

Parish Committee Minutes

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington

July 25, 2018

Present: Steve McMullin (Chair), Marie Meter (Vice Chair), Lori Kenschaft (Clerk), Maggie Carey (Parish Committee Member), Tom Estabrook (Parish Committee Member), Sara Galantowicz (Parish Committee Member), Jeff Roberts (Parish Committee Member), David Dreyfus (Chair, Finance Committee)

(1) Consent agenda. *The members of the Parish Committee voted 7-0-0* to accept the consent agenda, which consists of the July 12 minutes.

(2) Appointment to Social Justice Committee. *The members of the Parish Committee voted 7-0-0* to appoint Alan Linov and Tish Miller as members of the Social Justice Committee.

(2) Financial Documents. We reviewed the end-of-year P&L from June 30. We had questions about several of the entries; Steve will share these questions with David Klingsberg. We concluded that we should consider this a draft P&L and not accept it for First Parish's records. Our only larger-scale conclusion is that First Parish did not have a large budget surplus last year – the current draft suggests a surplus of about \$11K, but that will likely change.

(3) Committee on Ministry members. Lori explained the three-step process by which Committee on Ministry (COM) members have been chosen since Marta arrived:

- (1) Both existing COM members and Marta propose people who they think would be good COM members. COM gives the Parish Committee this list of possible COM members (typically 6 or so people), a list of continuing COM members, and the number of new members that COM is looking for.
- (2) The Parish Committee discusses the potential COM members and rank-orders them, based on their skills, background within First Parish, and how well they complement continuing COM members.
- (3) The COM Chair invites the potential COM members in the order selected by the Parish Committee, stopping when the pre-determined number of seats have been filled. People are not told they are being considered for COM until this phase, so they don't know they have been not selected.

We agreed that this three-step process should be included in COM's charter or another written document. We are not sure whether COM has an active charter, and it appears that COM has forgotten how its members were previously selected. Steve will talk with the COM Chair about this selection process and how to improve institutional memory.

(4) Sanctuary Art. In June Steve received and forwarded to other Parish Committee members an email from the sanctuary art committee (Nancy Crasco, Anne Goodwin, and Louise Strayhorn) saying

that they planned to choose an artist to create a piece for the sanctuary's chancel area in August and have it installed in December. The Parish Committee is concerned that making a decision in August, with no opportunity for input from the congregation, on an artwork that will be so prominent and permanent would not go over well with the congregation.

Steve will tell the sanctuary art committee that the Parish Committee recommends creating a couple of after-service informational meetings in September, to share information and solicit input from the congregation.

(5) Worship Service Accessibility for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Maggie reported on her conversation with Mark Steinwinter, the UUA's Director of Information Technology Services. Her take-home message was that the UUA has a lot of neat technology but no sophisticated systems or practical advice for congregations who want to make their worship services more accessible to people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. The most actionable suggestion was a T-coil, which provides direct input to high-end (expensive) hearing aids but provides no assistance to people who are deaf. Jeff commented that his hearing aid isn't T-coil compatible and he doesn't know anyone who has a T-coil compatible hearing aid. Mark also recommended hiring a designer (who would cost \$6-10K) who would look over our space and talk with us, but may or may not be able to come up with any suggestions.

We mentioned the possibility of using a voice recognition system with dedicated tablets. Marie indicated that voice recognition errors are frequent, unpredictable, and sometimes appalling. She recommends against using voice recognition without a human checker in line. That would be cheaper than CART reporters or ASL interpreters, but still expensive.

We discussed having tablets that are pre-loaded with links to written texts that will be read during the service – the sermon, prayer, other readings, perhaps the hymns (for convenience, as they are in the hymnals). This approach would require some advance preparation and staff time, but it would be much cheaper than the alternatives we've considered. It would be imperfect – it would not include spontaneous sharings, last-minute changes to the sermon, and perhaps guest speakers. But it would be far better than nothing, which is what we currently offer people who are deaf. (One mother signs for her adult son, and two people regularly use the hearing-assistance earphones.)

Maggie will continue to look into options.

(6) Planned Giving. Steve shared information from his discussion with a UUA organizer of the Wake Now Our Vision campaign. He reported that the UUA is doing only rudimentary due diligence – their goal seems to be primarily a culture change, not making sure that every promised dollar eventually arrives. It's OK to have one's partner as a primary beneficiary and have the money go to the UUA only after they are gone, as long as both partners use the same language.

