

Parish Committee Minutes

First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington
December 7, 2021

Attendance: Marie Meter, Sara Galantowicz, Al Tosti, Steve McMullen, Anne Quaadgras, Tom Estabrook, Jeff Keffer, Carolyn Hodges, Rev. Marta Flanagan, Rev. Erica Richmond, Tina Schultz.

Call to Order (Marie)
Check in

Review of Current COVID Rules

- Summary of first five services (Marta) – Services have been split between those attending in the sanctuary, and those online. The Religious Education program has seen consistent attendance, between 45-50 people
- Current rules to consider
- 1) Singing at worship (alternative, humming)
- 2) Singing exception just for Silent Night at Christmas Eve service
- Discussion of singing:
 - There was general consensus among the Parish Committee to allow singing with masks on. Ideally, people would space themselves out; with lower in-service attendance, there is more ability to socially distance. Members noted that people can continue to join online if they are uncomfortable with the renewing of congregational singing.
 - Vote #1: Move that we allow congregational singing. Motion made by Anne and seconded by Jeff. The vote was seven “yes” and two abstentions.
- Food – Food discussion was tabled to a later date. Allowing food to be served and consumed would require masks being off in the Vestry or meeting rooms. The Parish Committee will revisit this in January.
- Masks in private meetings – maintain current policy
- Greeters at the entrances – Al raised that eight greeters were not needed at this time and standing outside is beginning to be uncomfortable as it gets colder. Al suggested that the number of Sunday morning greeters go down to four and stand just inside the doors. Marta and Al will discuss with Kate Tranquada and make changes.

Christmas services:

There will be two services on Christmas Eve, at 4 and 6 PM. These have already been advertised. One will be hybrid (TBA)

Proposal to Trustees (please review attached documents)

- Infrastructure Fund Policy – See attached policy proposal which has already been discussed and sent to the Trustees.

- The policy recommends a yearly contribution of 3-5% of the unrestricted funds to be used for all building upkeep, maintenance and improvements, not simply long term capital projects. The Parish Committee would continue to contribute \$13,000 a year to the Infrastructure fund. Any unused monies will be maintained in the Infrastructure fund.
- The proposal for the first year would be for 3% from the general unrestricted fund into the Infrastructure fund.
- The draft policy further clarifies the process of using the fund.
- Annually the Parish Committee, Property Committee and Trustees would meet to discuss what needs to be done from the 5-year property plan and the funds available for the plan.
- Damon Wellington Fund-
 - Jeff gave a brief history of how the housing allotment to the operating budget became \$10,000 a year five years ago.
 - First Parish now has two ministers, and housing costs have gone up significantly. The revised policy proposes to the Trustees that the amount should be increased to a total of \$30,000 from the Damon-Wellington funds. Given the growth in the value of this fund well in excess of inflation, this amount should be feasible.

Motion made at 9:00 PM to adjourn. Motion made by Anne, seconded by Sara. Motion passed unanimously.

The Parish Committee will meet in person on December 14th, to review the draft budget. The Finance Committee and Stewardship will also be attending.

Motions:

Vote #1: I move that we allow congregational singing.

Infrastructure Fund Policy- December __, 2021 [Draft]

Note: This policy completely replaces the Capital Infrastructure Fund Policy adopted in 2016. First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington Massachusetts (“First Parish”) owns and uses interconnected buildings and grounds located at 630 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts all of which are intended to be infrastructure covered by this policy. The purpose of this policy is to document a shared, workable, sustained, long-term approach to prioritizing and funding the upkeep, repair, maintenance, and replacement of First Parish UU Arlington infrastructure. This policy has been jointly created and approved and is to be implemented and updated as needed by the Property Committee, Trustees of the Trust Funds and Parish Committee.

