

Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes

All Souls Church, Unitarian

February 24, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Trustees, Officers, and Staff in Attendance:

Peg Barratt, President
Chuck Dulaney, First Vice President
Anne Bradley, Second Vice President
Ken Ambrose, Trustee
Erin Boeke Burke, Board Secretary
Kysseleine Jean-Mary Cherestal, Trustee
Whitney Cooper, Trustee
Cledwyn Jones, Moderator
Vickie Lindsey, Trustee
Kate Saylor, Trustee
Tracy Zorpette, Trustee
Katie Loughary, Executive Director
Susan Newman Moore, Senior Minister

Also in attendance: Jennifer Bolick, Matt Bowen, Paula Cole-Jones, Emily Koechlin, Dolores Miller

Not in attendance: Robert Hardies, Senior Minister; Leo Jones, Chief Program Officer; Laurie Lester, Membership Secretary; John Strongman, Treasurer

Call to Order – Peg Barratt

Chalice lighting and reading – Ken Ambrose

Minutes: (Erin Boeke Burke) Amendments to the February minutes were briefly discussed.

Motion: Chuck Dulaney moved that the February minutes be approved, as amended. Anne Bradley seconded. The motion passed.

Report from Safe Congregations: (Emily Koechlin)

Emily walked through the Safe Congregations (SC) report that was provided to the Board in writing, and highlighted a number of items.

Fire safety: The fire marshal has recommended several changes, and the committee is working on implementing them. Dolores Miller has scheduled several fire drills for the children in RE, and SC is planning a congregation-wide fire drill during a Sunday service in June. SC is actively working to develop an evacuation plan for the babies in the nursery, as the stairs are the only

path out of the building when the elevators are out of service and there are generally only two-three caregivers in the nursery.

Peg Barratt said that the potential of a major incident during a Sunday service is the Board's greatest concern, and asked about how SC is preparing the response and training the ushers to assist. Heather Kramer and Rose Eaton were both at the last SC meeting and working to prepare for the June fire drill. Vickie Lindsey noted that it can be very difficult to contact all the ushers, and recommended reaching out in short order. Rev. Moore requested that the fire drill not overlap with Rev. Parker's last Sunday, or Rev. Keithan's Fathers Day service. Emily agreed, and said the date of the fire drill will be extensively publicized, so it should not come as a surprise.

SC is developing a safety manual that covers, in addition to fire, non-fire building evacuations, severe weather, violent acts, and medical emergencies. Anne Bradley asked if there is a date to complete the manual; SC responded that while the plan is drafted, finalization is contingent on approval from the fire marshal. Katie Loughary has been actively engaging the fire marshal to try to get to resolution. For the manual, SC is also looking into internal theft and embezzlement concerns. Ken asked about how church financial and business practices relate to safe congregations. **Emily** explained that these pieces are focused on making sure that we catch any instance of theft or fraud. The church already has procedures to handle and track the collection money, and the committee will check them.

The committee has concern about building security via the Harvard St. entrance, as it is frequently unobserved when the front desk staff are busy in other parts of the building.

SC is considering appointing someone other than an usher be the designated safety officer during services, to serve as a trained observer and serve to coordinate the response to any problem that arises until Rose Eaton arrives. Rose would then be the incident manager.

Emily also confirmed the church conducts extensive background checks of anyone who works with children.

Peg encouraged the committee to keep working with the different church groups and to contact Emily directly with any additional questions.

Religious Education for Children and Youth (Dolores Miller)

Dolores started by explaining that the RE staff includes herself, Maxine Hillman, James Ploeser, and two nursery staff. Following the departure of both nursery staff over the last year, Dolores is working to replace them.

The RE program has 230 children registered in the database, but serves about 300 children. The unregistered children include children of guests and people who attend service for a while but just don't register. The multiple database transitions over the last year have also made maintenance more difficult, and Maxine is working to bring the current database up to date.

Theme based workshop rotation: Rev. Hardies expressed interest in transitioning to a theme-based workshop model when Dolores was first hired, and the RE program has been transitioning towards such a model in stages. They are now five months into a two-year trial period. The key difference between the old model and the new is greater involvement of the congregation and workshops that tie to congregation-wide monthly themes. The monthly themes are integrated with all of the different activities in RE. The middle school still have the year-long “pillars”, with the themes layered on top. There is some challenge in having needing workshop leaders for multiple services. Chuck Dulaney asked about whether students have uniformity of experience, given the changes in workshop leaders. Dolores acknowledged that as the workshop leaders offer very different amounts of time and there are frequently substitute workshop leaders, there is a lot of change. In contrast to the workshop leaders, who “get the fun stuff,” the class teachers are responsible for getting the kids settled, keeping order, and helping explain the “why.” Some teachers have also served as workshop leaders, due to the need for coverage.

