

First Unitarian Church of Providence

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

April 13, 2022

ATTENDING:

Prudential Committee

Odile Mattiauda, President

Michael Cappelli, Past-President

Joan Richards, President-elect

John Dooley, Treasurer

Rick Richards, Assistant Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Edie Warren, Personnel Liaison

Beth Armstrong, Strategic Planning

Louise Sloan, Community Life Liaison *absent*

Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison

Alison Green, Spiritual Development Liaison

Vacant, Stewardship Liaison

Ex-officio - Liz Lerner Maclay, Minister

Carson Cole, Youth Representative *absent*

Church Staff Attending

Nancy Forsstrom, Director of Operations

Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education

Guests Attending

Peter Bowden (for his presentation)

Jay Glasson (for finance and investment presentation)

Tony Allen (for finance and investment presentation)

6:00PM - Sanctuary Disability Access Planning Team (PruComm and Max Pounder) – PruComm gathered in the sanctuary prior to official start of the meeting for Max Pounder to share three plans for providing wheelchair pew access. Option#1 allowed for 2 wheelchairs in the front south side, but seemed kind of tight for 2 wheelchairs. Option #2 would allow more room for maneuvering and companion or family members. Options #3 also involved expansion of the front platform. Some discussion suggested possibility of having side access rather than front access for the wheelchairs in Option #2 as well as the possibility of having similar arrangements in the middle and north aisle to allow for wheelchair users some choice as to where to sit. It was also noted that wheelchair access to the platform should also be part of the plans. Thanks to Max for all his work on this. Proposals will take more discussion before final approval.

6:45 PM – Gathering

Opening Words – (Claire) Amanda Gorman “Every Day we are Learning”

**Covenant Reading -
Call to Order – 7:00 PM**

DISCUSSION – Some Budget Considerations

Peter Bowden – After a meeting with staff around communication issues, the question arose as to whether and how Peter could consult to help First U in development of communication strategies using the digital technology tools of 2022. Peter had shared a written presentation with the PruCOmm how he might do this. Peter has consulted with other UU congregations on how to use digital tools to communicate, connect and inspire. He emphasizes how video content is often the best way to communicate and engage with people using various social media platforms, website, etc. A communications plan should be based on congregation mission and vision -- the needs of congregations and community around us. We need to recognize realities of today's digital culture. The group discussed how some of our current needs for web management, streaming of worship, e-newsletter already call for the need for communications coordinator (working with volunteers). Peter grew up in and knows this congregation and also has had a lot of experience consulting nationwide on many different aspects of congregational life – with many different age groups. He could help with coordination of communication tools available to advance the work of congregation, acting as a trainer and coach. He could help evaluate the effectiveness of what we are doing as well as learning how to use newer tools (Instagram, TikTok, etc.) He could help us to thoughtfully develop a communications position. He also discussed potential for assistance from UUA funding panel to help support this effort financially since this sort of consultation would have an extended benefit for a large number of UU congregations.

Osbourne Annuity Discussion

Finance and Investment Committee - (Jay Glasson and Tony Allen)

Background: The Finance and Investment Committee is putting forward their recommendation for use of the Osbourne annuity proceeds. This recommendation was supported by 6 members of the committee with one abstention. Jay outlined the reasoning for this recommendation. The intention at time of establishment of annuity fund (although never written anywhere) was to have any remaining funds go to the preservation and restoration of the physical plant. The Benevolent Society was formed in 2018 as a mechanism for members to leave bequests to Preservation Fund. The plan was that once Preservation Fund reached \$100,000, 5% annually would go to Capital Maintenance Fund. During the last Capital Campaign, goal was to raise \$2.5M. We only reached \$1.5. Interior of sanctuary, kitchen, Parish House interior, RE wing all need work.

Motion to accept recommendation of Finance and Investment Committee(Odile / Joan):

“The Finance Committee recommends the Osborne Annuity fund proceeds be added to the First Unitarian Preservation Endowment Fund and utilized pursuant to the directives of said Fund to provide for the maintenance and upkeep of the Meeting House, Parish House and Religious Education Building, and surrounding grounds of the Church to ensure the preservation, maintenance and restoration of the distinctive historic buildings and grounds enjoyed by our congregation.”

Discussion:

PruComm has full discretion on how Osbourne funds will be spent. Policy manual states that these funds could be placed in New Initiatives Fund (4.3.2) – We could put some proceeds in a sabbatical fund, some to new initiatives, some to building fund. **This motion was tabled** and John Dooley was charged with putting together a proposal for use of Osbourne funds taking into consideration all the needs discussed. It was pointed out that there is no urgency for deciding how to use the Osbourne Annuity funds and we should take sufficient time to deliberate.

All acknowledged the need to tend to the upkeep of the physical plant of the church. We need to form an active buildings and grounds committee to discern all building needs on an ongoing basis rather than waiting for crises. Up to 5% annually from the Consolidated Fund can be used for building maintenance needs in the church's general operating budget. (We have been using about that for building maintenance salaries, insurance, snow removal, landscaping, and other minor but ongoing building related expenses.) We need more time to discern various building maintenance needs in more detail. It was noted that in years past the Alliance used to tend to the kitchen and parish house upkeep, but does no longer. (The kitchen is no longer safe to cook in). We also need a finance committee engaged in more than the church's investments, but also in budget development that will engage in such discernment.

Motion to approve the March Minutes (Odile / Edie) was approved inanimously.

Motion to accept First Unitarian Church of Providence's Covid 19 team recommendation dated March 28, 2022 (Odile / Edie):

- **Keep masks on for worship and in public places on church campus (small groups may decide to unmask and share foods as they have been)**
- **Keep pews distanced & roped, (pew crowding has not been an issue at worship services and there have been many empty seats)**
- **Stop choir testing,**
- **April 24 service exception: Choir tested (masked as usual), because they will sing from front of church (led by Maestra Nancy Rosenberg, composer of one of 2 songs commissioned for the 300th Celebration) in the vicinity of worship staff who gets tested also,**
- **Lunch (probably sandwiches) will be served at the David Smith weekend's day-long rehearsal on April 30. Attendees masked are encouraged to practice some degree of distancing and to eat outside if possible.**
- **Summer services, given windows and doors open, first pews not occupied: Singers and instrumentalists will not be required to mask but will be required to test.**

UUA Consultant Erika Barron's recommendations – Erika Barron, UUA consultant, will attend next Executive Committee meeting to share her recommendations on clarifying PruComm / Staff roles and improving communication between staff and PruComm. She will base recommendations on feedback provided to her by PruComm members and staff.

REPORTS

Commitment Drive Report – 137 pledges. \$305,474. 77 increased their pledges at rate of 13.5%. Seven pledged who have not pledged before. A few decreases. Net increase \$20,000.

Last year had a total of 348 pledges. Committee will be strategizing outreach for final weeks of drive.

Nominating Committee Report (Michael) – Nominating committee is still looking for a few more deacons. We have one Liaison who is fairly certain, but still needs to confirm.

Volunteer Recognition Nominees – This will happen during Annual Meeting. In light of extraordinary times, it was decided to recognize all thirteen people who were nominated. If thirteen people recognized, we will need a very brief intro of each awardees or one general acknowledgement.

DRE Search Report (Alison)

We received nine applications. Two were withdrawn (accepted other positions). The committee has interviewed three, and scheduled an additional first interview. They have also scheduled a second interview with one applicant who was particularly promising. Hope to have the other interviews wrapped up soon and a decision by late April / early May.

Kelley Smith Memorial Fund – Kelley Smith has requested that \$10,000 (in Tesla stock) be given to First U after her passing. Her gift is intended to be a challenge fund to build capacity and resources for a broader music program at First U in Kelley’s memory. Her spouse, Sam Cole, is inviting friends, family and fellow First U members to also direct gifts to this fund in Kelley’s memory. Kelley’s memorial service will be held Saturday, April 23, so go-ahead approval is needed immediately. Any outstanding parameters or questions regarding the fund will be completed / resolved and a more complete description will come back to the PruComm. The fund can be used for First U to purchase sound equipment and other resources that help expand the range of First U’s music capacities and sustain that increased diversity going forward. (See printed proposal for more details) – **Motion – (Beth / Alison) To approve the moving forward with establishment of a fund, to be named the Kelley Smith Memorial Fund, seeded with the bequest from Kelley and supplemented with donations from Kelley’s family and friends. Motion approved unanimously.**

Cathy Farewell – Cathy has requested that her final day be June 5. Spiritual Pathways likes having a bit more time to plan a farewell celebration. June 5 is also the date for the annual meeting. We will have worship followed by the annual meeting, followed by the farewell celebration. We will need to plan for children’s activity during annual meeting that day.

See written staff reports

Addition to the Director of Operations Report - Additional security camera has been installed in parking lot. There have been some issues and all are advised to never leave vehicle in parking lot overnight.

Closing Words – (Claire) from Amanda Gorman “Practice Makes People”

Chalice Extinguishing

Adjourn – 7:00 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk