

First Parish Unitarian Universalist – Canton
Minutes of the Parish Committee
November 13, 2024
7:15 PM on Zoom

In Attendance:

Kitty McGregor, President
Dave Williams, VP-Administration
Larry Cotton, Treasurer
Debbie Radovsky, VP-Member Services
Jonette Nagai, Clerk
Don Seaman, Member-at-Large
Bette Wells, Member-at-Large
Rev. Dr. Michelle Walsh, Minister

2024-25 Parish Committee Guests:

Rev. Dr. Clyde Grubbs

Absent:

Call to Order and Chalice Reading: The meeting was called to order at 7:15PM. Bette lit the chalice and gave the following chalice reading:

Chalice Lighting for the Work of the Congregation

By Erik Walker Wikstrom

As we approach our agenda
let us remember that we are doing the work of the congregation.
When we do the work of this congregation, we touch lives.
When we touch lives, we change the world.
May this chalice flame we now kindle
remind us throughout our meeting
of our ministry and our mission.

Check In: We took a few minutes to share how we were getting through these days given the presidential election results at the beginning of the meeting. During the meeting, Michelle noted that, fortunately, HR 9495 which could have been used to strip various “terrorist supporting” organizations of tax-exempt status failed to pass. Debbie suggested we check out the One Good Thing blog written by Reverend Sylvia Stocker, a minister in Maine. Reverend Stocker's parents, Bob and Mary Lou were long time pillars of the FPUU Canton community, and several long-time members shared memories of them.

Consent Agenda:

The Parish Committee (PC) unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2024 meeting after various changes suggested by Michelle, Bette, and David Bryant to the original draft.

The PC also voted to adopt the 8th UU Principle: “We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

Ministers’ Thoughts and Concerns:

Michelle asked us to consider donating \$200 toward the rental of the space for a joint event with the CDEI for the Transgender Day of Remembrance to be held on November 17th at 4pm. She noted that there is a budget of \$500 for this sort of expense. The PC unanimously approved this disbursement.

Michelle asked us all to read and become familiar with the details of Project 2025 and Project Esther.

The UUA recommends that churches incorporate with the State since it is safer to have the State (or Federal) recognition of the church’s status as a non-profit in addition to the IRS recognition. Kitty voiced concerns on pursuing this and will get a legal review and opinion. Alternatively, we should get an IRS determination letter prior to January 20, 2025.

We discussed the draft for the Dignity Fund policy. Larry shared his comfort with the current draft other than questioning the need for having two signatures and whether we should explicitly address the policy if, at some point, there is no minister. However, Kitty had additional comments that she wanted to share on the document that she had yet to circulate. Since there is no pressing need to finalize the document, we decided to continue the discussion at the next PC meeting after Kitty shares her comments.

Larry will go with Michelle to change the signer on the account, potentially changing the name on the account, and perhaps changing the account to an interest-bearing account once the policy is finalized.

President’s Report:

Replacement of the sanctuary roof has been completed. The patching job on the driveway has also been completed. The vendor did an excellent job and did approximately 20% more than agreed up in the contract for an amount that was well under what other potential vendors had quoted. Kitty estimates he saved the church well in excess of \$4,000. Apparently, he likes doing jobs for churches. Don proposed we send a formal thank you note to him.

Treasurer's Report:

Kitty requested to have a balance sheet report every month. Pledge income appears to be somewhat behind prior year and goal, but we will need additional data. The expectation is that there will be some catch-up in December, the end of the calendar year.

Kitty discussed trying to jump start a process to encourage legacy giving which has not happened at FPUU Canton. Michelle noted that the UUA has resources around planned giving which she circulated to the PC. Several people will need to be responsible for this effort.

VP/Ministry Reports:

Vision Ministry – David is unable to attend tomorrow's internal team meeting since he is having eye surgery. The meeting will be in person at the church at 2pm.

Congregational Life and Stewardship Ministry – Debbie reported that there will be a meeting will be working with others to update the friends and members of First Parish.

Don discussed how the two recent speaker events went. Unfortunately, the event with the League of Women Voters event on voter engagement with Diane O'Toole was not as successful as hoped perhaps largely due to the timing of the event. There was discussion on whether it made sense to invite them back again; all were open to this. On the other hand, the joint CDEI event with Thomas Green on indigenous people was a great success with about 50 people including children and young adults attending.

Don reported that the recent work party was also very successful with yard clean up and clean-up and dusting of internal spaces. There was a good turn-out. Name of participants included: Barbara Foley, Dave Williams, Annie Holden, Kathleen O'Connell, and Don Seaman. The raised flower beds and metal cabinet in the play area were removed and spiders were chased from the windows. There will be future work parties.

With thanks to Deb Radovsky's, the pew removal at the front of the sanctuary was successfully executed. Rev. Hardamon is happy, as are the members of the choir and Jim Chubet.

Don is still working on the sound issues in the sanctuary. He is having issues getting in touch with the person he uses, but still expects to be ready for the interfaith service.

A date of February 15, 2025 has been set for the event with Liam Galvin. Don will be working out the details on format and fee structure.

We will be contracting with a plumber for a number of issues: 1) the water pressure in the kitchen sink is low; 2) there is a leak in the Men's bathroom; 3) we need to plug off the water

supply on the hall bubbler; and 4) the pilot burners on the stove need to be lit which our plumber has indicated needs to be done professionally.

Don noted one additional small project which is to get the flag to fly by this weekend.

For the Spring speaker series, potential speakers include: 1) Neponset River Watershed; 2) Jerico Circle, 3) Diane Tynan with Canton elder services.

Miscellaneous:

Kitty will be away visiting family from November 16th through December 2nd.

A low key service is planned for December 1st.

Next Meeting of the Parish Committee:

In general, Parish Committee meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7:15pm on Zoom. The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 11th.

Closing Words:

Rev. Michelle read some closing words beginning with a phrase “often words fail...”

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40PM.

Open Follow-up Items including those from previous meetings:

- All member to continue reviewing Dignity Fund policy to discuss at the December meeting; Kitty to circulate her comments.
- Get IRS determination letter for tax exempt status before January 20, 2025 or state recognition. (Who?)
- Send thank you note to driveway vendor. (Kitty?)
- Work on planned giving project. (Kitty, Dave, others?)
- Kitty and Carol Smith to work on rental rate charts and process for one-off rentals
- Dave Bryant, Kitty, and Debbie to work on contract language and policy for long-term rentals.
- Draft up formal policy for handling in-kind donations for approval of PC at next meeting. (Larry)

Minutes prepared, and respectfully submitted, by Jonette Nagai, Parish Committee Clerk