

First Unitarian Universalist Society of San Francisco
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
July 20, 2010

Present:

Matt Fuller, Moderator
Stephen Schwichow
Lizzy Gruner
Howard Oringer
Millie Phillips
Judith Stoddard
Claire Weber, Vice Moderator

Excused Absence:

Jim Barnett, Treasurer
Laura Gilmore, Secretary

Guests:

Leslie Bader
Nancy Buffum
Karla Jones

Call to order. The meeting was called to order by Matt Fuller at 7 o'clock. He appointed Claire to take minutes because Laura is Transylvania-ing.

Opening. Matt's opening reading was the Board's Covenant of Right Relations.

Agenda review. Matt added the following items:

- Under "Reports" -- added item 3. Annual Report
- Under "New Business" -- added item 3. Approval of wedding officiant
- Under "New Business" -- added item 4. Executive session about recent personnel changes.

Matt pointed out that the agenda is organized a bit differently. He said that Laura had attended a very interesting session at GA that discussed ways to organize meetings and agendas for maximum efficiency and UU values. We will discuss this more when Laura is back, probably at the retreat.

Members' Forum. Leslie Bader spoke as a "committee of one" about the plaque given by the children in 2000 to thank Donald Johnson and the sextons. The plaque has never been put up and is now displayed on the shelf in the office. She asked the Board to put it up on a wall and the Board agreed.

Nancy Buffum spoke about her serious concerns about the Family Faith Education program. She said the program has a "vanishing director" and she and her family and others interested in the program are asking what is going on. They need some information about what religious education will have this fall in the areas of leadership action, guidance, and a program. Her basic question is: "What is going on?" She is concerned about the recent PCD

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newsletter ad for an interim RE director which made her wonder who has input into decision-making about the new director, what is the timeline, is anyone going to ask the retired religious ed director (who has experience working with Greg Stewart) whether she would be interested in the position, what kind of support is available for the people who are meeting this summer about the program (a process started by Betty Skwarek), whether the group has authority to make any decisions, is there any empowerment for parents and interested people and is there any support for planning before autumn?

Matt said this issue is especially challenging because of timing and logistics with people gone on summer vacation. There is a meeting this Sunday with interested parties and Matt will attend. Matt explained that Greg learned at GA about a new UUA interim DRE program, similar to the existing interim minister program. An interim DRE helps the congregation decide where it wants to go with its RE program. We are not committed to having an interim RE director, but we needed to advertise now to give us the option to decide about it. This fall's children's curriculum will be the *Tapestry of Faith* program, because we needed to pick a program that was basically a middle of the road program.

Nancy asked whether we need to wait for someone to be selected or can we go ahead and start planning now and, if we can, how can we do this? Sunday's meeting will discuss the ideas that people have been coming up with but Nancy wants to make sure there is empowerment for these ideas to be implemented, regardless of who is the director. Nancy pointed out that six or more people have been at these meetings, which shows a lot of interest. Nancy said this group is the Family Faith Planning Circle and it is open for anyone who wants to attend. Nancy said the Family Faith people very much want to have board and other members come so the group does not feel isolated. Judith said she would attend on Sunday. Lizzy asked if there is a report or any written commemoration of these meetings. Nancy will work on making that happen. She reminded us about the parent/family survey from the spring, which gives an idea of what people are interested in.

Karla Jones observed that she thinks there are vacuums for concerns and issues and people would like to know that there are board members they can come to. Vacuums create a feeling of insecurity and she would like to see more transparency. She does not feel there is genuine transparency.

Board sharing: Stephen says he is hearing general confusion from members about the front office staffing situation.

Consent agenda. The minutes of the Board regular meeting on June 15, 2010, and the July 4, 2010, special Board meeting on July 4, 2010, were approved with minor corrections shown on a hand-annotated "copy w/edits" of the minutes. Minutes were accepted with those changes.

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Governance Review & Learning

1. Retreat Agenda Item Suggestions.

During discussion, the Board confirmed or added the following topics for discussion at the August Board Retreat:

- Governance Changes,
- Personnel Liaison/Committee
- Beyond Sunday program
- Family Faith program
- Summary of board self-evaluation
- Budget 101
- Communication issues—how do we keep members informed?
- Board training for new members and how to improve it
- Selection of new board liaison assignments.

