

First Unitarian Church of Providence
Prudential Committee Meeting Notes
September 11, 2019

ATTENDING:

Prudential Committee

Cheryl Bartholomew, President
John Simmonds, Past-President
Michael Cappelli, President-Elect
Roberta Groch, Treasurer
David Fancis, Assistant Treasurer
Claire Rosenbaum, Clerk
Caroline Mailloux, Strategic Planning *by speaker phone*
Tiffany Reed, Stewardship Liaison
Edie Warren, Personnel Liaison
Sam Cole, Community Life Liaison
Greg Kniseley, Social Justice Liaison
Dave Spremulli, Spiritual Development Liaison

Church Staff Attending

Elizabeth Lerner Maclay, Minister
Cathy Seggel, Director of Religious Education
Nancy Forsstrom, Church Administrator

Guests Attending - none

6:45 **Check-in**

Opening Words (Cheryl) – Walking Toward Morning
Call to Order - Chalice Lighting & Covenant Reading
Welcome New PruComm Members

7:00 **Consent Agenda:** Meeting Minutes 12 June, 2019

Dave S. moved to accept; Tiffany seconded. Approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

• **Surplus FY 2019 Update (Cheryl)**

After last year's budget prioritization process, we were able to fund 2-3 priorities within the budget. The congregation voted that any surplus would go toward funding the other priorities in order. There is currently a surplus of \$27,287 – \$12,412 used to fund all the remaining requests. We need to communicate this to whole congregation with gratitude via First U times and Cheryl and Liz's presentation at the September potluck supper.

Motion was made (Dave S / Roberta) to take the surplus from 2019 FY and put in 'rainy day line item' with any expenditures approved by PruComm. Motion passed unanimously.

- **Budget Prioritization Task Force (Roberta & David)**

Budget prioritization subcommittee was tasked to come up with a better way to prioritize requests from committees and ministries for funding. Last year's process may not have provided enough detail about each request. Process developed by the committee resembles grant request process. The task force hopes that it will provide more of a level playing field, each request providing similar amount and type of background information. The task force decided to use this process for annual budget, not just for any surplus. The process will require committees and others to get request information in by December 21. Rick Richards, head of commitment campaign, is on board with this process. Final documents would be fillable online. There was a suggestion to record last year's struggles that led to the development of this process (needing to make priorities without enough information in a easy format for review). Deadline is tight, we need to communicate out in various ways, including face-to-face – to whole congregation, not just committee chairs, helping people understand to think forward for a budgeting process. Cheryl will set up some meetings after church to explain process and ask for help to try process and suggest refinements. **Motion was made (John / Edie) to adopt findings of budget prioritization task force and develop a communication strategy. Passed unanimously.**

Sound System Update

Tiffany, Neil and Cheryl have begun to plan a fundraiser for the sound system (estimate of \$50,000) – Will be targeting 20-30 members for donations, then approach the congregation member who donated the funds for the assessment to see if they would want to contribute more. Section 4.15.9 of bylaws –“Active or Passive Appeals” – requires approval of executive committee for such targeted fundraising. Suggestion to talk with Rick Richards regarding impact on commitment drive. Possibility for applying for grants. Cathy reminded that we will need better sound for the auditorium as well.

- **Request by documentary filmmaker, Justin Reifert**

Assistant professor of cinema studies, Oakland University wants to make documentary highlighting immigrants looking for asylum support. He approached sanctuary committee and wants to follow their efforts. He met with them and Amor and other organizations working on providing support for asylum seekers. He knows that he needs permissions from all involved. Initial funding is coming from research funds from Oakland University. There is a concern that Amor and others involved are fully on board. We don't want First U to be center of an immigration / asylum story. People impacted should be the ones at the center of such a project. Cheryl will take questions, put on agenda for next meeting – and invite filmmaker or Sanctuary rep to next committee.

- **Landscaping in front of Meeting House Update**

The intention of the landscaping group is to seed with grass and put in some shrubs. Details are still in flux. More to come.

- **300th Anniversary Email**

There is a meeting scheduled this Sunday after church. Meghan Smith is chairing committee. All welcome to join.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS

- **Prototype Budget for Commitment Drive materials**

Rick wants to include prototype budget in commitment drive materials.

