

First Unitarian Prudential Committee

February 14, 2024 6:30 – 8:45 pm

Attending:

Hillary Salmons, President
Karen Silva, President-Elect (Zoom)
Joan Richards, Past President
Kate Niles, Clerk
John Dooley, Treasurer
Chris Campanile, Deputy Treasurer (Zoom)
Andy Wilby, Stewardship Liaison
Alison Green, Spiritual Development Liaison (absent)
Katy Killilea, Community Life Liaison (absent)
Lisa Voutes, Social Justice Liaison
Peter Laarman, Strategic Planning
Dana Borrelli-Murray, Personnel Liaison
Ex-Officio - Liz Lerner Maclay, Senior Minister

Guests:

Erica Baron, UUA Consultant
Amy Grant, Deacon Representative

Staff:

Nancy Forsstrom, Director of Operations

Welcome and Chalice Lighting – 6:39 p.m.

Review of January Minutes – Peter moved to adopt; Dana seconded. Unanimous approval.

Erica – Committee Roles. Our Policies or By-Laws currently have no specified role for staff in committee and task force formation or dissolution. Whatever policy we develop as we restructure Committees, Task Forces, and Teams, we should be clear as to staff responsibilities and control vis a vis these entities.

Based on Dan Hotchkiss's work, committees are divided between staff (ministry) and PruComm (governance) oversight. Erica recommends this structure. These are the recommended Committees for PruComm oversight at First U – Governance, Finance, Strategic Plan, Personnel, Nominating, Executive, Investment, and Stewardship (under which finance and investment fall).

Groups that are staff responsibility (ministry) are Spiritual Pathways Committee, Social Justice (many under this), Worship, Music, Arts, Community Life (many under this too), discreet events (silent auction, etc), Women's Alliance. Maybe call these Teams, not Committees, to help distinguish different functions?

Staff should be in charge of programs; Deacons belong here too but are elected by the congregation so there is some crossover. Buildings and Grounds is full of ambiguity here, also, however. (For example, the Stewardship Liaison holds both financial and buildings/grounds responsibilities.) How do Buildings and Grounds connect to the larger organization? We have staff that run it on a daily basis but PruComm must direct policy and financial decisions about the Building and Grounds. There needs to be a standing group because of constant maintenance issues etc.

Then there are Task Forces for big projects (organ, ADA compliance, kitchens, e.g.) that are shorter term. More coherency was brought up as a concern. Who do these Task Forces report to? What to do about the whole plan once the legwork has been done? Who orchestrates and gets to a plan? It was felt that in some way Task Forces would need to report both to staff (e.g., the current Organ Task Force has to do with buildings and grounds procedure/functioning (a staff concern), but will require financial outlay that is the purview of PruComm.) Following this, next month Erica will discuss what the job of the liaisons should be. Erica will also codify the structural shifts/reorganizations discussed here, for us to consider.

Strategic Planning – Feedback from Sundays' Presentation. Peter reported that two people did come up to him privately to offer volunteer interest. About 50 people came to the meeting after the church and were receptive. The concern that any building upgrade that occurred be Green (LEED Certified, etc.) was raised and strongly agreed upon. We need more volunteers, however. Nancy reported that we got a deal on Grant Station software that will help us find money for projects for the next year.

First U Facilities Use Survey – We all filled this out.

Financial Report & Budget update -- John reports we are doing fine. We are 58% through the year with 74% of income in. Expenses are running as they should be. Cash flow good too. Investments up. Nancy reported that we need contingency plans for the '24-'25 budget just to cover bases that may come up. Chris, John, and Nancy will convene the budget committee to work on this.

Matters for PruComm Approval:

- a. Roger's sabbatical request. Joan moves, Andy seconds. John gave Roger kudos but expressed concern that the first quarter of the new year is when we make

some headway with governance. Lay ministry is concerned about filling his shoes if he is gone three months. There is general agreement that he is entitled to his sabbatical. Unanimously approved.

- b. Update in Liz's Housing Allowance Formula. Ministers are taxed as self-employed and get their income divided into salary and housing. Housing is what they pay for rent or projected rent (if they own), cleaning, etc. This portion of income is not taxed and can offset the higher self-employment rate. Her house rental projection has gone up substantially since her allowance was last calculated. She is asking PruComm to change the allocation of the ratio between salary and housing based on this. Nancy says this is approximately 1800\$ a pay period currently. We would be increasing it to 2200\$ a pay period. The IRS says the PruComm has to acknowledge this. Joan moves, John seconds. Motion carries unanimously and we so acknowledge.
- c. Food Pantry and Loaves and Fishes – Can they apply for a permanent community collection slot or get added to our budget annually? Nancy put both in the budget at 2500\$ a piece right now while we have the discussion about how each group fits into the Strategic Plan. But she is asking if we can take them out of the budget because we need ways to balance it. Peter moves, John seconds, that we grant each group a Community Collection for the next year. This will be revisited over the course of the year. Liz does not like that they come out of Community Collections as it feels like less of a commitment from us. She would like to see them included in the budget in following years. It is our intent to work toward contributing funding to those programs. The motion is amended that for the forthcoming year budget they not be included as budget lines but it is our firm intent to fund these programs appropriately going forward. Peter moved, Hillary seconded. Unanimously approved.

2.) Updates – Report from Staff and Committees

- a. Minister & Staff – Liz wants to highlight her leadership training and community development via Ted Lasso! This series starts next Tuesday from 7:30 to 9 pm for 10 Tuesday nights.
- b. Committee Liaisons –
 - i. Andy mentioned the Lay Ministry is hosting Care Talks. First was on Autism, next is on Dementia. Third will be on Substance Dependence. First one had 40-50 people in attendance.
 - ii. Lisa had a question about community collections and aligning them with Strategic Plan. The same people apply every year and are all over the place. Nancy says to change the application form and specify Strategic

Plan requirements. PruComm agreed that a more formal process needs to be implemented.

c. Finance & Development –

- i. Chris reported that AV upgrade been successful in that speakers are working better but a couple of hearing-impaired people are having significant trouble with hearing devices. John, Chris, and Michael Cappelli are going to get together to discuss options. Project is under budget so we should be able to afford better equipment. Chris says there need to be contingencies on the upcoming projects as we also discussed for the budget in general. He wonders if the capital projects can happen in staged ways, rather than shooting for the moon right away, though the organ will not work in staged ways. We need dollar signs for Kitchen and Auditorium, as we do for Organ right now.
- ii. Karen was asked to set up a meeting with the two capital campaign consultants. We do have a potential date and time for Mark Ewert. And for the other consultant Karen is waiting on Team availability for a meeting next week. Hillary says Chris’s concerns will be good to bring up in the interviews with the consultants. She feels it may be ok to have a “rough schematic” versus specific dollar signs. Liz cautioned against balkanizing the capital campaign in order to ensure that it goes into a unified program rather than having people picking their pet projects.
- iii. Joan and the organ – Joan says we can check about working in stages, though in general she agrees that such a project is not very amenable to this approach. The organ group is organizing field trips to check out other organs. Matching funds/outside granting agencies may be able to help with the organ capital campaign. But Dana mentioned there are a very small pool of funders of capital campaigns in RI.

d. Commitment Drive – letters are going out; they did a great Leadership and Big Donor Reception.

3.) Other Issues – Jay Glasson would like to step down from the Investment Committee chair position. Who would we recommend?

Adjourn at 8:31.

Attachments:

January Minutes

Strategic Plan Updated Timeline

Buildings & Grounds Questions & Kitchen Report

Financial Report

Roger's Sabbatical Request

Minister's Report