A. Property: The Property Committee will:

1. Annually prepare, update, and provide to the Parish Committee and Trustees a long term infrastructure plan, including projected projects, priorities of projects, life expectancy, and estimated cost. Certain projects may be identified after consultation with the Parish Committee as appropriate for funding through capital campaigns or third party grants.
2. Plan for those infrastructure projects that will need to be funded and performed during the next budget year as well as those which will need to be accomplished during the next five years based on the priorities set forth in the infrastructure plan. Funds available for infrastructure projects may be greater than actual infrastructure expenditures in a fiscal year and, if that is the case, such funds will remain with and be invested by the Trustees and be made available to fund infrastructure projects in future fiscal years.
3. Keep the Parish Committee informed on status of the infrastructure projects and developments as well as unforeseen needs that may arise that could lead to changes in the project costs, priorities and acceleration or postponement of projects.
4. Initiate requests to the treasurer for infrastructure expenditures for the current year based on the infrastructure plan, available funds and this policy.

B. Trustees: The Trustees will:

1. Meet with the Parish Committee and Property Committee annually (during the budget preparation process) to determine the amount of funds that can be made available from the First Parish endowment to undertake infrastructure projects for the next budget year. The intent is that the Trustees will be the primary contributor to the infrastructure fund by contributing each church budget year between 3 and 5% of the aggregate value of the unrestricted funds in the First Parish endowment. The amount provided from the endowment will be determined by the Trustees each year based upon, among other things, the aggregate value of the unrestricted endowment funds and the net returns on investments.
2. The initial contribution by the Trustees for the 2022-23 church year is expected to be 3% of the aggregate value of the unrestricted funds or approximately \$70,000.
3. From time to time as requested by the treasurer transfer to the First Parish operating account the funds that the Trustees have agreed to provide to the infrastructure fund.

C. Parish Committee: The Parish Committee will:

1. Meet with the Trustees and Property Committee annually (during the budget preparation process) to determine the amount of funds required and that can be provided by the Trustees from the unrestricted endowment funds and from operating funds for infrastructure projects for the coming budget year. The amount provided from operating funds is expected to be less than and is not required to match the Trustees' contribution in a given year. Funding from the operating budget is subject to adoption of the operating budget by First Parish members at their Annual Meeting or special meetings.
2. With the Property Committee, annually evaluate the funds available for infrastructure projects in the current fiscal year and agree on projects to be undertaken.
3. The initial operating budget amount from the operating budget for the 2022-23 church year is expected to be \$13,000.

Adopted by the Parish Committee, December __, 2021

Adopted by the Trustees of the Trust Funds, December __, 2021

Adopted by the Property Committee, December __, 2021

Draft- December 2, 2021

Parish Committee 2022 Budget Funding Request to Trustees re: Damon Wellington Fund

The Damon Wellington fund was created with the proceeds from the sale of the parish house in 2007. The original value of the fund was \$638,061. The Trustees decided to use the net income for the foreseeable future to provide a predictable annual contribution to support ministerial housing while preserving the real value of the principal. Real value has been interpreted to mean maintaining the purchasing power of the fund by growing the base amount at the rate of inflation.

The annual contribution to support ministerial housing has been fixed at \$10,000 since 2017. When the \$10,000 annual contribution was set in 2017, the value of the fund was \$701,719, below the then inflation adjusted value of \$732,949. At this lower contribution level it was conservatively expected to take up to 10 years before the fund was right sized over its base inflation adjusted amount. Instead in the last five years the aggregate value of the fund has increased from \$701,719 to \$1,047,356 while the inflation adjusted base amount for the fund as of December 31, 2020 was \$790,754.

Circumstances have changed since 2017. First Parish now supports two ministers. The minister housing allowance has increased to \$72,000 in the 2020-21 budget while housing costs in the Boston metro region have doubled over the last five years. In addition, the value of the Damon Wellington fund has increased substantially since 2017 and now well exceeds the inflation adjusted base.

For these reasons, the Parish Committee respectfully requests that the Trustees consider increasing the annual contribution to the ministerial housing allowance to 3% of the value of the Damon Wellington fund, or to approximately \$30,000.

We would be happy to discuss this request at your convenience. Thank you for your consideration.