RE is putting together a survey for parents, teachers, and children. Dolores asked the Board to reach out to others in the congregation to encourage them to consider what they could offer. Chuck asked RE to provide a few bullet points to summarize the feedback for the Board following the survey, as part of the staff report.

In terms of long-term planning, Dolores said that RE spent about a year developing a vision statement for the program, then picked four goals to support that vision, then made a list of actions to meet each of the four goals. She views the list of actions as a living document, and in need of revisiting following the actual actions taken during the last year.

In response to the Board’s question about the presence of children in the balcony during service, Dolores had several explanations. Some parents say the kids like to hear the music, so they keep them until they start to feel restless. However, at that point the downstairs classes are already underway and it is disruptive to introduce a new child. Others say their kids are surrounded by children in school all week and just want some time with their mom and dad. Dolores noted that it is a real challenge to broach the topic with parents while making sure they still feel welcome. The church stopped using the second floor “wobble room” due to security concerns, but you can listen to the sermon on headsets in the nursery.

Dolores also explained that RE has developed a way to identify children with special needs for the classroom teachers in a way that will not be overseen by other students.

Vickie Lindsey requested Dolores provide input on how the ushers can be of assistance, so that guidance can be included in ushers training. Such information is in the planning document and continues to be a work in progress. Dolores also recommended checking in with **Carolyn Feller-Smith**. Also, there are copies of the weekly RE update on the ushers table, and a quick review could help bring them up to speed.

Tracy Zorpette then asked Dolores for her opinions regarding the presence, amount, and enforcement of the requested registration fee (\$25/ child for the year). Dolores: every church makes its own decision about that. Dolores said this decision is really made on a church-by-church basis. She said that she winced when she first learned of the fee, but acknowledged that

money needs to come from somewhere. Dolores tells parents that the fee is requested, but it is also waived without question. That said, parents must volunteer their time if they have a child in the program, and that service is not waived.

Jubilee Anti-Racism Update: (Whitney Cooper and Paula Cole Jones)

Ita Hannond, who is also in Jubilee leadership, cannot make it on Wednesdays.

Whitney Cooper started by explaining that the committee is currently called the 8th Principle Task Force (8P). During their time on the nominating committee, Whitney and Ita were asked about how to increase diversity at All Souls, and decided to (1) expand Jubilee and (2) recommend that all committee leaders and Board members attend the training. Jubilee training returned to All Souls in January; 8P wants to hold at least four trainings a year. The group then chose their new name and has subsequently made a major push at the last Church Council meeting for participants to attend, as well as giving this presentation to the Board. Whitney noted that one of the barriers to Jubilee trainings is being able to hold it at All Souls. The January training was the first time the committee has been charged for space, and she expressed the feeling that the church is not enthusiastic to host the trainings.

Paula Cole-Jones then spoke, saying the Board need to hold the vision for dismantling the historical effects of racism in our communities. She also emphasized the importance of new Board members receiving Jubilee training – due to the requisite turnover, it would only take a few years to develop a Board where none of the members had undergone training, which would undo much of the work to build excellent leadership over the years.

Paula then explained the “Seven levels of readiness” of progress on Anti-racism anti-oppression multiculturalism (ARAOMC):

- 1) Status quo
- 2) Reinforcing
- 3) Adapting
- 4) Revisioning
- 5) Retooling
- 6) Restructuring
- 7) Transforming

The Board then did an exercise, assigning a different stage to each of the church groups with which they engage. Paula emphasized the we get the results that we measure, and challenged the Board to think about whether All Souls is focusing on racial diversity openly, or practicing color blindness.

Whitney emphasized that 8P is using a similar matrix to measure progress over the coming year. They are also encouraging each committee to have one or two goals consistent with ARAOMC.

8P then asked Board members to do a number of things:

- Take the matrix back to the committees they work with, and encourage them to think about where they are

- Propose a line item in the Budget to include Jubilee training for every member of the Board in the first year
- Recommend that the Nominating Committee and Church Council leadership seriously consider whether individuals have undergone or are willing to undergo Jubilee training
- For All Souls to again host Jubilee training, four times annually. Katie Loughary pointed out that this is logistically challenging for the church as All Souls is generally closed at times when the training occurs (weekends), which significantly increases the cost to host because they have to open the church to do so

The next training is May 20-22 at Washington Ethical Society and River Road UU.

