

First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco
Regular Board Meeting
April 28, 2009

Present

Jane Park, moderator
Matt Fuller, vice moderator
Thad Smith, treasurer
Ben Bear
Carol Johnson
Mike McGirr
Stephen Schwichow
Sonnie Willis
Bill Wise
Claire Weber, secretary
Greg Stewart, Senior Minister
Nancy Evans, Executive Director
Peter Olandt, Ministerial Intern

Absent

Tara Hernandez
Don Williams

Guests

Mary Castiglia

Call to order. The meeting was called to order by Jane Park at 7 o'clock.

Opening. Sonnie Willis opened the meeting by reading from the Dr. Seuss book: *Oh, The Places You'll Go*.

Members' Forum. Mary Castiglia informed the board about the current status of the partner church program. She passed around a book called "A Transylvania Pilgrimage," with photos and information from the Transylvania trip. The partner church committee, which has eleven members, provides help to the partner church for a variety of expenses, including the minister, facility rental, a youth group and a women's group. She reviewed the history of the partner church program, which was re-started in 1990. She wants the board to be aware of the work of the committee and especially to be supportive of the partner church program.

Agenda review. No changes.

Consent agenda. The board made several minor corrections to the minutes, relating to the date of the finance committee meeting and other minor corrections.

Reports.

Senior minister's report. Greg's printed report was distributed in the board packet. He noted that he will be on a reduced work load for medical reasons until May 1, when doctor's advice will permit him to be back to 100%. He is encouraged by how well things went in his absence and expressed his gratitude for Nancy's work, and that of the entire staff, while he was away.

Executive director's report. Nancy's printed report was distributed in the board packet. She discussed the increased graffiti problem and noted that research is being done on graffiti-resistant coatings for the walls that are repeatedly defaced. Paint colors are being coordinated to make painting over graffiti easier and less obtrusive.

Financial reports. A printed report was distributed in the board packet. Nancy pointed out that the Buddhist attendance on Sunday evening is often equal to our Sunday service attendance. Our income is just about what we expected, with 75% of income received with three-fourths of the year past. For expenses, we will be over budget for refuse collection and colored printing and a bit over for utilities. Generally, expenses are satisfactory. It is difficult this year to estimate the collectibles on pledges because of the economy. In the recent past, we collected 96% of pledges, but we don't know what will happen in the current recession. It is possible we will collect less than 96%, which would certainly be a problem. Mike asked whether the investment committee would have a report for the board as he would like to see the current amounts of the restricted funds related to recent bequest income. The investment committee last reported to the board in November. Thad noted that the next regular report from the investment committee is scheduled for August.

Old business/Updates.

1. California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC). Bill included a printed report in the board packet. He also distributed additional informative reports. There will be a public meeting on May 19, the date of our next board meeting, and it is important for members to attend. At that meeting, the CPMC Institutional Master Plan will be presented to the city Health Commission. Nancy said that George Mayer believes it is important for members to attend this meeting. Bill said the Plan specifies the proposed division of labor among the four existing campuses and the proposed hospital. The new facility will be the largest, over 300 feet high. The proposed start date is still mid-2010. Parking at the new hospital will be limited to on-call physicians and car pools, according to the proposal. Bill noted that any parking that is available to the general public will be priced to discourage all day parking. Additional parking will be available in Japantown, but CPMC is encouraging biking and use of public transportation. Bill noted that Sunday morning parking by hospital workers may be a serious problem for church attendees who will be unable to find parking. Nancy said that George Mayer thinks this is an important meeting for members to attend.

2. FY 09-10 Budget: Communications. Nancy reported that about 243 pledges have been received. The top half of our pledgers have almost all pledged already, only 18 are outstanding. Ninety-nine pledge units have increased their pledges over last year, forty-seven have reduced them and we are essentially seeing the same pledge patterns from last year. However, some who have reduced pledges have had to drop significantly due to the economy. Thus the net increase is not as large it was last year. The pledge target is 343 households and 243 have pledged so far. That is a much better pledge record than last year at the same time and follow-up has been good. Pledges are currently at \$425,000. Pledges coming in now are a bit smaller than earlier pledges, which is typical. The goal is \$600,000.