Lori mentioned that it took her 10 minutes to change the beneficiary on her retirement account, do all the paperwork, and send in the form.

We had two questions: What do the Trustees need from the Parish Committee? Should there be a video to support the planned giving campaign?

The second minister project needs to have the basic infrastructure for planned giving (primarily the ability to keep records) in place by In-Gathering. That doesn't mean that the full campaign (with video

etc.) needs to be launched by then, but we do need to be able to record who has pledged what and how they want their cash matches to be used.

(7) Cash Reserves. David Dreyfus spoke about cash reserves, in preparation for a future Parish Committee vote on how much to hold in cash reserves.

He noted that First Parish has four types of potential contingencies:

- Unexpected expenses
- Predictable expenses (currently managed using designated funds)
- Drops in pledge payments or other income (what worries David most)
- Unexpected timing of cash flows (difficult or impossible to distinguish from drops in income except in retrospect)

Options for managing contingencies include:

- Drawing on Trust Funds (but that depletes the Trust Funds)
- Asking donors for assistance
- Drawing on cash reserves (including designated funds if we're confident the shortfall is just a timing issue)
- Drawing on a credit line
- More timely financial reporting, allowing more nimble and timely decision-making

We noted that designated and undesignated funds are all held in one bank account. Steve is talking with Cambridge Savings Bank about how to earn some interest on First Parish's six-digit balance. Steve and David K. are working on setting up a credit line. It might also be helpful to think in advance about what we would cut if needed, and what would trigger those cuts.

(8) Second Minister Update. Lori, Tom, and Sara reported that they have begun to put together a project plan and talk with selected individuals. It looks like we will need to have a final yes/no by the end of October if we are to hire someone in September 2019. A "yes" needs the finances in place, plans for an office space, and support from the congregation, and probably other things. We will need to start general education of the congregation at In-Gathering or the week after it.

So far \$58K has been pledged to support a second minister. If this is to work, we will need to raise some amount of start-up money (perhaps \$120K) to use for start-up costs (such as office space and the search process) and then contribute a decreasing amount to the budget for the first four years (using the same model as we used for the Executive Assistant to the Minister position). We will not be able to work out the finances in detail until the June 30 financial documents have been finalized and the Parish Committee votes on how much of the existing general cash reserve we choose to set aside as a designated cash reserve.

Marta is talking with UUA folks, though she is on vacation. The working group has two meetings scheduled in the next three weeks, and will consult with Marta once she is back from vacation.

(9) Charter. Lori and Marie revised and updated the Parish Committee's draft charter (Appendix A). We encourage Parish Committee members to read it before our next meeting.

We also discussed committee charters more generally. The Parish Committee got Standing Committees (and perhaps other committees) to write charters 6-7 years ago, and reviewed those original charters and annual updates for a few years. It has been a few years now since any committee has shared its charter with the Parish Committee. We have the perception that some committees no longer remember that they ever had a charter.

Charters are useful for committees because they help members think through the committee's priorities, projects, and practices. They are an aid to institutional memory as well as future planning. We may want to revive committee charters.

Members were invited to toss out ideas related to charters between now and the September meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Draft minutes submitted by Lori Kenschaft, Clerk
Minutes approved by the Parish Committee, July 28, 2018

Appendix A

Draft Parish Committee Charter, 2018-19

July 19, 2018

General Purpose

The Parish Committee is the principal policy-forming and administrative body of First Parish, subject only to the prime authority of the congregation. The Parish Committee provides leadership and vision, creates policy, and has full authority and responsibility to act on the business and programs of First Parish, except as limited by our bylaws. The Parish Committee has general charge of the conduct of all First Parish business affairs and the control of First Parish administration, including the appointment of such committees as the members of the Parish Committee may deem necessary. The Parish Committee serves and answers to the congregation.

Alignment with First Parish's Mission

The Parish Committee covenants to uphold the mission of First Parish as the basis for all actions and decisions:

*We choose to be a liberal religious community, welcoming to all.
We encourage each other on our spiritual journeys,
Support one another through the changes in our lives,
And challenge the excesses and injustices of our time.
Called to love and upheld by joy, we live our faith.*

Leadership and Membership

The Parish Committee consists of the Clerk, the Treasurer, and seven other members at large, all of whom must be members of First Parish.