- **Commitment Drive Kickoff March 1, 2020**

Need to have after church schedule cleared for that day so everyone can attend Commitment Drive kickoff.

- **Facilitated Congregational Conversations - Imagine the Future (John)**

We have planned three congregational conversations – hired facilitator from UU region. John, Caroline and Wendy Oliver have been working with facilitator since June. Three dates are Saturday, October 12, 9-11AM; Thursday, October 24 6:30 – 8:30PM; and Sunday, October 27, 12-2PM. The purpose is to have a dialogue and hear different perspectives, using an outside facilitator. We will need 5-6 volunteers to help facilitate small groups during meetings. It will be helpful for PruComm members to get a sense of congregation perspectives. Outreach is planned via email, to RE families, and also those who do not use email. This will be foundational to mission / vision work we will be doing this year.

- **Pastoral Care Minister Position Update (Liz)**

Liz and Nancy created job description for position which they will review with personnel committee. We have four candidates to bring in for interviews. We have several options. We want to find the right person rather than hire someone we are not sure about.

- **Stewardship For Us Update**

“Stewardship for us” giving assessment weekend – Friday, Feb. 21 evening – 6-9; Saturday, Feb. 22; 9 – 3; Sunday, February 23 - after church. PruComm put on calendar

- **David Smith Music Weekend Fundraising Dinners Update**

Beth Armstrong and Marth Rice Sanders are arranging congregants to host dinner to raise remaining funds.

- **Member Donation**

A congregation member has made a donation of \$100,000 to First U. After fulfilling their pledge and capital campaign donation, \$65,000 is remaining. That amount will be placed in the preservation endowment fund per the member’s wishes. Notes and visits of appreciation have been made.

- **GA 2020 Update**

Local Task Force meeting – Saturday 9/14 – 2-4PM Biltmore Hotel.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:

Administrator – Nancy reports that wifi is now in all spaces in building!!! New phone system is installed. See updates for handbook. New PruComm members were all given handbooks.

We now have nine volunteer front desk staff. Orientation was held. They are filling two 3hour shifts each day, answering phone, greeting visitors, answering questions, etc.

DRE – Some staff changes. Looking for youth music leader. Workshop with Michael Cappelli on “Embracing Family Ministry” on Star Island. Memorial for Michael Van Leesten (civil rights leader) held in August – 700 people attended, mostly of color.

Minister – Several memorial services this summer. Attended Staff Supervision Training with Nancy. Fred is on sabbatical this fall. Cathy will be planning sabbatical – TBD. Liz looking forward to her sabbatical a few years out as well.

Treasurer – Everything is in line for this point in the year.

MINISTRIES, PERSONNEL, STRATEGIC PLANNING

- **Personnel (Edie)**

Committee met in August. They read through staff assessment. During Christmas vacation some staff still need to work. It was explained that due to ongoing programs some building staff will always need to be here. Summer vacation issue is still under analysis. Recommendation that all job descriptions / contracts are gathered into one location. From training, Nancy suggested standardized format for job descriptions. Centralized confidential site that is limited with administrative access only – for personnel committee.

- **Strategic Planning (Caroline)**

October will be big month with the “Imagine the Future” conversations (See above). Caroline requests that all PruComm members talk up these opportunities. She will be also be looking for strategic planning committee members. Pass any recommendations her way. The strategic planning committee Will be looking to gather and synthesis information from meetings in October.

- **Community Life (Sam)** – September 20 Potluck – PruCom is sponsoring, so we need volunteers to help.

- **Social Justice (Greg)** – Greg is working on a process for applying for the once a month collection plate. Wants to plan for an electronic application for that purpose.

- **Spiritual Development (David S.)** – no report tonight

- **Stewardship (Tiffany)** – Rick is on top of Commitment drive process

NEW BUSINESS

8:50 ACTION ITEM REVIEW

- 1. Develop communication strategy for budget prioritization process.**
- 2. Ask for Executive Committee approval for sound system fundraising effort.**
- 3. Invite Sanctuary rep and/or filmmaker to next month’s PruComm meeting.**

Next Meeting Date October 9
October Opening & Closing Words (Dave Spremulli)
Closing Words (Cheryl) -
Extinguish Chalice

9:00 ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn (John / Dave S.) approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Rosenbaum
Clerk