

Board of Directors' Meeting

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF HARTFORD

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

Members present: John Brancato, Chris Wilt, Phil Gardner, Hank Murray, Margaret Leicach, Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, Rev. Heather Rion Starr, Gloria Francesca Mengual, Katharine Ann Buck Anderson

Members absent: Martha Bradley

Guests present: David Newton, Janice Newton. Erica Richmond, Jeff Howard, Edith Savage

Call to Order: John Brancato, President called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, following the potluck dinner which began at 6:00 PM.

Chalice Lighting and Opening words

The chalice was lit and Reverend Cathy Rion Starr offered as opening words a selection from Marge Percy.

Board Covenant and Mission Statement

Members read and reflected on the Board Covenant and USH Mission statement in silence.

Approve minutes of July and August meetings

Discussion: The header on the was revised from June to July.

Decision: The minutes of the July meeting were approved as revised. Phil moved and Hank seconded that the minutes of the August meeting be approved as presented.

Actions: None needed.

Affiliated Community Minister

Discussion:

- The advisory group described in provision # 12 in the agreement is included because it is required by the UUA. Erica will select the people to be in the group, though she welcomes suggestions. The Board does not need to be involved in the selection of this group.
- The ritual of affiliation will be part of our worship service on October 9 and Erica will be preaching in the October 15th worship service.
- The upcoming Board-Under-the-Stairs will be an opportunity for members to meet Erica more personally and ask questions about her and her role in our congregation.
- Any Board members who can are encouraged to attend Erica's ordination in Brookline on September 24th at 2:00 PM.

Decision: Margaret moved and Gloria seconded the motion to approve the affiliation agreement between Erica Richmond and USH as presented. The motion passed.

Actions: Board members were asked to spread the word about the Board-Under-the-Stairs and to encourage congregation members to come.

Viewing of "Defying the Nazis"

Discussion: The movie will be shown after the worship service on September 25th. There will be soup for sale by the Youth Group and childcare will be available.

Decision: None needed

Actions: None needed.

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Ministers' Report

Discussion: Ingathering Sunday is rapidly approaching.

Decision: None needed

Actions:

- Board members were reminded to get their bios to Brian Harvey in for the OOS for Ingathering Sunday.
- Phil Gardner will update the bulletin board in Fellowship Hall lobby, using material from Brian Harvey.

Update on Hearing Loop

Discussion:

- David Newton reported that B&G is getting bids from two vendors and they anticipate a cost of just under \$7,500 to wire the sanctuary on both sides, involving some work on the very edges of the carpet.
- This plan will provide coverage for about 97% of the sanctuary and for 2 devices which can be used by those without hearing aids to test the system and also by those with hearing aids which don't have the appropriate setting to take advantage of the hearing loop.
- B&G and AIM will get information out to those with hearing aids about going to their hearing aid provider to get it set up properly to take advantage of the hearing loop.
- The system should be available for use in the very near future.

Decision: None needed.

Actions: None needed.

New Board Manuals

Discussion: Rev. Heather distributed the new manuals and encouraged everyone to put their name on their own manual, add material as it arises BUT keep the sections in the same order so we can all find things at the same time when we need to for reference. It was noted that having a copy or copies in the library would be helpful.

Decision: None needed.

Actions: None needed.

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Board Presence at Memorial Services,

Discussion: It is important to have as much Board presence as possible at memorial services for members. The minimal goal would be to have at least one Board member present, even if the person whose service it is is minimally known to the congregation, e.g. a family member or friend of a member. Upcoming services include Carolyn Cartland's on September 7th, Al Angelbeck's sometime in September, the Garvais' in October after a worship service, and Ted Space's sometime in November.

Decision: We will ask the Caring Network to notify the Board President when a memorial service is scheduled and Revs. Cathy and Heather will also notify the President, just in case. The Board President will then notify all Board members via email and Board members will respond as to whether or not they can go to the particular service.

Actions:

- John and/or the ministers will notify the Caring Network of this plan.
- Board members will encourage and model the expectation that as many members as possible will attend memorial services, irrespective of the extent of their connection to the person being memorialized.