Stephen pointed out that absent members need to be given the opportunity to suggest topics for the retreat.

2. Review of Board Covenant.

The board discussed the board covenant and what it means for board members. It is a promise among us that we individually make to each other.

Reports.

1. Financials YTD (draft) prior fiscal year

Matt reviewed the financial reports and there was general discussion of the components of the balance sheet, budget vs. actual, income and expense report, pledge collection report and event and wedding income report. The Board agreed to add “Budget 101” as a topic at the Board Retreat.

2. Attendance Report. Lizzy will talk to ushers re: obtaining the attendance report. Leslie explained where the ushers’ information about Sunday attendance is recorded. Matt will have Sylvia collect that data and put it in the attendance binder by Leslie’s desk. It will be available to the Board for the next meeting,

3. Annual report. A printed copy of the 50-page long version of the Annual Report was distributed. A short version of the Report was distributed at the Annual Meeting.

Old business/Updates.

1. Board Self Evaluation. This topic was moved to the retreat. Judith is summarizing the evaluation by board members and she welcomes additional evaluation and suggestions. She would like to receive any additional comments within the next week—no later than July 27.

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2. Membership Committee Chair. Liz Strand is no longer serving as membership chair and this important committee needs a chair. Board members were asked to name a possible new chair. (We did not ask the nominating committee to suggest names.) Claire suggested John Steele as a possible chair.

Matt suggested that the membership committee might want to merge with greeters to become one committee with a similar focus. Judith reminded us about Jeremiah's observation of natural groupings within the church and she observed that greeters and membership form a natural cluster. (Greeter chair is David Hulbert.) She said that the church tour leaders might also be an appropriate group to join this cluster. Matt asked for volunteer to talk to membership and greeter committees about the merger of the two or to talk to John Steele. Lizzy will talk to the committee chairs about a possible merger.

3. Pie fundraising request. Matt distributed the email from Dolores Priem about the possibility of Uhuru selling pies throughout the month of November. Uhuru will make a Forum presentation in November and wishes to sell pies throughout the month of November.

The board first reviewed the current practice where Forum speakers sell their products, often books, on the same Sunday that they make the Forum presentation. Permitting a month of solicitation for an outside group would be a new policy. There was general discussion about whether to extend to outside groups the opportunity to solicit members for fund-raising for a longer period of time.

The board raised concerns about allowing an outside group to have one month to do sales for fund-raising when the Society itself is expecting a serious shortfall in pledges increasing the need for our own fund-raising. Also, the recession is causing serious financial problems for groups closely affiliated with the church such as Up On Top, and they may need to do additional fund-raising during the year. Lizzy noted that the recently-adopted fund-raising blackout period also crunches other church-related fund-raising into this period of time.

The Board expressed its support of the Forum and its programs and speakers. Howard noted that he appreciates that Forum speakers hold a wide range of beliefs and expose us to a variety of ideas. But he believes that we need to keep Forum sales and fund-raising on the single Sunday when the group doing the fund-raising makes the Forum presentation.

Motion by Howard that we support Uhuru's soliciting funds from the congregation as other Forum speakers do, by selling pies on the Sunday they make the Forum presentation. Seconded by Lizzy. The motion was passed with six votes in

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favor, none opposed and the moderator not voting. Millie noted that the pies are delicious.

Committee Updates & Reports.

1. Annual Budget Drive

Matt distributed a memo from Annual Budget Drive co-chair Ron Weber about the expected result of Annual Budget Drive, which will likely come in between \$70,000 and \$90,000 short. The board generally discussed the comparison to last year's Beyond Sunday drive, during which we made a concerted push for the Beyond Sunday position. Howard noted that people gave to the Beyond Sunday drive assuming it was a one-time donation and now they are falling back to their previous pledge level. The board discussed whether to look at the data about pledge info in executive session. Stephen noted that the retreat is in a couple of weeks and we can discuss this issue at that time when the treasurer and secretary can be present. Claire suggested that it would help to see the names of people who have not yet pledged to see whether any board members would volunteer to solicit pledges from their un-pledged friends. Howard asked that Ron or someone else from the Finance Committee should analyze the data for the retreat as the board is really not able to look at raw data. Matt will save the individual data for the retreat when the treasurer and secretary can both be present and will investigate the possibility of some analysis.