The Board then discussed the committee's name. Kate Saylor expressed concern about the use of "8th principle", as anti-racism goals fit into the existing principles. Paula responded that each of the principles could imply this, but none of them historically have. She believes making this a formal principle, or explicitly in the interpretation of one of the principles, would make it part of our core ethos, and would make it transformative for the country. Peg expressed concern about the ambiguity, as there is no explanation of what 8P means in the name. There was agreement to continue the conversation in the future.

Whitney said 8P would follow up by submitting their asks to the Board in writing.

Lindsey asked if the Board could lead by example and commit as a group to take the training at some point. Cledwyn tied this to the broader objective to have a training curriculum for Board members so we're consistently in the practice of bettering ourselves, and including Jubilee training in the first year.

Paula pointed out that ASC is hosting a Black Lives Matter summit in May.

Peg Barratt concluded by noting that the Board has a responsibility to monitor the church's progress on goals, and to make sure the goals include concrete ARAOMC metrics.

Goals: (Matt Bowen and Cledwyn Jones)

Matt Bowen explained that the Goals Committee has already done extensive outreach to congregation, including focus group sessions and at Church Council meetings. His goals for the Board meeting was to obtain a sense of Board's priorities for where we as a church want to be in five years. He also explained the difference between goals ("something loftier" that set the agenda) and metrics (how we measure or benchmark our progress towards achieving goals).

Members of the Board were asked to write goals on pieces of paper, then rank by priority in groups of four. The groups shared their top goal:

- Kate Saylor and group: Create/ reinforce an interdependent community in which people feel supported
- Peg Barratt and group: Vibrant community that engages people in spiritual exploration... empower people, families – we went with needing the community and programming to get the money

- Chuck Dulaney and group: Four overlapping items speaking to increasing resources and securing future financial viability
- Whitney Cooper and group: Antiracism goal: emphasizing increasing human contact and getting to know each other (before asking for money)

The Goals Committee took all of the written goals, and requested any follow-up goals be sent to matt@mattbowen.net They also requested Board volunteers to serve on the Goals Committee, and Kate Saylor volunteered. Matt said the Goals Committee will synthesize what they gained that evening with what they have already heard from the congregation, and then the committee will make one last appeal to the congregation on the unified proposed goals and measures list. That list will come back to the Board for approval.

Executive Team Report:

Rev. Moore:

- Diversity summit was supposed to be April 23 but there is now a conflicting event the week before. It is being postponed until later this fall.
- Dr. Bartlett was here; Rev. Moore will follow up in the future with more Reeb project and associated plans. The Reeb Project has stayed connected with UU fellowship of Raleigh, and will host some of the people from Raleigh for a rally on the mall and acts of civil disobedience. There is also an upcoming training here for Reeb Project and Young Souls-Social Justice participants.
- Worship planning is done through September 25
- Jen Hayman's maternity leave starts soon, and she has provided names and contact info for musicians to surrogate for her while she is away
- On Leo Jones's work: Rev. Moore is adding social justice to her existing portfolio, Katie Loughary is adding programs: welcoming, RE, music
- ASC Executive Team priorities for 2016 were provided in the staff report.
- The Board was also provided with a new church staff org chart
- The Beckner committee grant process final meeting April 12
- April is Earth Day (April 17 sermon on water by Rev. Moore, April 24 sermon on trees by Rev. Parker), Green Souls involved in several programs

Katie Loughary:

- Music program update circulated in writing
- Solar Installation: We heard back from the nonprofit interested in installing solar panels. The delay was apparently caused because the organization was concerned our project was too small, but they found another project site to combine with us and so they're prepared to move forward. Katie reiterated that this is a not a for-profit organization and they do not need to sell the power for profit – they are offering to give us the power for free for the life of the system (est. 25 years). All Souls will only be responsible for paying a supplier fee to the group, and we will meet any additional electricity demand by buying energy from the grid. Peg Barratt requested more information about the financial backers of the nonprofit, including a donor list. **Someone suggested that some of the funds may be the result of SREC requirements for utilities.** Katie proposed continuing the conversation with the group and requested board approval; Ken Ambrose noted that the nonprofit documentation said something about a Board approval requirement.

Motion: Chuck Dulaney moved that Katie continue pursuing this option and keep the Board informed. Vickie Lindsey seconded. The motion carried.

