Unitarian Church of Montpelier

Meeting of the Board

Tuesday, September 1, 2015, 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM

MINUTES

Convened: 6:32 PM

Location: Unitarian Church of Montpelier, Montpelier, VT

Present:

Amy Willis, Board President
Stuart Russo-Savage, Board Secretary
Nancy Read, Board Financial Officer
Priscilla Fox, Board Member at Large
Melinda Moz-Knight, Board Member at Large
Will White, Board Member at Large
Joan Javier-Duval, Minister (ET)

Absent:

Jo Romano, Board Vice President

I. **Opening/Chalice Lighting:** Amy
Amy shared a reading from the UUA – New Beginnings

The board looked at the board covenant from last year and approved it for our use this year.

II. **Minister's Report:** Joan
This is Joan's first UCM minister report to the board. It's been a month of getting her bearings. Joan started on August 1. Happy Anniversary! The management team had two meetings in addition to the joint retreat.
Theme based ministry was explained to the board by Joan. This structure can bring alignment to a spiritual community, more of a sense of purpose. This will be tried this year – all of the various UCM committees are behind it. Not a radical idea. It is something to try together.
The management team went back to the list of priorities from the joint board management team retreat and has created a draft list of priorities for the management team. Joan will share more on this with the board in October.

III. Recap of August 23 Retreat:

a. Decisions made: Taking over Stewardship Committee and budgeting portion of Finance Committee; having Property Committee identify larger accessibility issues for board attention; eliminating ET monitoring reports until goals are identified in strategic plan

b. Actions needed: Further discussion of policy regarding
    i. soliciting donations from outside businesses;

Soliciting donations from outside businesses was discussed. Some felt it should not be a problem. Others wondered about the idea of churches approaching businesses. If one church receives a donation, will the businesses feel obliged to all churches? Also, it appears that little money was earned from soliciting donations from outside businesses. A question was asked about whether this subject is ripe for the creation of a board policy. How specific should board policies be? In addition, the issue of whether or not the policies of a business should be considered prior to soliciting a donation. Should solicitation of a donation be limited to businesses owned by members or friends? We discussed asking the ET to draft a policy after our guidance that solicitation of contributions would be limited to members and friends. We then took a step back, thinking that we might be getting too involved in details. Instead, can we rely on our mission statement and the current financial management policy to guide the ET and MT to implement in conjunction with the Stewardship Committee. ***In the end, the direction from the board is that we do not see the need to have a board policy specific to this issue. Instead, we see this as something for the Stewardship Committee to address and ask that the ET report back to the Board on whether or not the current Financial Management Policy addresses this issue sufficiently.***

    ii. approving existing management policies (AKA UCM policies) and reposting online.
Which policies would we adopt? What shall we call them? ***UCM Policies****. In that way it is clear that we all (the congregation) follow them. The date when a policy is adopted by the board can be made clear on the document.* ***We decided to table adoption of these policies by the board until October and, in the interim, review them****.*

IV. **Update on Visioning and Strategic Planning Task Force** (Stuart, Will)

Will has stepped down due to other commitments. Names have been suggested by the 2020 Vision Task Force. ***Amy or Melinda will ask some of the people suggested by the 2020 Vision Task Force****. The discussion primarily centered around concern for time commitments our members already have.*

Joan discussed that visioning is the work of the board. Her strong feeling is that this is the work of the board and that the board needs to step up to do the work. It is the most exciting thing that is happening in the congregation. The committee is a great one that is doing great work. We agree and hope that, in the future, this board is in a place where more of its time is used in the creation and support of a vision.

Stuart reported out on what the task force is doing and what plans it is making. Joan added that the process the task force has discussed includes phases of work, starting with helping people to understand what it is we are hoping to create – help to define a vision. In October, we would launch the process in a worship service and then have a dedicated Sunday and time after that same Sunday service devoted to the process. In addition, there would be smaller group meetings. Then the task force would take all of that information, synthesize it, and create a vision statement to be submitted to the UCM Board in January.

The Board expressed that we would be willing to do extra work, as needed, to help out. If that is a possibility, please don't hesitate to ask Amy and she'll put the word out to the board that help is needed.

V. Board Communications and Outreach Efforts:

We do need to improve our communication efforts to help the congregation know what we are doing.

a. Board Calendar (Stuart) – *reported to the Board on work done over the summer on this. This will be shared with the Board through a Google Doc, welcoming input from the board members. Discussion of this will be placed on the October agenda*

b. Committee of Chairs Meetings in October, January and April (second Tuesdays from 6:30-8:30?) – *The meeting date has not yet been set. Nancy, Melinda, and Will each agreed that they would be willing to go if they are available.*

c. Women's Alliance potlucks – Board members should *please RSVP to Janet Poeten or Hedi Ballantyne if you plan to attend.*

d. Other ("Notes from the Board," etc.) – Last year *Amy tried to summarize the activities of the Board on a monthly basis for the church announcements. The Board was limited in the number of words that could be placed in the weekly announcements. Amy felt this limited the quality of the information that she gave. Joan will make a request of the communication committee to see if an exception can be made for the board to make a longer post once a month. The Board realizes that there will, still, be a limit but that the limit of words would be raised so that we could explain our main ideas in a way that would be understood by the congregation.*

e. Communications stylebook (suggestions for writing from the AP)

f. Other ideas:

- *Facebook & Twitter for notices*
- *Post when we meet on the "Friends of UCM" group*
- *Work into a Sunday service what we do*
- *A photograph of the Board*
- *Joan mentioned that some UU boards hold a monthly "come and chat with the board" time after Sunday service.*

VI. **Evaluating the Minister:** Methods used in the past; new guides/templates
Joan is in preliminary fellowship with the UUA. This means that every year (for three years) she has to re-apply. The application is due by July. The Board's part in that would need to be done by May/June. How we solicit feedback is up to us. In the past, the COM has been involved. Joan will circulate the form to us and the board will discuss this more at a later date.

VII. **Joan's Installation:** Preliminary thoughts; forming committee – *Donna Russo-Savage has offered to help lead the congregation's work with Joan's installation but she is particularly busy in the Spring. She would like to get going on this earlier rather than later. Joan agreed to meet with a group of people to begin work on that.*

VIII. **AOB** (Any Other Business) - *none*

IX. **Closing:** Amy – *the board did a "check-out" – What's been going on and how this meeting went for each of us.*

Meeting Adjourned: *8:40*

Respectfully submitted,

Stuart Russo-Savage

Board Secretary