

**Winchester Unitarian Society
Standing Committee
Minutes: December 13, 2017**

Attending: Sioux Brokaw, Heather Janules, Steve Forcucci., Betsy Bowles, Sheila Puffer, Ryan Levering, Cynthia Randolph, Rebecca Keller, Kathy Richardson, Steve Butterfield, Susan McPhee, Alison Streit Baron, Marilyn Mullane, Gordy MacIntosh, Patty Shephard.

Absent: NOBODY!

1. Opening Words and chalice lighting – Heather

Familiar Christmas message from Fra Giovanni:

There is nothing I can give you which you have not. But there is much, very much, that, while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today. Take heaven! No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant.

Take peace! The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within our reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in darkness, could we but see. And to see, we have only to look. I beseech you to look!

Life is so generous a giver. But we, judging its gifts by their covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering, and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love by wisdom, with power. Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's hand that brings it to you.

2. Consent Agenda

- a. SC Minutes from November 8, 2017
- b. Executive Meeting Minutes from December 6, 2017
- c. Staff Reports
Rebecca K inquired about Rebecca KM's concerns. To be addressed in future.
- d. Committee Reports - from Nov/Dec 2017
- e. Betsy Bowles' revised Banner Policy: to be dated 12/13/17
Moved and seconded, committee voted unanimous approval.

3. Call for Special Meeting Jan. 7, 2018

4. Warrant Articles Proposed:

Article I – Minutes from 150th meeting, May 2017.

Article II – By Law revision: Marilyn presented a synopsis of the article. She worked with the Social Action and Outreach committee previous chair. SOAC had nine members historically. Trial with seven members for SOAC began with this church year, although the by-law change to support the pilot had

mistakenly not been put in place. After the two-year pilot period the group will review the results of the pilot and see if they would like to codify the changed number of committee members. Two years includes this year, so at the end of next year we would be the decision. This article is a formality that makes SOAC's by law status match what is happening on the ground this year.

Article III –Sanctuary Level 2 Support: Marilyn passed around Attachment 3 for the Special Meeting summarizing the background to the article. Level 1 is a big deal and would require modifying our physical plant, adding a shower, etc. Also, it is a 24 hour/day, 7 days/week commitment. Task force felt it was more appropriate at this time to be a supporting Level 2 congregation, in support of the Bedford UU Church, already working as a Level 1 Sanctuary. Steve F asked about legal liability. Marilyn noted that there is back up material from UUA that has been circulated. According to the UUA, there has not, in 40 years, been a legal action against a sanctuary congregation. Protection is the public knowledge that someone is in sanctuary. There is a legal team that would be working with anyone staying in sanctuary. Marilyn's feeling is that if there is liability it would be with the Bedford church. Marilyn clarified details about how this would work, operationally, plus a bit of history.

Article IV – Black Lives Matter: Gordy noted that Attachment 4 is "affirming..." rather than the BLM movement's statement. The task force thought it best to separate the banner debate from the statement of support. Kathy noted that re the resolution, there is a small typo, that we need an end quotation mark or delete the first quotation mark. (Patty to add an end quotation mark and forward.) All the background conversations are available with links on the website.

Betsy asked if we know how the UUA spent the \$1million it raised for BLM. Patty and Gordy believe this is a \$6 million commitment, not to BLM but to BLUU, Black Lives of UU. To be revisited at a future time.

Article V – BLM Banner wording and location: Gordy and Patty made clear that the wording of the banner or sign to be "BLACK LIVES MATTER." It was clarified that the article can be amended at the meeting, as can any article. It will be up to the moderator, who has requested a meeting with the BLM Banner Process Group prior to the special meeting.

5. Vote to hold a Special Meeting for Jan 7, 2018 Kathy moves and Steve B seconds holding the special meeting. Unanimously approved.
6. Moved and seconded that articles 1 and 2 be included in the warrant for the special meeting. Unanimous approval.
7. Article 3 as written, seeking Standing Committee's support for passage of warrant article supporting Sanctuary Level 2 designation. Moved and seconded that standing committee support Level 2 status for WUS. Unanimous approval voted.
8. Article 4, Black Lives Matter statement of the congregation's commitment to racial justice as written in attachment 4. Moved and seconded, voted unanimous approval.
9. Article 5, Black Lives Matter. Steve B moves and Kathy seconds approval of the warrant article's inclusion in the special meeting. Steve B moves that "Standing Committee support" wording be removed from this article. There was a wide ranging and interesting discussion. Kathy called the question, James seconded Kathy's motion. SC voted unanimous approval to vote the question. Next the

committee voted on whether to delete the words “the standing committee and” from the warrant article text. Vote passed, a simple majority being required and 9 having voted approval and 2 having voted against, the motion carried. Next Standing Committee voted to include Warrant Article 5 as amended. A simple majority being required and with 10 voting to approve and 1 voting against, the motion carried.

Next Steps: Susan and Alison to work together to get the warrant out to the congregation early next week.

10. Money Matters – Steve B reports that we are basically on track.
 1. SC members requested that the reports have more headings, percentages and dollar signs, essentially looking for ways to make the data easier to read and digest. Steve B. will try to use the budget format to report status in future.
 2. Steve B circulated a report recommending shift of monies from previous FY to this FY for escrow type of funds. The shift is necessary to close out the previous fiscal year. Moved and seconded that SC approve the movement of funds, as detailed below, from Fy16/17 to FY 17/18. Unanimous Approval.

The Standing Committee votes to allocate \$17,433.78 in the General Fund as of 8/31/17 as follows:

Reserve Fund
Undesignated \$(162.62)
Stabilization \$(4,538.88)
Short Term Project
\$850.00
Building \$118.28
Sabbatical Escrow
\$12,500.00
Fund Raising
Escrow\$8,667.00

Total \$17,433.78

3. James said to note this as an “as of” transaction. Ordinarily done within 31 days.

Next Steps: Steve B to tweak format for treasurer’s report to SC with an eye toward making it easier for SC to read and understand.

11. James notes that Kate’s continued access to the WUS accounts should stop, as treasurer is a voted position and she is no longer in the position, therefore it is a liability situation. Alison noted that she cannot do her job without Kate’s help. Kate’s knowledge of the books and Church Windows is vital. Noted that Kate’s role and it is diminishing over time. Steve B asks if it can be limited to the time that Alison is in the office. Heather requested that SC give Kate a defined

consulting role, granting her access to our account for a time-limited period. Kathy asked executive committee to put together wording for this for the next meeting. Susan asked Alison to craft a role description that would support the interaction needed. Susan requested that James and Alison put together wording for Exec Comm to give Kate an official role, but that the role would wrap up by a date certain.

Next Steps: Alison to draft a role description for consideration at next Exec Comm meeting.

12. Building, Use and Rental Policy – Alison edited the existing document. Added suggesting that we require sexton for groups over 50. Otherwise, rates increased 10-15%. See Document C. Over all, Alison believes this is still very inexpensive. Kathy wanted to make sure that there is something about returning the room to the way renter found it. Agreed that the rentals already paid are grandfathered at their current rates. Betsy moved that we accept the policy. James asked that we confirm that the max person counts comply with all safety regs. Steve F said the building committee can check this. Rebecca asked that we add return space to the way you found it. Alison will add this. Steve B seconded. Unanimous approval.

Next Steps: Alison to update the policy regarding building condition. **Steve F** to work with the Building Committee to ensure that the maximum occupancies comply with safety regulations.

13. Sioux called out that the budget team, from the finance and stewardship committee, would appreciate SC representation at their budget meetings from Jan through May, as the budget is developed. Sioux said she'll pony up a dinner as motivation for the lucky volunteer!

Next Steps: All SC members please consider participating in the budget process, along with the Finance and Stewardship Committee's budget subcommittee.

14. Heather explained that last year we gave gift cards to staff for the holidays. The proposal is to give gift cards again this year. Details are in Doc B. Approve gift card purchases for staff, as end of year/holiday gifts. Unanimous approval was voted, there were no grinchers at the table.
15. Pledge Drive Update - Rebecca K reported that the group wants to have fun with the pledge drive this year. Kick off will be with a dinner on 2/9, buffet and karaoke. Cooking will be the night before, all are welcome to help prep on Thursday 2/8. Karen Erikson will be coaching the chefs. There will be a cash bar. There will also be some sort of kick off on Sunday at church, but not as big a kick off. James inquired about decorations. Rebecca also explained that the committee is looking for someone to join in this year and chair the pledge next year.
16. Debrief Nicaragua WUSYG trip - Heather and Sioux noted that the meeting asking and answering questions re the trip went smoothly and that Sam capably fielded questions. Susan noted that for several years the planning has been late in the game. Susan asked James, as YAC rep, to request that YAC apply deadlines to the four-year plan.

Next Steps: YAC to propose some sort of calendar or set of deadlines to the four-year plan, building in enough lead time for families and for fund raising.

17. Vote to approve minister's housing allowance for taxes- James moved that we approve Heather's requested \$40,000. Unanimous approval.
18. Other business
 - a. Transparency: SC update to Highlights – **Steve F** will write it up.
 - b. Standing Committee member to announce on Sunday Dec 17th upcoming Special Meeting – **Sioux B** hopes to do this, if she cannot, then **Steve F** has volunteered. Thank you Steve!
19. **Sheila** will write up her interaction with Music committee, regarding the chimes, for the next meeting.
20. Upcoming dates:
 - a. Special Meeting of Congregation – January 7, 2018
 - b. Committee considerations and concerns for EC & SC to Sioux by Jan 2, 2018. (Betsy Bowles away.)
 - c. Executive Meeting Jan 3, 2018, 1 PM.
 - d. Next SC meeting: January 10, 7-9 PM
 - e. Kick Off Pledge Drive: Feb 9, 2018
 - f. Jan 21, 2018 CoSM lead discussion with Congregation
21. Sioux said that her New Year's Resolution is to review SC Covenant at January meeting!
22. Gratitudes:
 - a. The Ellis Family for designating WUS Music Committee for donations in memory of Emmons Ellis. Thank you from **Sheila**.
 - b. Acknowledge James and Phil and Tyson adding lights and microphones to the sanctuary. **Sioux** will write these.
23. Sounds like Rebecca KM's surgery went well. Each member of SC please write a get-well card for Rebecca Kelly Morgan. – leave with Alison to have it delivered. (Surgery date -Dec 12)

Next Steps: All interested SC Members to write to Rebecca during her recovery.

24. Intern minister discussion tabled until next meeting.
25. Closing words – Heather

Last paragraph from Fra Giovanni's letter:

Life is so full of meaning and purpose, so full of beauty beneath its covering, that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage then to claim it; that is all! But courage you have, and the knowledge that we are pilgrims together, wending through unknown country home.

26. Adjourn