Proposed Change in Youth Advisor Role at USH

Discussion: The ministers, in consultation with staff, propose that we modify the staffing and budget for RE in response to the following:

- We now have enough young people to offer a Coming-of-Age program. We haven't allocated anything in the RE budget for this in recent years because we didn't have enough participants to run it. Happily, now we do so we need to include this in our budget.
- John Bengston will continue heading up the soup project as a volunteer, but will otherwise be stepping back from his role as Youth Group Advisor.
- Rayla will assume a larger role in working with the Youth Group and the Youth Group Advisor role will be eliminated.
- The financial net result of these changes is to free up some funds which can be reallocated to better meet the needs of the congregation.

Decision: Phil moved and Gloria seconded a motion to (1) increase Rayla's hours and scope of duties to include work with the Youth Group; (2) eliminate the role of Youth Group advisor as it has existed to this point, and (3) hire someone to provide support to Rayla 6 hours per month (including assisting her twice per month on Sunday mornings), and to the ministers 6 hours per month

Actions: The ministers and staff will implement these changes.

Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting on January 8, 2017

Discussion: The Board brainstormed ideas about the theme and focus of the meeting, including the following thoughts:

- It should be enjoyable and energizing, rather than meeting-like.
- The congregation could participate in visioning goals for the stewardship campaign.
- We could have presentations by the Councils.
- We could present the plan for the ministers' parental leave.

Decisions: None needed.

Actions: Hank will ask the Council Chairs to gather input from their Councils as to what they might want to / be able to do.

Fundraising Policies

Discussion: Jeff Howard distributed: (a) the draft Memorandum of Understanding between UUSE and Solarize Connecticut; and (b) Project 2 from the Green Sanctuary re-accreditation application. He then provided an overview of the proposed project that the Green Sanctuary SubCouncil is asking the Board to endorse.

- The goal is to encourage more households to convert to solar energy, focusing on households within USH and the immediate neighbourhood of the Meeting House.
- Solarize Connecticut is vetting potential vendors and will select one for this project with faith communities. The company who installed our solar panels is one of the bidders.
- There is no cost to the USH budget for this project.
- John asked Jeff to have the Green Sanctuary SubCouncil come up with outcome measures for the success of the project. Jeff suggested something like "10 households signed up".
- Hank suggested that having estimates of the cost per household would be helpful in coming up with an estimate of the number of households that might be expected to sign on.
- Rev. Heather noted that this is only one of the recent proposals highlighting a lack of clarity in our policies about when, how and by whom congregants should be solicited within the Meeting House (e.g. during coffee hour) to purchase goods or services. We *do* have written policies which have not been referred to, have been followed inconsistently, and which need review, clarification, and probably updating.

Decisions: Hank moved and Margaret seconded a motion to suspend the fundraising policy for one year while we review it, but track carefully what fundraising is done by whom for what so that we will have that information available in order to make a more thoughtful decision next year.

Actions: Phil will talk with Linda and come up with a plan to collect this information as systematically as possible.

USH Support and Promotion of Solarize with Faith

Discussion: Jeff Howard presented the Memorandum of Understanding for approval by the Board. The Board asked for the following change to be made: Line 2 in Item #2 will be revised to read: "...support such as USH members and friends working with..."

- Jeff agreed to ensure that any tabling by the vendor will occur elsewhere other than Fellowship Hall or on the lower level.
- It was noted that we will also need a MOU with the vendor who is selected.

Decisions: Hank moved and Phil seconded a motion to approve the MOU in concept, subject to receipt of a revised MOU at the October meeting. The motion passed with 3 votes yes, 1 vote no, and 1 abstention.

Actions: Jeff will bring the revised MOU to the October meeting for a vote.

Comments from Visitors

Janice Newton asked what was going to happen regarding quarterly reports from the Councils.

David Newton distributed Ed Richardson's document on our trees and suggested that we ask Ed to offer tours of our trees.

Decisions: None needed

Actions: None needed.

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Closing Items, Announcements:

- John will communicate with Council Chairs via email to schedule Council reports for the remainder of this fiscal year.
- Whether or not and when Councils might conduct 'fairs' at coffee hours this year will be postponed to a future meeting.

Closing Words

Rev. Heather Rion Starr closed with words by John Cummings.

Adjournment: President John Brancato adjourned the meeting shortly at 9:40 PM.