

## **First Unitarian Church of Providence**

Prudential Committee Minutes

October 11, 2023

### **ATTENDING:**

#### **Prudential Committee**

Hillary Salmons, President

Joan Richards, Past-President

Karen Silva, President-Elect

John Dooley, Treasurer

Chris Campanile, Assistant Treasurer

Kate Niles, Clerk

Dana Borrelli-Murray, Personnel Liaison (absent)

Peter Laarman, Strategic Planning

Katy Killilea, Community Life Liaison

Lisa Voutes, Social Justice Liaison (absent)

Alison Green, Spiritual Development Liaison (ill – listening in via Zoom)

Andy Wilby, Stewardship Liaison

Ex-officio – Rev. Liz Lerner Maclay (via Zoom)

#### **Church Staff Attending**

Nancy Forsstrom, Director of Operations

Mandy Neff, Interim Religious Education Director (absent)

### **6:39 PM – Call to order, Chalice lighting, opening welcome**

**Approval of June minutes and Minutes from 9.13.23. Hillary Salmons moved; Joan Richards seconded after Joan requested that John Ortloff's name be consistently spelled correctly, and that clarification of RE numbers for the month be added. Unanimously approved.**

#### **1. Letter to Washington Trust regarding its apparent history of redlining:**

- a. Chris Campanile drafted a letter to the CEO of Washington Trust that Liz read out loud and put up on the screen so others could comment. (Background: Washington Trust, where First U keeps a lot of its money, was recently found by the DOJ's Civil Rights Division to be in violation of redlining regulations and secured an agreement to pay fines and commit to compliance changes.) We are writing a letter in support of those findings and the subsequent agreement. Discussion ensued about whether to send it to our representative who manages our accounts and Cc the "boss" or to send it to the "boss" (CEO/Chairman) and Cc our representative. We agreed on the latter so that our representative does not feel put upon. We also agreed that Jay Gleason, Finance Committee Chair, should be in the loop on this, and that Nancy as Director of Operations would be following up to set up a meeting with Washington Trust about this issue. Chris will do a final edit and Hillary and Liz will sign it to send.

2. **Erica Baron** – Congregational Consultant.

- a. Erica has been brought in to help us clarify the different roles of staff and Pru Comm members. A key goal is to make some clear decisions and put them in a written public, accessible domain. This month she wants to focus on **values**; next month on **capacity building** – i.e. triaging our ambitious Strategic Plan; and in December she would like to develop (build?) a model for differentiating roles, along with assessment and accountability around those roles.
- b. Today, vis a vis **values**, she pointed out that congregations forget they are *employers*. What is our role as employer that is in line with our values? A little exercise in each of our remembrances of bad versus great work environments proved that the latter was in line with our values/principles (“inherent worth and dignity of each person”, e.g.). Given that, how do we empower staff to make decisions and focus their roles so efforts are not duplicated? Once we prioritize our Strategic Plan goals we will need to designate what staff vs. Pru Comm vs volunteers do in service to this.
- c. Nancy pointed out that policy and procedures are not the same thing. Our first manual (circa 2016) does not separate the two, which Erica pointed out is ok in a small church but not in a large one. We will need to instigate a separate manual for each.

3. **Janice Ookomian on Music Director Search:**

- a. Janice reported that 40 people showed up to the congregational meeting regarding the director. This was a good turnout with a lot of enthusiasm. She wanted Pru Comm help to get a bigger buy in for the Directorship. What are next steps? It was suggested that “little snippets” be regularly dropped into the First U Times on a monthly basis – maybe a little column – to keep awareness circulating. It was also suggested that reminders about David Smith et al as examples of broad musical possibilities be incorporated. Janice was also seeking clarification on the “arts” add on. We clarified that this meant “Worship Arts” – mainly music – not arts administration. Peter Laarman suggested that the job description “tweak’ to lean into the Church of the City goal from the Strategic Plan (auditorium use, etc.). We agreed we would do a little research on the job market to understand how to word our own job listing that feasibly matches market realities. It was agreed that Pru Comm needs to give the Music Committee better guidance on broader church buy-in and what we want from the job.

4. **Commitment Drive:**

- a. Diane Baxter introduced Tim Burns as the new Co-Chair of the Commitment Drive. She handed out a draft timeline for this year’s Drive.
- b. Budget requests for Pru Comm from Committees will be needed by November 30. We approved a revised **Budgeting Form** that Nancy developed. PruComm will then need to give the Commitment Drive a clear list of priorities for budgeting by December. Pru Comm’s job will be to winnow budget requests and get back to committees after having done so.

Committees are encouraged to ask for as much as they want – it is our job to prioritize based on this.

**5. Strategic Plan:**

- a. Peter Laarman had one request this meeting and that is to commence the work of the new Antiracism Team as a Steering Committee to replace the Mosaic Team. This will circumvent usual procedures for establishing committees and is so acknowledged. Peter made the motion for such and Joan seconded. Unanimously approved.
- b. Kate pointed out that the Mosaic Team needs to submit a budget request as per Commitment Drive, above, BEFORE Antiracism Team is established so there is continuity in monies available to the new Team.

**6. Staff Reports:**

- a. Nancy said we need auction items by the 27<sup>th</sup> of October.
- b. Andy W. reported on the lay ministry being offered/involved in four after-service talks on Mental Health First Aid, Neurodiversity, Dementia, and End of Life Preparation. (Clerk's note: This is a GREAT example of incorporating Strategic Plan goals into a specific group's work BTW.)

**7. Dana on Emeritus Policy.**

- a. Dana handed out a draft policy. There was some discussion around whether a simple majority or a very high number of people needed to approve someone for Emeritus status. It was agreed that 85% of the **people who actually come to the meeting regarding the Emeritus status in question** would be needed to approve the status, and not a quorum of the full church. Joan Richards made a motion to approve this course of action; Andy seconded. All approved.

**8. Chris on Finance and Development:**

- a. We need 20K to complete the AV installment. It was suggested by Finance that we had a credit line we could use. We agreed to do so with the caveat that we roll that into our Capital Campaign and that the first 20k raised would go to pay off this credit line. No additional fundraising needed.

**9. Transylvania Partner Church Visit:**

- a. There will be a lunch with our visiting church members Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> at noon with the Executive Committee of Pru Comm.

**9:03 Meeting Adjourned.**