The members of the Parish Committee are elected at the Annual Meeting. A person who has served two consecutive three-year terms as a member of the Parish Committee must wait at least one year before being eligible to serve on the Parish Committee again. All officers' and members' terms begin immediately following the Annual Meeting at which they are elected. In case of early resignation or removal from office, Parish Committee may appoint a replacement to serve until the next Annual Meeting.

The Parish Committee elects its own leadership from among its at-large members, currently a Chair and Vice Chair, and determines their terms.

The Chair, Vice Chair, and the minister (as a non-voting *ex-officio* member) serve as an Executive Committee. The Parish Committee may choose other lay people to participate in the Executive Committee at any time.

The Executive Committee is empowered to triage requests and concerns from within the community, serve as a sounding board for various topics, make minor administrative decisions, and respond to emergencies. The Executive Committee reports monthly to the Parish Committee and brings matters of importance to the Parish Committee for timely action.

Meetings

The Parish Committee meets from 7 to 9 p.m., typically on the second Tuesday of each month. It also has two special meetings in the spring, one with the Committee on Ministry to evaluate the minister and ministry of the congregation and the other with the Finance Committee to approve a proposed budget for the upcoming program year. Except when the Parish Committee goes into executive session, its meetings are open to all First Parish members.

The Parish Committee also holds three retreats, in the fall, winter, and spring. These retreats are for orientation, relationship building, and discernment. Retreats are open only to Parish Committee members and invited guests. No binding votes are conducted at retreats.

The Executive Committee generally meets twice a month at times convenient to its members. It may invite other individuals to attend and participate in its meetings.

Both the Parish Committee and the Executive Committee may meet as needed to provide timely response to urgent matters or to devote extended time to an important topic.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Parish Committee include:

- Create and hold a long-term vision
- Create policy
- Promote the health of the community
- Hold legal responsibility for the actions of First Parish
- Prepare an annual budget, to be submitted to each Annual Meeting
- Send a biannual status report to the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board regarding variances for the walkway to the Massachusetts Avenue entrance and the kitchen
- Evaluate the minister and the overall ministry of the church annually
- Oversee and empower committees and their work
- Foster new initiatives and discern priorities among them
- Bear ultimate responsibility for the stewardship drive for the annual operating budget
- Bear ultimate responsibility for the condition of the physical property
- Hire and dismiss non-called program staff (currently Director of Religious Education, Music Director, and Office Manager)
- Speak for the congregation on matters of public concern

Calendar

June 12 (Tuesday)

Parish Committee Meeting

June 23 (Retreat)	Spring Retreat: Choose the Parish Committee's goals for the year
July 25 (Wednesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
July 31	Massachusetts Architectural Access Board status report due
September 9 (Sunday)	In-Gathering
September 11 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
September 15 (Saturday)	Fall Retreat
October 9 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
November 13 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
December 11 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
January 8 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
January 31	Massachusetts Architectural Access Board status report due – perhaps the final status report?
February 2 (Saturday)	Winter Retreat
February 12 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
TBD	Minister Evaluation forms completed by Parish Committee members
March 12 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
March 26 (Tuesday)	Joint meeting of Parish Committee and Committee on Ministry: minister and ministry evaluation
April 9 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
April 23 (Tuesday)	Joint meeting of Parish Committee and Finance Committee: budget meeting
May 14 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
May 19 (Sunday)	Annual Meeting: New officers and Parish Committee members elected
May 19 (Sunday)	Brief Parish Committee Meeting with new members
June 11 (Tuesday)	Parish Committee Meeting
June 29 (Saturday)	Spring Retreat

Budget Calendar

Early Fall	The Stewardship Committee thanks individuals and the congregation for their support of First Parish's work. Stewardship Committee and Parish Committee illuminate what the congregation's generosity makes possible. Finance Committee collects input from staff and committees about expected income (other than the pledge campaign) and expenses in the following fiscal year. Marta solicits requests from staff.
October	The Parish Committee Chair and Vice Chair meet with Finance Committee chair and (separately) with Stewardship Committee chairs to share information.

