

**Winchester Unitarian Society Standing Committee
Minutes: August 15, 2018**

Voting Attending: Kathy Richardson (Chair), Phyllis Preston (Vice Chair), Sue Kiewra (Co-Treasurer), Judy Murray (Co-Treasurer), Jennifer Edwards (Clerk), Patty Cameron, Mike Hyde, Rebecca Keller, James Pidacks

Non-Member Staff: Alison Streit Baron

Ex-Officio: Reverend Heather Janules

1. **Opening words from the Rev. Elea Kemler** – Kathy
2. **Check-in**
3. **SC covenant** – we took turns reading the document, which was updated by last year's committee. No revisions were suggested but one question arose about SC's role in being accountable to the outside community. Any revisions can be sent to Kathy by email.
4. **Consent agenda** – motion to approve by James, seconded by Patty.
 - a. Standing Committee minutes of June 13
 - b. Executive Committee meeting Aug. 10 – concerned solely with preparation for this meeting
 - c. Treasurers' report through August 10
 - d. Staff reports
 - e. Committee reports
5. **Review of Committees and liaison responsibilities**

Kathy reviewed the list of committees. SC needs to vote on the membership of annual committees (Committee on Shared Ministry, Building & Grounds, Stewardship & Finance, and Personnel); liaisons should have a list of members by next meeting. Liaisons should contact committee chairs, and should review the committee charge to see if expectations of committee members differ from SC's expectations.

Kathy also reviewed the role of liaisons to committees. They are members of the committees per bylaws; most committees work via consensus rather than formal voting. Liaisons allow for 2-way communication between committees and SC; you should let SC know if a committee is struggling or needs guidance. Liaisons also should send reports from committees to Alison a week before SC.

A specific question was asked about the Employee Relations Committee. Because this committee deals with sensitive issues, and the charge says it is independent of SC, the liaison serves as a connection to SC but will not participate in meetings (Jennifer is the liaison this year). Kathy also recommended that everyone review the personnel policies and grievance policy steps available in the Members Only section of the website.

6. Filling open committee positions

- a. SC – to replace Betsy Bowles; Betsy was also liaison to Denominational Affairs and Social Action and Outreach. New member can be voted on by email.
- b. Music and Nominating & Leadership Development – Voting can be done by email but if anyone has any questions or concerns, these can be brought to the next SC meeting.
- c. Annual committees will need to submit names of members

7. WUSYG service trip policy

SC reviewed the latest draft of the policy, which incorporated elements that came up in the June meeting discussion, particularly fundraising issues. There was some confusion about unanswered questions at the end, which are meant for the trip planners to answer. Phyllis (this year's liaison) will work with the Youth Advisory Committee to reformat these in the draft to make it clearer. Heather announced that the YAC planning subcommittee will announce the local (no plane travel) trip this year in October, which will give extra time before the November deadline per policy, in anticipation of approval by SC of the policy by October.

There was some discussion about trips being "5-9 days", which raised concerns about missing school days and the varied school policies. Some language was suggested to ensure planning of trips doesn't impact school / unexcused absences, and to consider all school districts' policies that the kids attend.

There was a brief discussion about what drove the need to create the policy and well as the 4 year cycle that started a few years ago, including last year's trip issues with short time frame to consider participation, costs, international aspect, for-profit local partner, and cultural immersion vs service concerns.

Another issue was raised about what happens if the policy is not followed. Will it jeopardize the trip? Will SC not approve it, or recommend an alternative? Will it affect personal evaluation? It was suggested that YAC consider these issues. SC agreed that if the expectation is not met, there will be consequences.

Timeline: The policy resides with YAC, but ultimately SC will need to vote to approve it. Further input should be presented to SC by next meeting in September. YAC should consider it provisional so that they can start a planning subcommittee now.

8. Child care policy

This policy is about child care coverage for church-sponsored events (meetings, social events, etc.). Ryan Levering asked some questions in regards to money to pay for 2 adults, and about language about hours that needs rewording. Some suggestions in response included setting aside money for known standing meetings (e.g. annual meeting); other meetings or events may or may not need to provide child care. SC agreed it is good to have a general policy to offer child care, but develop a way to determine need on a case by case basis (e.g. ask for reservations).

Action item: Religious Education committee will look at the draft and give feedback before the next SC meeting.

9. RE plans for fall

A summary of plans for fall is available on the website at <https://www.winchesteruu.org/education/childrens-programming/>
A brochure will be available soon.

