

Providence First Unitarian Church
Prudential Committee Meeting
Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 6:30 - 8:30

Hillary Salmons – President (absent)
Karen Silva – President Elect
Joan Richards – Past President
Kate Niles – Clerk
John Dooley – Treasurer
Chris Campanile – Assistant Treasurer (Zoom)
Dana Borrelli-Murray – HR/personnel Liaison (absent)
Alison Green – Spiritual Pathways Liaison
Andrew Wilby – Stewardship Liaison
Peter Laarman – Strategic Planning Coordinator (late)
Katy Killilea – Community Life Liaison (absent)
Lisa Voutes – Social Justice Liaison
Liz Lerner Maclay, Senior Minister – Ex-Officio

Staff:

Nancy Forsstrom – Director of Operations
Mandy Neff – Interim Director of Religious Education

Guests:

Erica Baron – UUA Consultant
Amy Grant - congregant

Welcome & Chalice Lighting:

Karen Silva

March Minutes – Alison moved to approve, Joan seconded. Unanimously approved.

Erica's presentation - Nominating Committee discussion.

Erica has a “platonic ideal” of a Nominating Committee process:

1. A good understanding of the position and its requirements. She suggests talking to people already on PruComm and the Nominating Committee to get a feel for what is needed as new positions are to be filled. Getting a balance of gender, age, etc., as well as people with various skill sets for various jobs will be important. Similar conversations should happen between staff and the Nominating Committee.

2. Erica also recommended that the Nominating Committee talk to the Senior Minister about anyone they are interested in nominating. This can be controversial as it can appear that the minister can hand-pick people. But the senior minister does not make the final decision, and Erica thinks this is an important perspective for the Nominating Committee to have. This is because the Senior Minister often has inside information (re health, moving away, e.g.) that others do not. Also there are certain positions in church leadership where it behooves the congregation for those positions to be filled by people who work well with the Senior Minister; e.g. Presidents of PruComm.

3. She urges the Nominating Committee to resist the temptation to downplay the commitment to the job they are trying to nominate people for. However, it is a good idea to ask if there are relatively small changes we can make that would make them accept the position? E.g. Child care, times of meetings, etc.

Questions and discussion? Alison noted that no one on PruComm is on the Nominating Committee, so how do we communicate across lines here? Erica suggested again that the Nominating Committee people talk to the person currently in the role someone is being recruited for. Following that, how do we disperse these conversations institutionally? The Past President is the liaison to the Nominating Committee, so that can be utilized. But deeper input would be good for the Nominating Committee to hear about from the PruComm. Liz asked if there were any reservations from us about Erica's suggestions. Alison suggested that outgoing PruComm members have intentional conversations with potential successors about what to expect and what is expected. Too often we try to recruit people into big roles without building up smaller involvement first. Erica said succession planning a good idea. The current Assistant Treasurer position, e.g., was discussed in light of this. Chris Campanile is NOT considered John's "successor" however, but takes on a liaison role with various groups involving finances. This role is evolving. Liz has pointed out that we are not doing a lot of leadership development. How do we cultivate the right people?

Karen said we should make a note for next year to bring up heightened coordination between the Nominating Committee and PruComm. Right now, just Alison is leaving and she can talk to her successor. The Committee is chosen by itself. Three rotate off every year and three rotate on. Mandy brought up a larger issue of Staff-appointed Committees and whether they should have some kind of charter of structured coordination with PruComm.

Next month Erica will talk about goal setting and accountability.

Committee & Staff Reports –

Liz: Needs us to read her reports every month. PruComm is to base their evaluation based on her reports. PruComm also self-evaluates. These are tasks for May. By the end of the church year we should have a good dialogue between all parties. Liz reports so many positive things are happening – record attendance at Easter, 1000 dollars in offerings (!), rise in attendance, energy, new people, young families, new membership demands, a sense of identity and focus coming from the Strategic Plan.

Mandy: We have two candidates for the RE position. She is hoping that by the first of May the candidate will be chosen. Mandy has asked for input from us for her final report from her two-year tenure. Karen said it would be good for her to point out what she has observed, and activities done. Liz said she will want to do an exit interview with Mandy. PruComm should read this and discuss.

Nancy: She reports that the part-time Communications Assistant has been great and taken a good load off of Nancy. She is very professional. The Communications Policy in the Handbook does not mesh with new structure. But she and Kelly (CA) are updating it, and a big manual update is on their plate for the summer.

In the meantime Nancy has had five people telling her how to do her job. Liz, Kelly, and Nancy have talked about this. They are copying each other to avoid end runs. People either think this is still a small church, and/or that their own event or business is more important. It reflects a total lack of understanding about what is going on with church communication and structure. PruComm can defend Staff if people approach members about issues such as this.

Commitment Drive & Capital Campaign Updates – Nancy: 246 pledges. We are waiting on about 100 people. In the past week we got about 60K in pledges. 62 pledges are the same; 31 have decreased; 141 have increased (by 20.4%). 12 are pledging for the first time. The average pledge has gone from 1400 to 1900 dollars per household. We are doing well and hope we can make our 15% increase goals.

Strategic Plan Update – Peter Laarman. Good news. Hillary, Lisa Voutes, and Peter met around Social Justice organizations. There will regular check-ins on Sundays; and engaging people on particular projects versus saddling people with committee commitments. They will reconvene at the end of the Church year and posit how to move forward. Re antiracism – the big push for this has to be anchored in the church history. So most of the activity next year will be around this history, through pulpit, small group study, invited speakers, and then a culminating event in May 2025.

Peter is also planning to leave the Strategic Planning area and will be replaced by Dana.

Financial Report -- John Dooley: Doing well. 84% of non-endowment income in, with 73% of expenses utilized. New pledge units – at 10K! (We budgeted 4K and might go to 13.5K.)

Summer renovations plans/costs – deferred maintenance. Nancy and John are still gathering numbers on carpet, dehumidifiers etc. We have some money for those and do not need to include these things in the Capital Campaign. John wants to talk to Jay and Andy once he gets numbers from Nancy.

Suggestions for HR Position – this position has changed as the church has evolved into a big church. Volunteers used to do much of this work – drafting job descriptions, lead search processes, etc. We have started professionalizing these things now. Job descriptions have more consistency. Staff has taken this on and the HR Committee has died off. If sticky issues arise, we can bring an HR consultant, not volunteers. So do we need an HR position on PruComm anymore? This will mean a By-law revision and a timely announcement for Annual June Meeting. Do we want to reduce the PruComm by one? Or have a floating at-large position? The congregation has to vote on the By-laws, but then we have to explain a new structure and change the Policy Handbook (via

PruComm). We are agreeing to put this suggestion to change By-laws in front of the church at this time.

Financial Investment Committee – Jay Glasson needs replacing on Finance Committee. John has suggested Roberta Groch and Colin Murray. Liz puts a vote in for Colin as is new and not burned out as she feels Roberta is burned out within the finance system. But Andy says Colin has already jumped into a lot and Nancy feels neither one have time. Hillary talked to Jenn today but we don't know results of this today as to her suggestions.

PruComm Retreat Schedule – This is proposed for Saturday, June 8, to give PruComm to prepare for the new church year well ahead of September. John has offered his South County house with his famous burgers (yes!).

Other business – accolades and awards for lay leadership. Roger and Liz discussed Richard and Joyce Boober and Liz would like to nominate them as a Pillars of the Church.

Motion to go into executive session. Peter moved, Alison seconded. All approved.

Important Dates!

May 8	PruComm Meeting
May 22	PruComm Budget Meeting
June 2	Annual Meeting
June 8	Leadership retreat
June 9	Flower communion