2. Solar Power Project. Matt said there will be a meeting on August 5 about how we may wish to pay for this, assuming we get the governmental rebates. The special board meeting on July 4 authorized signing the revocable contract so we can get in the queue for rebates. The Society for Community Work (SCW) has offered to loan the Society the funds for the project, but we have not yet decided how to pay for this.

3. California Pacific Medical Center (CPMC). Matt distributed two emails from George Mayer chair of CPMC committee. The environmental impact report will now be released later than expected. The release is followed by a comment period. The CPMC committee continues to meet and keep on top of events.

New business.

1. Privacy policy. This issue came up because of the annual report. Last year, the long version (50 pages) of the annual report was posted on line to save printing and paper. This year, we planned to again post the long version but then reconsidered because the report includes some personal information about members. Posting the report makes all that personal information available to anyone on the internet. Discussion centered around members not specifically approving posting information and concern about info such as the names of members of the Allyne Circle. Stephen pointed out that there are two issues involved: protection of personal information and public record. He asked whether the UUA has any guidelines about this. Matt said not that he was aware of.

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Lizzy suggested we post the short report on line and include a note that the long report is available by email or at the church office. Millie agreed but commented that the long report should only be available to members and pledging friends. The board agreed to post the short version and notify members about how to get the long version.

What are other churches doing about putting newsletters and info on the internet and still preserving privacy? Stephen will research this issue on the UUA leadership list to learn what other churches do. We agreed we don't want public access to info like the names of Allyne Circle members, but Millie pointed out that the Allyne Circle inspires other members to be generous. We agreed to let members know how to get the long version of the report by notes in the order of service and the newsletter.

2. Communication generally. This topic covers all kinds of communication. Some congregants say they don't feel well informed, while board members are concerned that members don't read the Flame or the Newsletter and that is why they are not informed. Millie says some people want more personal connection, not more written communication. They want to be personally addressed by board, staff and ministers about what is going on. This suggests we need more congregational meetings like town halls to report on various issues. The question is apparently not whether members are getting information but *how* they are getting the information. Judith noted that it is important for board members to wear nametags so we are obvious to members who then come and discuss issues with us. All members said they are often approached by members with issues to discuss.

Lizzy raised a concern about different groups using different forms of communication, such as Religious Education and the Young Adults having different kinds of online groups. We need to consolidate communication sources. Stephen suggested that the board member doing the Sunday welcome could come early and greet before the service and maybe stand in the line with the minister after the service. It also seems silly to write different announcements for Flame, order of service, newsletter, Sunday announcements, etc. This discussion will continue at the board retreat. Information about board liaisons will be widely disseminated after it is decided at the retreat.

3. Approval of wedding officiant. Betty Skwarek has requested authorization to perform her son's wedding. Motion by Stephen, seconded by Judith, to authorize Betty Skwarek to officiate at her son's wedding. Motion carried unanimously, moderator not voting.

4. Executive session concerning recent personnel changes. Stephen moved, Lizzy seconded, that the board go into executive session to discuss recent

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personnel changes. The motion passed 6 to 0 with six votes in favor, none opposed and the moderator not voting. The board went into executive session.

The board came out of executive session and briefly discussed having more face to face interaction with some church groups, like the Sunday brunch we did with the Young Adults. The board agreed these informal brunches are a very good idea. The next brunches will be with the religious education group and the intern committee. Millie will check with Amy Kelly to find a date to meet with the intern committee. Future brunch candidates are: membership and greeters, the nominating committee and ministerial relations.

Upcoming Events.

Tabled, but not forgotten.

1. Evaluation of Senior Minister
2. Bylaw amendment Regarding Term Length
3. Governance Revisions (retreat)
4. Bylaw change re: audit vs. financial review

Appreciation.

Carrie Steere-Salazar for work as board staff liaison.

Good and welfare.

Closing.

Judith read from the book "Teacher" by Sylvia Ashton-Warner.

Adjournment.

Matt adjourned the meeting at 10:05.