

151st ANNUAL MEETING: Minutes
Winchester Unitarian Society
Sunday, May 20, 2018

1. Martin Newhouse, moderator, established that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 12:30.
2. Heather Janules introduced Marianne DiBlasi, who will serve WUS as intern minister during the coming church year. Heather also remembered three members who passed away: Emmons Ellis, Dick Spencer and Evelyn Trageser. She then shared opening words.
3. Martin Newhouse prefaced the meeting with remarks regarding civil debate, traditionally recognized and honored by this society. He noted that in all debate and discussion, the focus is to remain on the *merits* of a question rather than the *motives behind* a question. Procedurally, the meeting will follow Roberts Rules of Order.
4. Moved and seconded that the reading of the minutes of the January 7, 2018 Special Meeting be waved and minutes accepted. Voted unanimously.
5. Moved and seconded that the reports of the Minister, Heather Janules; the Church Administrator, Alison Streit Baron; Director of Lifespan Religious Education, Rebecca Kelley-Morgan; Director of Youth Ministries, Sam Wilson; Music Director, John Kramer; Trustees of Permanent Funds and the Standing Committee be accepted. Majority voted in the affirmative.
6. Moved and seconded to accept the Treasurers' Report for the Fiscal Year ending 31 August 2017, and the Treasurer's Estimated Report for the fiscal year ending 31 August 2018. Steve Butterfield presented his report, beginning on page 26 in the accompanying 2017-2018 Annual Report.
 - a. Responding to a question, Steve Milt explained the stabilization fund in the budget, formerly called the "Snow and Ice" stabilization, can and should vary depending on the severity of winter weather.
 - b. Unanimous approval was voted to accept the Treasurers' reports.
7. Moved and seconded to approve the Standing Committee's budget recommendation for the fiscal year ending 31 August 2019.
 - a. Judy Murray presented the budget and began by referring the meeting to the Draft Budget document, starting on page 31 in the 2017-2018 Annual Report.
 - b. Judy, using a power point presentation, outlined the highlights of this year's budget conversation.
 - i. More than 60 people have helped develop the budget, during an extensive budget process.
 - ii. Income and expenses sources were reviewed, including the multi-year reserves now included in the budget, that help the church support expenses like sabbaticals and audits that do not occur every year.
 - iii. Judy shared pie charts illustrating both income and expense. Having checked on a few similar churches, Judy reported that staff expense, at close to 75% of budget, is a normal proportion.
 - iv. Regarding this year's pledge, income is down \$27,000. Pledges represent roughly half of WUS's annual income.
 - v. Proposed budget is presented with a \$29,000 deficit, tracking the drop in pledges.

- vi. Trustees' disbursements from unrestricted funds are now at 5%, vs 5.1% during the previous year, achieving a goal set several years ago.
 - vii. Rental income has increased, as have fundraising event and concert income.
 - viii. Judy outlined that the treasurers are using reserve funds for fundraising and sabbaticals, allowing more even budgeting from year to year.
- c. Expense changes include staffing increases and moving Rebecca Kelly-Morgan to 49 weeks per year, from 47, honoring an intention from when she was first hired. Kirsten Hart running the children's chorale is budgeted, allowing John Kramer to explore a choir for youth who have aged out of the children's chorale.
 - d. UUA denominational dues have decreased as membership has decreased. UUA has moved away from per member rate. Now asking for a percentage of annual budget. For the coming year this represents an increase of \$2200 or 10% for WUS.
 - e. Social Action and Outreach is budgeted up \$14,400. Phil Coonley asked for clarification. Judy said that the share the plate and SAO budget are combined. Claire McNeil concurred asking for further explanation. Judy pointed out that FY18 actuals and projected include Share the Plate income even though there was no budgeted amount. For FY19, Share the Plate monies have been estimated and will be tracked as income. On the expense side, FY19 SOAC grants are budgeted as two components: Share the Plate grants and SOAC committee grants which total 5% of FY19 budgeted expenses.
 - f. Regarding committee budgets, Judy noted that often committee budgets go unspent. She encouraged congregants to spend the money budgeted for their committees. In the same vein, if a committee has a brilliant idea, please reach out to your Standing Committee representative and request additional funding. It will then be discussed at Standing Committee and potentially funded. John Loewy asked for clarification about using unspent committee budgets on shared resources, such as AV equipment. Chuck Khuen suggested that those unspent funds might be available for Buildings and Grounds needs.
 - g. Judy assured the meeting that planning a deficit will not be a practice every year. In the coming year we will do benchmarking relative to similar congregations and work on additional sources of revenue from outside of the congregation, such as the Winchester Town Day fundraiser which we are trying in the next couple of weeks. Fritzie Nace outlined the Town Day event and mentioned that the Arlington church runs a similar fund raiser each year and nets about \$5,000. She pointed out that this is also an opportunity to show people how lovely WUS is and perhaps encourage new membership.
 - h. Martin called the vote. Budget was approved unanimously.
8. The meeting enjoyed Lee Barton dramatically reading the motion: To authorize that there be raised and appropriated from the income and receipts of the Society, including the Sunday collections and funds obtained by general solicitation or otherwise, such amounts as may be necessary or appropriate to meet the expenses, debts, or other charges of the Society during the fiscal year ending 31 August 2019; and that the Treasurer be and is hereby authorized, subject to the approval of the Standing Committee, to borrow from time to time, for a period not to exceed one year, such amounts as may be necessary and appropriate to meet the expenses, debts, and other charges of the Society during the fiscal year for which provision has not otherwise been made. The motion was seconded. Unanimous approval was voted.
 9. Cynthia Randall moved and it was seconded that the Nominating and Leadership Development slate be accepted as submitted.
 - a. Fritzie Nace outlined a few changes to the slate regarding Social Action and Outreach Committee - Kathy McKool to be added and Terry Currier to continue on the committee. Susan McPhee to be taken off of the slate for the committee. Also, Nominating still needs membership. Fritzie moved to amend the slate as outlined. The motion to amend was seconded and unanimously approved.