Thad said we need to get the outstanding pledges, but then we will still need to raise about \$70,000 more. That breaks down to \$205 per pledge unit, or less than one dollar a day. In the next few days, Ron Weber and Nancy will review groups within the congregation and decide how to approach various segments. The Culture of Generosity and Annual Budget Drive committee will meet next week to work out details, but we will focus on various groups in seeking increased pledges. For example, we will ask social security recipients who will be getting a one-time payment of \$250 in May to donate that amount to increase their pledges. We are definitely asking members of the congregation to increase their pledges, so we must also ask ourselves, the board, to increase our pledges.

Greg discussed the importance of our church in the larger community and the importance of increasing our pledges to continue this work. Greg, as minister, is being asked by others about how we motivated members to work on Prop 8 and other issues. He hears positive reports from various places about the way the work of this church is perceived in the world and he believes our vote for the budget affirms what we do here. This budget is a matter of faith and reason. We will go back and ask for more from large givers and from everyone else as well. Greg noted that we need the spiritual strength we get from this community, others need it as well and he asked the board to increase their pledges. He asked board members to raise their pledges by 20% over last year. Then we can tell the congregation that the board is doing what we are asking them to do. He explained the Beyond Sunday Coordinator position and the services it would provide.

Jane suggested that at the board retreat, we might want to consider how the members forum at board meetings is handled. It sometimes seems odd for a member to make a statement and then the board continues with its agenda. This will probably be an appropriate topic for the retreat.

3. Review: Intern Committee Resolution. The board reviewed the language of the resolution from the intern committee as well as the minutes on this matter from the January and February board meetings. Jane said the resolution asks the congregation to comply with UUA financial guidelines for interns. The resolution does not make a specific budget commitment for the intern program. The resolution expresses the intention of the board to be a teaching church and support the intern program, but does not require that the church have an intern every year.

Board initiatives.

1. Finance Committee/Treasurer/s report. Thad reported about his concern about selection of the next treasurer. He will be termed out at the end of next year, and strongly recommends that someone participate in a complete budget cycle before becoming treasurer. The finance committee is a working committee with good members but the committee needs some new people. He needs at least one more board member on the finance committee, particularly a member who is interested in being treasurer. If no one on the board wants to be treasurer, we need to recruit a treasurer candidate for board next year and get that person on the finance committee right away. He asked whether any board member is interested in being treasurer and whether we have suggestions for the nominating committee for a board member who can be the next treasurer.

Jane said that we will discuss various subjects at the board retreat in August, but the ongoing interest of the board in these topics suggest that financial generosity and leadership will be two main topics.

3. Culture of Generosity/Fundraising. Claire reviewed some projected approaches for meeting the canvass goal. Stephen pointed out that many people have commented to him about the power of the pulpit in financial matters. Greg's comments from the pulpit about the canvass are important and make a difference.

4. Leadership/policy governance:

- Jane, Stephen and Matt commented on the Council of Committee Chairs (CCC) meeting. About 30 people attended. There was a focus on supporting the lay leadership of committee chairs. Stephen was particularly pleased with participation by young adults. Ben noted that the nurturance exercise showed enthusiasm for engaging the membership with a Beyond Sunday coordinator. Mike thought the process was affirmative with good opportunities for cooperation. However, the communication about these opportunities was lacking, which shows the need for a staff person to assist. Jane noted that the CCC meetings can be restructured depending on what committees need. Perhaps there can be a meeting with only those committees in a particular cluster.

- Committee charges: Stephen is still researching committee charges and will have info for us at a later time.
- Update on Larry Peers Leadership Project. Saturday, May 9, is next event on this project. Matt reported that we have had pretty good participation so far and everyone who participated has been very positive about it. The resulting data has been sent to Larry for evaluation. We should encourage people to attend on May 9 as this project helps us tap into people's gifts and really make a difference.
- Social Justice structure update. Jane noted that about a year ago we had an all-day event about structuring Social Justice, including a UUA presenter. There was no consensus reached at that time. Stephen has reminded Social Justice people to participate in the Larry Peers project and we expect to follow up on the earlier event.
- Update on Up On Top MOU. No update.