- November** The Finance Committee presents a first draft of the budget to the Parish Committee. The Parish Committee identifies preliminary budget priorities and suggests a pledge goal to the Stewardship Committee.
- January-March** The Stewardship Committee conducts the pledge drive. The Parish Committee Chair and Vice Chair are in regular communication with the Stewardship and Finance Committees.
- April** The Finance Committee prepares a draft budget based on the pledge drive results and identified priorities. The Parish Committee and Finance Committee chair have a shared budget meeting at which the Parish Committee approves a proposed budget. The proposed budget is published on the website, with notices in the E-Bulletin and Sunday bulletin.
- April-May** The Parish Committee and Finance Committee host at least one meeting, preferably two where members of the congregation can ask questions about the proposed budget.
- May** The congregation approves the budget for the following year at the Annual Meeting.

Priorities and Metrics of Success for 2018-2019

<u>Priorities</u>	<u>Metrics of Success</u>
Associate Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a funding strategy for the new position • Communicate with the congregation and solicit support • Clarify the role of the Associate Minister and work with others to develop a job description • Launch and support a search process • Hire or call an Associate Minister who will start work in September 2019
Planned Giving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Trustees in developing and implementing a plan for a planned giving campaign • Set and meet goals for participation and amount raised • Communicate with the congregation, so that most active members know about this opportunity whether or not they choose to participate in it
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a website consultant who will design and launch a new and improved First Parish website by September 2019 • Develop and implement an architecture that will allow stakeholders to manage their own content and will facilitate future upgrades

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a multi-year plan and strategy that feeds into the budgeting process for future years |
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Reporting

The Parish Committee reports to the congregation at Annual Meeting. All meeting dates and times are made available to the congregation. Minutes are published on the First Parish website at www.firstparish.info and in hard copy in a binder in the First Parish office. ParSnip articles, with monthly updates on Parish Committee decisions and discussions, are a regular feature in the *Spire*.

Relationship with Professional Staff

The minister serves in an advisory capacity to all committees, including the Parish Committee as a non-voting *ex officio* member. With the Committee on Ministry, the Parish Committee conducts an annual evaluation of the called minister. The Parish Committee also approves the hiring and termination of non-called lead program staff, who at this time are the Music Director, Religious Education Director, and Office Manager.

Annual Budget and Spending Authority

The First Parish bylaws state that the Parish Committee is the “principal policy-forming and administrative body of the church. . . . The Parish Committee shall have general charge of the property and funds of the Church, exclusive of the property and funds under the custody and control of the Trustees of Trust Funds. The Parish Committee shall also have general charge of the conduct of all its business affairs”.

The bylaws require the Parish Committee to submit an operating budget for the coming fiscal year at each Annual Meeting. Once a budget is approved, the Parish Committee may authorize and expend the funds as budgeted. It may reallocate funds between line items as long as the amount reallocated does not exceed ten percent of the total budgeted expenditures. It may borrow money for church expenses, if necessary, as long as the amount borrowed does not exceed ten percent of the current annual operating budget. Beyond these limits, any additional expenses or loans require the approval of the congregation during a congregational meeting.

The Parish Committee controls a discretionary budget that is allocated in the annual operating budget.

Bylaws Related to the Parish Committee

ARTICLE VII—Parish Committee

Section 1. The Parish Committee, subject to the prime authority of the congregation, is the principal policy-forming and administrative body of the church. The Parish Committee has full authority and responsibility, except as limited by these bylaws, to act on the business and programs of the church. The Parish Committee shall have general charge of the property and funds of the Church, exclusive of the property and funds under the custody and control of the Trustees of Trust Funds. The Parish Committee shall also have general charge of the conduct of all its business affairs, and the control of its administration, including the appointment of such committees as it may deem necessary.

Section 2. The Parish Committee shall consist of the Clerk, the Treasurer, and seven other members, all of whom shall be members of the Church.

Section 3.

a. The members of the Parish Committee, other than the Clerk and the Treasurer, shall each be elected for a term of three years. A person who has served two consecutive three-year terms as a member of the Parish Committee shall not be eligible for election to any seat on the Parish Committee until after the expiration of one year running from one Annual Meeting to the next Annual Meeting.

b. The terms of office of all Parish Committee members so elected shall run from the end of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected until the end of the Annual Meeting at which their terms of office expire.

Section 4. The Parish Committee shall make a written report to the membership on at least an annual basis, and otherwise shall inform the membership of major policy decisions.

Section 5. Meetings of the Parish Committee shall be open to the membership, except when matters relating to personnel or litigation are taken up in executive session.

Section 6. A majority of the voting members of the Parish Committee shall constitute a quorum. Any action by the Parish Committee may be decided by a simple majority of the votes cast by those present at the meeting, unless this majority limit is otherwise specifically increased in the Parish Committee's policies or otherwise provided in these bylaws.

Section 7. Any officer of the Church or member of the Parish Committee may resign by giving notice in writing to the Chair or may be removed by a two-thirds majority vote of the members of the Parish Committee or by vote of a simple majority of the voting members present at a congregational meeting.

ARTICLE VIII—Officers

Section 1. The officers of the Church shall be the members of the Parish Committee, the Assistant Treasurer, the Moderator, and the Auditor.

Section 2. The following officers shall be elected by written ballot at an Annual Meeting: the Clerk, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, the Moderator, and the Auditor, each for a term of three years. A person who has served two consecutive three-year terms as an officer shall be ineligible for re-election until after the expiration of one year running from one Annual Meeting to the next Annual Meeting. Only members of the church are eligible to serve as officers. The Clerk shall be a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Moderator and the Auditor may not serve concurrently as members of the Parish Committee.

Section 3. The terms of office of all officers so elected shall run from the end of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected until the end of the Annual Meeting at which their terms of office expire.

Section 4. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Parish Committee shall be selected by the Parish Committee from among its members, excluding the Clerk and the Treasurer.

Section 5. Except as otherwise provided herein, the authority and duties of the officers shall be as prescribed in writing by the Parish Committee.

Section 6. The Chair shall coordinate the administrative functions of the Church and shall represent the Church on all appropriate occasions.

Section 7. The Vice Chair shall act in the absence of or at the request of the Chair, at which time she or he shall have all powers and functions applicable to the Chair.

Section 9. The Clerk shall be the official secretary of the Parish Committee and shall ensure that proper records are maintained and that proceedings of the Parish Committee are regularly reported to the congregation. The Clerk shall be responsible for notifying the membership by mail of all congregational meetings and of all matters to be acted upon at said meetings, shall preside at congregational meetings in the absence of the Moderator until a Moderator pro tem is chosen, and shall keep a record of the proceedings of such meetings. The Clerk shall perform the duties of the Chair in the event of the simultaneous absence or incapacity of both the Chair and Vice Chair.

Section 10. The Treasurer shall receive and safely keep all money and other property of the church entrusted to his or her care, which excludes monies, securities, and properties under the control of the Trustees of Trust Funds; make disbursements as directed or approved by the Parish Committee; keep a complete account of the finances of the Church in records belonging to the Church, including direction and coordination of any public accounting firm employed by the Church; render a current statement at each regular meeting of the Parish Committee and of the membership; and ensure that all federal, state or local returns, reports or other items required by law are properly prepared and filed with the appropriate authorities in a timely manner.

ARTICLE X—Committee and Duties

Section 3. The Parish Committee may appoint from time to time such ad hoc committees as it may deem necessary.

ARTICLE XII—Fiscal Matters

Section 2. In its management of the affairs of the Church, the Parish Committee shall expend only such sums as have been appropriated by adoption of the annual budget or by special vote taken at the Annual Meeting or at another congregational meeting or are designated gifts or grants that are intended by the giver to be used before the following fiscal year.

Section 3. At each Annual Meeting, the Parish Committee shall submit an operating budget for the coming fiscal year. The budgeted expenditures may not exceed the anticipated income. A budget shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of the voting members present at the meeting. Once a budget is approved, the Parish Committee may authorize and expend the funds as budgeted; however, the Parish Committee may reallocate funds among the line items of the approved budget so long as the amount reallocated does not exceed ten percent of the total budgeted expenditures.

Section 5. The Parish Committee may borrow money for church expenses, if necessary; however, no borrowing of money nor financial contract may be made without approval of the members of the Church in a congregational meeting if such borrowing or contract involves more than ten percent of the current annual operating budget.