- Steeple: We received an order-of-magnitude estimate on the steeple. Kearns, who has been guiding this process, brought in Monarch to provide an estimate. The church was not charged for the estimate; it is assumed Monarch is likely to bid on the construction contract. The Monarch estimate was \$1.3 - \$1.5 million. Kearns reviewed the estimate and added other ancillary costs, resulting in a revised estimate of \$1.8 million. Therefore, Katie estimates the actual estimate to be \$2 million. The netting has bought us five years of safety assuming decent maintenance before we need to undertake the steeple repairs. Katie said we may need a committee similar to the CAPT to look at the repair work.
- Third Century Challenge (TCC) loan: We are looking at the potential of refinancing but First Virginia Bank has said they can't offer a much better rate than what we currently pay on the loan. Bank of the West is offering a much lower rate, but there would be additional costs associated with refinancing. Bernard Moustafa of the Finance Committee is taking the lead in comparing the two options, and will come back with a recommendation to the Finance Committee and then to the Board. Another consideration is whether to simply refinance the amount we currently have outstanding (\$3.5 million) or whether we want to increase the loan amount to pay for the needed steeple work.
- Finance Committee report (on behalf of John Strongman, who could not be present): All Souls just made our scheduled payment to First Virginia Bank on the TCC loan; Katie had to borrow \$100,000 from the operating account to make the payment due to insufficient TCC payments received. Our next obligation is to pay down the loan balance to \$2.5 million by April 1, 2017. The financial results from the audit review, etc. are not available yet, but will be provided.

Investment Committee update: (Anne Bradley)

The committee has met three times (monthly) since being formed by the Board in January. They are creating two documents: one on investment philosophy and a second on policy. The philosophy document is mostly complete, and the committee hopes to have both documents ready to present to the Board at the April meeting. The committee is still looking for another member. Anne then circulated an update on the endowment, and encouraged the Board to send questions to Anne or Andrew Scott.

Finance Committee Update, continued: The Narrative Budget (Ken Ambrose)

Ken thanked the Finance committee for their contributions to the Narrative Budget. He requested Executive Team and Generosity Campaign input, since this is a whole-church document, and asked whether there are other key groups to involve in the process. Katie Loughary noted ongoing ambiguity about the purpose of the document; Ken noted that that is a key decision that needs to be made so the document can strike the right tone. Chuck Dulaney said that he understands that we never have a strong comprehensive document to explain how we spend our money for fundraising purposes, but he is also concerned about trying to turn the Narrative Budget into too many things. Ken said the Narrative Budget team hopes to continue engaging other key church groups throughout the summer.

Committee Appointments and Board Tasks: Peg Barratt will provide an update via email.

Consent agenda:

- 1) 2016 distributions from RE endowment fund
- 2) Appointment of Gerard Ford to the Committee on Right Relations

Motion: Ken Ambrose moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Kate Saylor seconded.

Discussion: Katie Loughary asked whether the church should be doing background checks on the Right Relations team, as we do for other individuals who handle sensitive information. Chuck Dulaney said that it was a good question, but would be best considered in a different context.

Vote: The Motion carried.

Notes: The Assistant Board Secretary will be asked to take minutes during the summer months since Board meeting will be on Thursday and Erin Boeke Burke is not available on Thursdays.

The Board then went into Executive Session.

Motion, following Executive Session. Chuck Dulaney moved to authorize Katie Loughary and Rev. Hardies to offer a sabbatical contract to Rev. Rebecca Parker for the term October 1 to March 31. **Second?**

Discussion: Khyssaline expressed surprise that the Board would consider this action, as hiring decisions are the responsibility of the Executive Team. Anne Bradley explained that the difference here is that the offer is in the form of a contract, as opposed to Rev. Parker being a direct hire. Tracy Zorpette asked whether this matter was so urgent that it could not wait. Katie Loughary said that she thought it was, as Rev. Hardies and Rev. Parker both need to be able to have this settled. Tracy expressed further concern about the Board needing more time to consider the overall church plan to pay for sabbaticals for its senior leadership before approving individual expenditures. **Others** responded that we have five years before any other sabbaticals, and noted that Katie only took half of her sabbatical to reduce the financial burden on the church. Erin Boeke Burke caution about conflating decision about this sabbatical with a larger conversation about how we prepare financially for sabbaticals.

Vote: The motion passed, with one opposed and one abstention.

The meeting adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Boeke Burke, Board Secretary