New business.

1. Presentation from Partner Church Committee. Jane distributed a written action item prepared by Mary Castiglia concerning the partner church program. She pointed out that we will discuss it tonight but make no decision about the matter until our next meeting. Mary is requesting that the congregational meeting include consideration of the partner church resolution. Jane suggested that the time frame makes inclusion of this at the annual meeting in June problematic. Funding for the partner church program was discussed. The Sunday collection on Easter and three other Sundays is used to fund the program and the partner church committee also does some fund-raising.

Thad noted that support for such programs comes from members who are interested in the program, not from board support. The program continues by increasing member support for the program. Stephen noted that one of the reasons for recognizing committees is to ensure that a committee has sufficient membership to perform whatever that committee needs to do. Clearly, the committee meets all board requirements for a committee, but the committee may also be seeking board assurance that the program will continue. Jane has discussed this with Mary and thinks that the partner church group may be following the lead of the intern committee in seeking board support for the program, particularly as leadership is in transition. However, that may not be the role of the board, and the board does not guarantee the continuation of a program if there is not an active committee and support for the program among the membership.

The board agreed that Mary's leadership of the program has been exemplary and should be recognized by the board. Nancy asked Greg his opinion about partner church programs. He said we need to support Unitarian Universalism around the world but there are several ways to do it. If there is congregational and committee support, then the partner church project will continue.

Matt noted that we support committees, but we may not want to set a precedent for numerous board resolutions recommending congregational support of a variety of committees. The discussion reflected general board concern about making a significant financial commitment when we have many other financially needy projects that may be equally deserving. Mike agreed and noted that, although the trip to Transylvania was personally meaningful to him, it doesn't necessarily translate to the congregation. A similar limited effect occurs with other programs, such as Up On Top, Faithful Fools and many others. The board agreed that official board affirmation of programs probably is not the right route; we can thank the people who maintain these valuable programs but not necessarily affirm and commit to them.

The board agreed that we do not support putting this resolution on the board agenda. The board response to Mary is: we are grateful for her work and the work of the committee and we will continue to support them as a committee. Stephen and Jane will take the board response back to Mary.

2. Congregational Sponsorship for ministerial aspirant Otto O'Connor. Otto provided the board with a written summary of her involvement in UUSFF. Jane noted this is an early stage for the church to sponsor a ministerial student, as Otto starts at Starr King this fall. Greg noted that the UUA has requirements, the PCD has requirements, the school has requirements, and these requirements are frequently changed. Otto is trying to navigate this maze by meeting everyone's requirements. Motion by Stephen to officially sponsor Otto O'Connor as a ministerial aspirant. Matt seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of 9 to 0 with no opposing votes, no abstentions and the moderator not voting.

3. Annual Meeting preparations. Jane noted two things: First, outgoing members work with Nancy on the lunch for the annual meeting on June 7. Second, the board must nominate someone for the Anne Dillon award, although we can skip a year if we feel that is appropriate. The procedure is that we nominate at this meeting and select at the next meeting.

4. Open House on June 6. Nancy explained that the purpose of this open house is to "market" the church for rentals by providing an opportunity for people to tour the facility. The new budget anticipates increased rental income and this marketing will help achieve that goal. Board members should market this event to all interested person. The open house will allow potential renters to tour all meeting rooms, the sanctuary and the chapel from noon to 3 p.m. Reiko, Faithful Fools, membership, greeters and others will participate in showing off the building.

Upcoming Events and Board Commitments. Printed in the agenda

Appreciation.

To Eric Langford for cleaning graffiti off the Starr King statue, a difficult project.

Good and welfare.

Best wishes to Don Williams for speedy recovery from recent surgery.

Best wishes to Maddie Gerlach for a successful impending surgery and rapid return to health.

Closing. Sonnie read from Leo Buscaglia about spirituality and its importance in being a fully functioning person.

Adjournment.

Jane adjourned the meeting at 9:50.