**First Unitarian Church of Providence**

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

January 15, 2020

**ATTENDING:**

**Prudential Committee**

Cheryl Bartholomew, President, *absent*

John Simmonds, Past-President

Michael Cappelli, President-Elect

Roberta Groch, Treasurer - *absent*

David Francis, Assistant Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Caroline Mailloux, Strategic Planning - *on speaker phone*

Tiffany Reed, Stewardship Liaison - *absent*

Edie Warren, Personnel Liaison - *absent*

Sam Cole, Community Life Liaison - *absent*

Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison

Dave Spremulli, Spiritual Development Liaison - *absent*

**Church Staff Attending**

Elizabeth Lerner Maclay, Minister, ex officio

Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

**Guests Attending –**

Rick Richards – Commitment Drive

Ktherine Alquist – Sanctuary Committee – for Sanctuary portion of agenda

Rebecca Ahlberg – Sanctuary Committee – for Sanctuary portion of agenda

With seven members participating, we have a quorum. Michael is presiding in Cheryl’s absence. Michael gave a brief update on Cheryl’s injuries and recovery trajectory.

**6:45 Check-in**

**Opening Words (Greg)**

**Call to Order - Chalice Lighting & Covenant Reading**

**Meditation**

**7:)0 Consent Agenda**:

* **December Minutes –** Consent agenda approved unanimously (John /Claire)

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

* **Sanctuary Steering Committee visit –**

Members of sanctuary committee attended to further discuss the proposal for a documentary by filmmaker, Justin Reifert, on First U’s sanctuary effort. **Why is it important for this film to focus on First U?** It is too dangerous to focus on individuals directly involved – undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers. Already, Justin could not continue with a project on DACA students because of the danger to them. So focusing on us (First U) could tell the story and raise people’s consciousness without putting folks at risk. The project would include the sanctuary coalition groups as well. **Will focus of documentary change with the focus of the sanctuary work here at First U changing?** This is likely. Filmmaker will likely follow the story where it leads. He has already been filming some of the protest activity at Wyatt Detention Center. **Possible risks? Concern about control of the content**. He would reserve artistic control of the content, framing and message. **Concern about having cameras present in our sanctuary and other parts of church campus.** We want our sanctuary to be a safe space. This may not even need to happen if mainly filming interviews with sanctuary committee members. **Concern that this could put this church on the map nationally and it might put us at risk down the line**. Although this was raised as a possible concern, several PruComm members stated that perhaps we want to be bold and courageous. It would help to shine a light on this important issue. Justin had indicated that he would likely not be filming with First U until the summer. Katherine also shared that she has reached out to Justin over the last several weeks with no response.

PruComm will vote on this issue at the next meeting. It will be important to communicate to the whole congregation our decision and why.

* **Leadership Retreat debrief/follow-up (All)**

Caroline shared the highlights of the retreat from her perspective. Positives include: Having staff present; opportunity for people to connect on a deeper level; using a third party facilitator; forty people showed up. The Strategic Planning Committee met on Sunday. Their feedback – in addition to the positives already mentioned, they felt that the mission piece was a bit weak. Perhaps hadn’t set safe enough space for candor and passion. Maybe needed more time? Cheryl’s absence at very last minute did not leave time to regroup some of the planned work effectively. Still, we need to maintain momentum. Communication on “Imagine the Future” to congregation is ready. This can go out in this week’s electronic Newsletter. Next would be the timeline for how this work relates to David Pyle’s work and Commitment Drive, etc. Nancy can be point person for these communications. We need to carve out time for PruComm to “practice” visioning. What does follow-up leadership activity look like – annual retreat?

* **Special project requests and budget requests (Roberta and David)**

Nancy and Roberta have started a draft budget for 2020-21 fiscal year. David and Roberta have made revisions. They have not received an RE budget yet. There are requests to increase pastoral care position to ½ time, increase membership coordinator hours, add a ¼ time Assistant RE Director, and we need to include budget for sabbatical fund. David and Roberta will take draft budget to finance committee. By end of January. New process of special budget requests have brought forth several requests (for spending of any surplus we may have at end of this fiscal year). 300th committee celebration. Loaves and fishes - $1300 better lunches. Community Food Share – $260 Chrome book.