- b. Martin called for a vote on the amended slate, which was unanimously approved.
10. Betsy Bowles moved to withdraw \$60,000 from the Meyer Fund to provide the bulk of funds to re-do our parking lot, front driveway and walkways to enhance safety, circulation and access. The motion was seconded.
- a. Chuck Khuen outlined the improvements proposed for the driveway, parking area and walkways. The centennial tree will be protected better, as it is now being harmed with cars driving over its roots. There are drainage problems in the parking area, likely caused by the roots of the large linden tree. This tree may have to be removed. The stairs at the Main Street entrance need attention. Numerous questions followed:
 - i. Peter McEntee asked for an explanation of the Meyer Fund implications. Chuck explained that the withdrawal from Meyer Fund will diminish the annual disbursement by \$3,000. The Meyer Fund is earmarked for capital improvements. Therefore, any future additional revenue would be held elsewhere, where its use is more flexible.
 - ii. Donna Reed asked how many estimates we will get for a project like this. Chuck said at least two and try for three estimates. These would be from known resources. He assured that Buildings and Grounds is good at getting projects done inexpensively.
 - iii. Fritzie Nace and Cynthia Randall asked if the walkway from Mystic Valley Parkway can be included in the project. Chuck said he would look into its inclusion in the project.
 - iv. Larry Banks asked where these numbers are relative to the budget. Kathy Richardson explained that this will be handled as a separate account, much like the Michelsen project. That account would appear in next year's balance sheet.
 - v. Gordy McIntosh asked why we don't do a capital campaign instead. Chuck explained that we have many capital needs and that this particular one has gotten to a point of urgency due to safety considerations. There are many other very valid projects, such as the lift replacement and organ repairs. However, the urgency of these projects has caused Buildings and Grounds to look for alternate sources to fund these projects in the near term.
 - vi. Martin called for a vote, and the motion to withdraw \$60,000 from the Meyer Fund for the purposes specified in the motion was unanimously approved.
11. Chuck Khuen then moved that we hear and act on the recommendation of the Reverend Heather Janules that Temple Janules and Dobby Baron be appointed Canine Chaplains with special responsibilities to lift morale and provide unconditional support and love to all those in the office on Thursdays. Motion was seconded and Heather outlined the rationale.
- a. Sam Berliner said he thinks the article is frivolous and has no place in a legal meeting.
 - b. Steve Butterfield spoke in favor, saying that he believes it is appropriate to vote this; it affects our office practices and those who visit and work in the office.
 - c. Zareen Aroz spoke in favor, noting how important dogs can be to comfort, love, health and well-being – that she might make a point of bringing her granddaughter to cuddle the dogs. She believes this is potentially a ground breaking and humane effort.
 - d. Rebecca Kelly-Morgan noted that hospitals, inpatient settings and more invite non-human support to their environments. She speaks as a staff member who has seen a teen in distress hug Dobby and child who is dog-phobic make friends with a dog. She encourages passage as a humane action by the congregation.
 - e. Peter McEntee wanted clarification that there would be no budget implications of the canine chaplains. Noted that there are none. The membership enjoyed this interaction.
 - f. Sam reiterated his belief that this is an inappropriate article. Martin Newhouse clarified that the article is in order as having been included by the Standing Committee as part of the Warrant, so recourse is to vote against it.

- g. Betsy Bowles spoke as her dog, Jackson Bowles' parent, noting that Rebecca's statement speaks to her feelings in support of the matter and that people who would prefer not to encounter dogs can be in the sanctuary, Symmes and Michelsen Rooms.
- h. Barbara Savage noted that by defining a time certain, Thursdays, it creates a safe space for those who prefer not to be in the company of dogs.
- i. John Loewy asked for clarification on why this is a Standing Committee Article. Martin Newhouse noted that we do not address the motives, just the merits of the warrant article.
- j. Sophia Sid asked should this be approved, can it please be mentioned on the website, so that others might know we have canine chaplains.
- k. Martin called the vote, which passed as a majority vote.

12. Moved, seconded and voted unanimously that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted
Susan G. McPhee
Captain Clerk