10. Staffing/operations analysis – Any recommendations of consultants?

At the June meeting, some members offered to search for possible consultants but they reported at this meeting that they were not able to find anyone suitable. Heather suggested Mark Ewart, the author of “The Generous Path”, who she had worked with at Cedar Lane UU. His focus is on the overall state of community; she found him to very personable.

Discussion centered on what it is we hope to get from this analysis. Are we staffed for our needs? Are there budget issues? Can we do this internally? What is the goal? Kathy did some research looking at local churches based on what was available on their websites. Her basic conclusion was there are no norms in that each church has their own unique circumstances and culture, and may not give due credit to volunteer work. But this does raise some ideas and thoughts about our own culture and circumstances, e.g. what does it say about what we fund, what are our values, etc. Will bringing in someone bring that out? A suggestion was made to set up a task force to look at the data, our values, interview other churches, what we want to staff for; a task force would be an opportunity to engage the community about our mission, vision, and values. Or does this fall under the purview of Personnel Committee or Committee on Shared Ministry? SC needs to decide what we want, not just cost savings. Timeline is also an issue – budget talks happen after the holidays; this analysis may generate some staffing ideas that involve the budget. Since some SC members were not in attendance, we will continue to think about it, and allow them time to get up to speed on the topic and offer ideas. This topic may be added to the retreat agenda.

11. Money matters

- a. Status of pledge collections – the amount of uncollected pledges is under \$20000 now. A reminder to send in pledges was in Highlights. Sue passed out names for SC members to call.
- b. Heather reported that a gift of \$100,000 was received from an anonymous donor, with no specific restrictions. The money is in a special account at Needham bank. No decision has been made on how to spend the money as yet; the donor is agreeable to organ repair or service trip scholarships. Stewardship and Finance hasn't met yet to discuss these and other needs.
- c. Leases – Alison reported that the Nursery school is renting another room (Sam's old office), going up \$3000 for a 1 year lease (a last-minute arrangement). Alison plans to increase their rent \$5000-\$10000 next year. No market value survey done recently so Alison has no guidance on how much to ask for.
- d. Pledge campaign leadership – Rebecca is having a hard time to find anyone to take the lead this year. She is trying to get a younger person and/or someone with market experience. Ryan has given her some names; Rebecca may also call nominating committee members for ideas, and asked SC to suggest names.
- e. Fundraiser leadership – Yard sale this FY is coming up as part of the 3 year cycle with fundraisers. This is a huge effort, and a major pending issue.

- f. Art show/fundraiser – Heather reported that she met with Christopher Andrews of Resources for Human Development, an organization that serves adults with disabilities. They have an art program called “Outside the Lines”. Heather asked about having an art show with these outsider artists, possibly in partnership with art from youth in WUSYG, as a minor fundraiser for the artists and WUSYG from sales of the artwork. She suggested holding the show in the Symmes room, tied in with monthly themes (December is “mystery”, March is “beauty”). Heather would take lead to organize, with some help, probably in December. Sue made a motion to proceed with the plan as Heather described; seconded by James. A question about focusing on art by disabled artists. A challenge in scheduling is that “Outside the Lines” is a day program. Heather suggested having an afternoon conversation with artists, then open house in the evening. All voted in favor.

12. Priorities for staff retreat on Sept. 6 – Heather asked SC for some suggestions for priorities for staff. Some suggestions included communication (e.g. YAC, trip); focus on growing congregation; reliable solid programming (particularly with Rebecca on sabbatical). Further ideas can be emailed to Heather.

13. SC retreat

Kathy reviewed agenda items for the retreat and reminded SC that the point of the retreat is to give people, especially those of us new to SC, background information. Some items included a Stewardship & Finance brief on money; a run-through of the bylaws and other governance issues; goals for the year; continued discussion of staffing/operations analysis. Other suggestions and discussion can be held over group email.

14. Update to Highlights – Jennifer, as clerk, will send in a brief summary of issues after each meeting to be included in Highlights.

15. Upcoming dates

- a. Sept. 12, Exec Committee meeting, 7pm
- b. Sept. 19, Standing Committee meeting – need volunteer for opening words
- c. Sept. 22, Standing Committee retreat; at the Willows,

16. Gratitudes

- a. Betsy (service on SC) - Rebecca
- b. Margaret Lowry (tending grounds) - Sue
- c. Eriksons and Ellen Koup (furniture for parlor) – James
- d. After Labor Day
 - i. June Edwards (organizing summer services) - Mike and Heather
 - ii. Mary McIntosh and Deb Walsh (leading Family Worship in summer) - Kathy

Respectfully submitted by
Jennifer Edwards, clerk