There was a proposal from a Contra Dance group to become a “Contra Dance ministry” of the church. It would require use of the auditorium one Friday night a month. This proposal is more than a simple budget request and needs further exploration as to how it aligns with mission as well as other possible counter-proposals to make this work.

* **Congregational staff assessment review for FY2021 budget**

Cheryl prepared a chart of David Pyle’s recommendations - which have we completed, which still in progress, and which are still to be done. Some of the items yet to be achieved are already being considered for 2021 budget (increasing Roger and Jenn’s time, etc. See above.) We are assessing the cost for laptops and policy on purchase on an ownership, etc.

* **May 15th Musicale proceeds**

John made a motion to **take proceeds from May 15th Musicale and use them as seed money for sound system fundraising.** (John / Greg). Discussion: David House is fully behind this idea. We need to have outline of the sound system proposal to share with congregation and for marketing before fundraising starts for sound system - by early May at the latest. Maybe invite Dave Dalzell (who did the assessment) back to answer questions. Motion passed unanimously.

* **GA Information**

There has been a Facebook conversation about who / why / how we might be organizing housing for GA attendees as we did last time GA was held in Providence. This takes a great degree of coordination, vetting, etc. We recruited for volunteers to coordinate last spring. There were no takers. Additionally, when Providence hosted GA last, there were MANY hotel spaces available than there are now. Housing for GA attendees should not be a problem this time. – Michael will respond to Facebook conversation. Delegates -- We have 10 delegate votes. We will announce this opportunity to congregation via newsletter in February. Delegates are charged to vote their conscience on any policy issues or amendments that are put to a vote.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

* **Church Administrator (Nancy) –** See written report.Staff space reallocation project is almost complete.
* **DRE (Cathy) -** No report this month.
* **Minister (Liz) –** See written report. Nineteen people registered for Path to Membership class. Today’s gun control event included a much more multi-racial and multi-cultural crowd. It was written up in ProJo.
* **Treasurer Reports (Roberta) –** We are where we should be. Pledges are at 71% for the 50% mark. Endowment is now over $6 million. Consideration to take a portion of Endowment out of market into more stable investment. Question regarding social conscience investing. We did review for this a few years back. Perhaps should be looked at again.

**MINITRIES, PERSONNEL, STRATEGIC PLANNING – (See Retreat debrief above for Strategic planning updates – otherwise, no major updates)**

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS:**

* **Intern being sought to Look into First U, the Slave Trade & Abolition Movement**

Committee working on this. Nothing new to report

* **Stewardship For Us Reminder Feb 21 - Feb 23 Congregational Giving Assessment. All PruComm members should plan to attend.**

* **Kevin Carson Ordination (Liz) –** Several First U representatives attended the ordination. Liz gave “charge to the ministry.” We will be giving Kevin a suncatcher and weathervane pin.
* **Sabbatical policy task force update (Michael and Greg)**

Met yesterday. Drafting policies – hope to have something soon for review.

* **Coffee Hour (Roberta)**

Women’s Alliance has been coordinating volunteer baking / snacks for coffee hour for quite some time and have become a bit burnt out. It was suggested that we ask

Deacons to take on this project. Roberta will approach Jim B.

* **Church overnight guest policy (Michael)**

Michael will be researching with the district and other congregations’ policies.

**NEW BUSINESS** –

* We need to plan for Lisa Garcia Samson’s ordination. We have already raised $1400. Cheryl was leading this effort. We need to find out Cheryl’s plans and form a committee to help make this happen. Scheduled for May.
* James Ford will be preaching in two weeks 1/26. Deacons are planning a luncheon. Michael will say a few words at the luncheon. Present James with a suncatcher.

**8:50 ACTION ITEM REVIEW**

**Next Meeting/Assignments**

* **Next Meeting: February 12**
* **Opening/Closing Words: Sam**

**Closing Words (Greg)**

**Extinguish Chalice**

**9:00 ADJOURNMENT –** Motion to adjourn **(** John / Claire) carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk