

First Unitarian Church of Providence

Prudential Committee Meeting Notes

December 14, 2022

ATTENDING:

Prudential Committee

Joan Richards, President

Odile Mattiauda, Past-President

Hillary Salmons, President-elect

John Dooley, Treasurer

Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk

Dana Borelli-Murray, Personnel Liaison

Peter Laarman, Strategic Planning

Louise Sloan, Community Life Liaison *absent*

Lisa Voutes, Social Justice Liaison

Alison Green, Spiritual Development Liaison

Andy Wilby, Stewardship Liaison *absent*

Ex-officio – Rev. Roger Peltier, Acting Senior Minister

Church Staff Attending

Mandy Neff, Interim Director of Religious Education

Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

Guests

Rick Richards, Commitment Drive

Diane Baxter, Commitment Drive

6:48 PM – Gathering Covenant Reading

Opening Words – (Peter)

Call to Order – 6:53 PM

Consent Agenda –

- **Approval of November Minutes**
- **Financial Report**
- **Motion – per the Finance Committee Recommendation:** To move all the smaller funds from Ocean State Charities to Washington Trust. This will have the benefit of allowing all our funds to be in one place – where they are very well-managed – and will still allow us to receive the disbursements we need.

Motion to approve the consent agenda (Peter/Odile) – Approved unanimously.

Staff Reports (read in advance Staff present one high light or challenge)

Acting Minister (Roger) – We are looking at staff budget requests and focusing on initiatives to become a more welcoming congregation. January service will welcome Gay Men’s Chorus to provide the music (MLK Sunday).

Director of Religious Education (Mandy) – We hired an RE Assistant – Amy Ahlberg. We continue to look for Youth Music Director. Spiritual Pathways Team has considered vision and budget. Looking toward Youth Leadership trips. Several Youth want to attend GA in 2023.

Director of Operations (Nancy) – Please be sure that you have Nancy’s correct email address – some have been sending to an incorrect address. Correct address is admin@firstunitarianprov.org. Do we need earthquake insurance? Insurance salesman has shared data that risk in Providence is extremely low. **Motion: We follow the guidance that states that earthquake insurance is not needed as the risk is very low. (Peter/Hillary)** – Motion passed unanimously.

Commitment Drive Update/Next Steps – (Diane) – The theme is “Meeting in Warmth and Joy.” There will be an article in Friday’s Newsletter Introduce Rick and Diane and plans for a Fellowship Dinner for entire congregation the Friday before kickoff (March 3). Tables will have host who will arrange the potluck food for their table. Goals and priorities will be shared. There will be some entertainment. Visiting stewards: Committee has developed script and sample email for this year. “What does the church mean to you?” conversation. Visiting Stewards will collect pledge at visit if it is ready. PruComm members are being asked to be visiting stewards, others on team as well. Visits will be happening in February. Roger can be a resource to address any pastoral needs identified during visits. Soft launch in early February – leadership and top donors. Last three weeks of February, visiting stewards will make their visits. Fellowship dinner March 3. March pledge packets go out to everyone in March – information on priorities, target goal, etc. Recruiting thank you note writers. Will need testimonials for services during March.

Signage Report – (Rick Richards) – Rick presented on work of task force. Decisions already made: No flagpole. Northwest corner of front yard is best location. Single sign or banner would be best. There are two design concepts for signage at First U. Portrait format – smaller letters, possibility for more message – best seen by pedestrians. Landscape – single line of text, with larger letters – more visible to vehicular traffic. Signs can be supplemented with a single banner no more than ten days at a time. Design considerations: (See proposal for more detail: Visual context, site, appearance, audience, historic district constraints. It was decided to postpone further decision until further discussion of messaging at retreat on January 8 (noon to 5PM).

GA recruitment flyer/process/budget (Hillary) - First U, based on congregation size, can send ten member delegates to include youth. Cost is \$250 virtual, \$475 in person. See draft recruitment flyer in Google Drive. There was some discussion of possibility for financial assistance to attend. Form will ask applicants to indicate if they need financial assistance and/or to contact Roger to discuss this. Hillary, Mandy and Roger will make some revisions to the draft and circulate for comments to finalize recruitment flyer and form for distribution in January. An article in the First U Times will describe the importance of this year’s GA in relation to the Article II vote that will take place there when announcing the GA opportunity.

Review & Prioritize List of Budget Requests (John) – Form for making budget requests has been developed and was distributed to committees last week. People used it, but also gave valuable feedback for improvements. Needed to be clearer that there needed to be regular budget requests, along with any special requests for new items. Seven committees submitted requests. Form will be tweaked based on feedback and sent out to committees, staff, and groups that have not yet submitted to develop operational budget in January. Will also need to do a similar process for Capital needs and develop a three year plan for larger fund raising. There needs to be a budget meeting scheduled in early January to review spreadsheets and put together draft budget. Budget committee consists of key staff, treasurer, PruComm personnel and Ministry liaisons (or designee, although liaison is preferable).

Strategic Planning Update: Board Input & Next Steps (Peter) – See document in Google Drive with six priority categories (and sub-activities). Peter led the group through an exercise to gauge relative importance of the different areas (highest possible score – 120):

- Growth with wider welcome 101
- Becoming a church for RI – reciprocal engagement with larger community – 98
- Spiritual depth and nurture - 102
- State of the Art communications – branding / identifying mission - 97
- Financial Stability / Physical infrastructure - 107
- Cultivating resilience, unity and resourcefulness – 97

Then there was a discussion of what might be missing –

- Caring, Community, Belonging
- Outreach / service to others
- Learning from the larger community

There was a suggestion that the stated areas could be separated into two buckets: 1) purpose and content (e.g., spiritual depth, belonging, service) and 2) means for getting us there (e.g., financial stability, communications, etc.). PruComm needs to keep working on clarity on these priorities at retreat. Plan a congregational conversation to introduce these priorities to larger congregation.

Other Business –

Peter and Hillary have invited Senator Whitehouse to speak about his book: “The Scheme: How the Right Wing Used Dark Money to Capture the Supreme Court” January 13, look for more detail in First U Times.

Upcoming PruComm Dates (Note change in Exec Comm and PruComm):

January 8 – Retreat, noon – 5PM

Exec Comm - January 11, 6PM zoom

PruComm – January 18, 6:45 in person

Closing Words (Peter) - Howard Thurman

Executive Session - Postponed

Adjournment – 9:09PM

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk