

Winchester Unitarian Society
Standing Committee Agenda
January 10, 2018

Voting Attending: James Pidacks, Steve Forcucci, Rebecca Keller, Kathy Richardson, Cynthia Randall, Steve Butterfield, Susan McPhee.

Non-Voting Attending: Heather Janules, Alison Streit Baron, Sam Wilson, Marilyn Mullane, Patty Shepard, Steve Milt, Jack McCreless.

Absent: Sioux Brokaw, Betsy Bowles, Ryan Levering, Sheila Puffer, Rebecca Kelly-Morgan.

1. **Opening Words** “Table Blessing” by Victoria Safford, Heather

2. ***Consent Agenda**

- i. Accept Executive Committee Minutes from January 3, 2018, which included the wording below re Kate Ebbott’s system access:

The Standing Committee authorizes Kate Ebbott to have continued access to WUS’ accounting database through the end of FY18 (August 31, 2018), as needed by the Administrator. This means Kate can view database remotely, at times agreed upon and arranged by Administrator. Kate is still bound by the terms of confidentiality that she was as Treasurer.

- ii. Approve Minutes from Special Meeting January 7, 2018
- iii. Accept Committee Reports
- iv. Accept Staff Reports

Kathy moved acceptance of the consent agenda, seconded and approved unanimously.

Reminder: SC Minutes from December 13, 2017 approved via E-vote)

3. **Sam Wilson WUSYG Report:** 20 youth and 5 adults are going on the Service Trip to Nicaragua. The folks not going are primarily not going because of sports and things like that. The group is working on immigration justice which engages youth that are going and those who are staying home. The congregation vote for the Sanctuary Status article on Sunday works really well with this effort. Sam has signed up to support the Bedford church with hopes of involving youth in support. WUSYG has an \$18,000 fund raising goal and they are working steadily towards it. Sam is working with Sue Kiewra on improving accounting systems.
 - a. James raised the possibility of the Chili Cook Off as part of the fund-raising effort.
 - b. Next year will be a trip within driving distance so the fund raising will be less than this year. Actual costs drive the fund-raising goal.
 - c. Other things on the horizon are continuing to try to break the barriers between WUSYG and the adult congregation. Chalice lighting program is a struggle to populate.
 - d. Statements by teens, regarding immigration and last year’s trip, at the December service was very powerful. That said, roughly 50% of WUSYG youth are affiliated with other congregations, temples, etc.

- e. Other efforts include running outreach programs with other youth groups and working on additional outreach for new members.
4. **Jack McCreless for John Kramer:** Immigration Sunday was a highlight for music with John's immigration Cantata. Will perform this piece again this spring, not sure when or where. Thanks for the new mics and improved recording.
- a. Hopes for the new year are that John has a fabulous sabbatical and comes back with some interesting ideas for our services. Choir continues to be a strong presence in the congregation.
 - b. Youth in the choir is an ongoing challenge. Rachel Milt has joined, which is a positive thing. Youth Choir and Hand Bell Choir are two efforts that get discussed from time to time.
 - c. Concert series takes most of the music committee effort. Bring a Friend to Brahms was successful. Number of sponsors is good and has paid for the series. So, fund raising for the balance of the season should be good.
 - d. Financial: Cerny-Thomases Fund has too much money and is tightly controlled and is limited to enrichment for children. Heather might have ideas to help with this. Jack has reached out to Rebecca re this. Also, there has been out-reach to Chair of RE committee.
 - e. Biggest challenge is the organ which is in urgent need of restoration. Very costly to restore to optimal condition. Minimum investment would be \$95,000, up to \$125,000. There is only one price thus far, the music committee will get another quote. Susan suggested that we look at trustees' funds. Also, we can look at grants for historic buildings.
5. **Alison Streit Baron, Office Administrator Update:**
- a. Nine months in, there are three buckets of work. Building, or leak, management. Building Committee and especially Chuck Khuen are super supportive. Contractors are also helpful in explaining how things work. Alison says she feels both out of control and also very well supported.
 - b. Finances is a second bucket, including personnel. Alison is working and learning with Kathy re personnel. The bigger piece is with finance. Kate E had trained Alison prior to her leaving. Alison finds the overlap of treasurer, personnel, stewardship and finance a bit fuzzy. She is still figuring out her roles within their moving parts. Alison said that coming from the non-profit world, working with a committee structure is a bit confounding. She said she is open to suggestions.
 - c. Communications is the third bucket. Newsletter, Mystic Messenger, etc. Membership Committee is working hard on outreach. Internal communications are really fun, supporting Jenny with Highlights and weekly order of service. Still learning about website and social media and how to get the word out. Internal systems are still an area for learning – she relies on Tyson and Ryan to navigate the systems. This area is the key to future growth for WUS. Work in progress.
 - d. A fourth area of focus is the data base that undergirds all this. Still coming to terms with Church Windows. Will work through the next six months and then make a decision to potentially scrap church windows. Likely we will then move to Quick Books. Make sure it is flexible enough for the needs of the church.

6. Recap of Sunday Special Meeting

- a. By-Law revision - Alison will update the by-laws. James pointed out that Betsy has indexed the by-laws.
- b. Kathy asked if we have become a corporation and do we need to refile with the AG to keep this status. Steve Milt said that this happens every May, so it can be voted at annual meeting and followed up after the annual meeting.
- c. **Sanctuary Level 2**
 - i. Marilyn Mullane says there is lots of news. She has informed the Bedford church of the WUS vote. They sent a covenant, which Marilyn is sharing. Explains responsibilities and who provides what. There is a spot for a signature on the last page – Sioux to sign on behalf of WUS.
 - ii. There is someone in sanctuary now. A woman with DACA kids and citizen kids. Husband deported last year. Need to staff up and get volunteers lined up. Task force hasn't even met yet, will meet on Thursday.
 - iii. 25 people have signed up for shifts. Marilyn and Alison will work on the CORI checks for everyone.
 - iv. There are seven houses of worship working in support. WUS has more volunteers than most.
 - v. Marilyn will build a data base of skills for our volunteers. Language, social worker, etc.
 - vi. There will be a training. More to follow.
 - vii. 24-hour coverage has a high burn out level. Works better to sign up by the shift in an online system. Then a volunteer coordinator would own a 24-hour period and make sure there is coverage for the whole day.
 - viii. Marilyn has asked for a copy of the legal docs for this sanctuary.
 - ix. Role for youth is to go to the ICE office in Burlington to hand out info. Marilyn will reach out to Jared Richardson with this information.
 - x. Committee will get to work on further out-reach and publicity.

Next Steps: Sioux to sign the covenant shared by Bedford, on behalf of WUS. **Marilyn and Alison** will work on the CORI checks for everyone using the church's current CORI. **Marilyn** will reach out to Jared re action for youth.

- d. **BLM Banner**
 - i. Patty Shepard circulated a draft update. First outreach within WUS. Then speak to community stake holders such as police and other civic groups. Get community feedback. Ask for WUS volunteers to help with this further work.
 - ii. Banner location - Convene with the building committee. Perceives that there should be a more permanent situation. Patty will take suggestions about where this should go and how it might work best.
 - iii. Heather suggested that location should bear in mind protecting the stained glass and preventing vandalism. Vent on the tower or above the Mystic Valley Parkway door were possible locations suggested as they are more difficult to vandalize.
 - iv. Next building Committee meeting is Monday night. Suggested considering a metal sign and to keep the sign on the Mystic Valley side for best visibility.

Next Steps: Steve F and Building Committee will work with the BLM Banner group.

7. Finances

- a. Treasurer's report from Steve Butterfield.
- b. Susan and Sioux are pulling together a top line document outlining the SC calendar year from a financial point of view - what needs to happen when. Useful for guiding SC agendas through the year.
- c. Budget: Steve Milt shared his budget process list. Cynthia is asking for a goal for the annual pledge effort. Last year was a \$380,000 goal. \$362,000 was the result which triggered a second round ask. Cynthia is asking for a specific pledge drive goal with the rationale. SFC meets next week and will give an estimated pledge goal number. Steve M invited the pledge team to attend the SFC meeting.
- d. Budget is a Standing Committee responsibility. SFC is advisory. Sioux and Kathy will be the liaisons to SFC for budget – thanks for taking this on.
- e. Steve Milt reported that SFC is making great progress on planned giving.

Next Steps: Budget Team to arrive at a pledge drive goal next week so pledge team can proceed on schedule.

8. Update from **Pledge Team**: Cynthia said there will be a February 9 kick off with dinner and karaoke. Pledge drive calendar will be the same as last year. The letter is almost done. The theme is “Celebrate community with a pledge from your heart.”
 - a. Looking for people to help with follow up. Also, looking for next year's co-chair, as Cynthia is done after this year.
 - b. Steve M asked to use the sum of their original pledge plus any close-the-gap amount when people are told their last year number. Rebecca confirmed that they would use the sum of their original pledge plus any close-the-gap amount as the base for this year's gift.
9. **GIVE + App**: Alison showed the Give + app on her phone and explained how it worked, noting that it is very easy to install. There are other additional services available. Heather mentioned that perhaps a similar app can log in pledges.

Kathy moved and it was seconded to announce this new app and trial it on 1/21.

Next Steps: Standing Committee to trial the app. **Alison and Heather** to tee up launch of app for January 21st service with Highlights announcement and announcement from the pulpit.

10. **Dine Around Fundraiser Review**– Cindy: dine around was a success. Harder to get hosts than in previous years. SC batted around a few ideas for future fundraisers: Art tours? Pancake breakfast? Mystery dinner at the church dinner?

Next Steps: Fundraisers please continue to brainstorm additional versions of fundraising that might be less labor intensive.

11. **Intern Letter**: discussion and vote –Heather re-presented the intern letter. Meeting with Chuck next week re physical plant changes necessary. Steve F and James both thought the letter looked fine. Asked if the changes would be temporary or permanent – Heather rec permanent for future accessibility. Kathy noted that this would be an improvement for many people.

Moved and seconded with unanimous approval voted.

12. Other business

- a. Transparency: SC update to Highlights (**Steve F.**)

13. Reminder Dates:

- a. Jan 21, 2018 CoSM lead discussion with Congregation
- b. Committee considerations and concerns for EC & SC to Betsy by Feb. 5
- c. Pledge Drive Kick off February 9 – Please be there!
- d. **IMPERATIVE: Liaisons (and WUS Staff)– Committees must have budget request to SC by end of February.**
- e. Next SC meeting: February 14, 7-9 PM - LOVE IT! Kathy and Susan M unavailable. James asked where we could move it? Steve F suggested Tuesday 2/13. Put it out as a proposal, see if the other members can make the 13th.

Next Steps: SC February meeting **move to Tuesday 2/13**. Does this work for people? **Sheila, Ryan, Sioux and Betsy** please weigh in if this does NOT work. Some SC members would prefer to be free on Valentine's Day. **SC all members** to reach out to their liaison committee chairs re budget requests due at end of February.

14. Gratitudes:

- a. Lily Kiewra for running winter solstice ceremony (**Sioux**)
- b. Sue Kiewra for mitten tree and refreshments for solstice (**Sioux**)
- c. Bernie Bloom, donation from Heather's former congregant (**Alison**)
- d. Marilyn Mullane, sanctuary effort. (**Sioux**)
- e. Patty Shepard, BLM effort. (**Sioux**)
- f. Joy VanBuskirk, donation. (**Alison**)
- g. Mark Shepherd, stage set up for the pageant. (**Alison**)
- h. Martin Newhouse – excellence as moderator of Special Meeting (**Sioux**)
- i. Mike Bussell – Shoveling post snowstorm on Friday 1/5 (**Alison**)
- j. Karen Erikson & Vicky Coccoluto - Memorial Team work. (**Sioux**)

1. Closing words – Heather

2. Adjourn

* A consent agenda may be presented by the president at the beginning of a meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the assembly.