

First Parish Cambridge Governing Board Minutes
May 21st, 2024 at 7:00 PM
(Virtual)

Present:

Tod Hibard (acting chair)	Sylvia Wheeler, Past Board Chair
Jane Stabile, Member at Large	Rev. Rob Hardies, Contract Minister 2022-23
Nina Lytton	Carol Lewis, Director of Administration
Patrick Sullivan, Member at Large	Grace Hall, Governance Advisory Committee
Rich Lawson, Clerk	Lindsay Lucke, Treasurer
Jennifer Goodman, DRE (at 8:45 for the RE agenda item)	Maria Altamore, GAC

Regrets: Cade Murray, Chair

Chalice Lighting & Check in

Jane Stabile led this. The reading was from a children's book: *I'm in charge of celebrations* by Byrd Baylor. The check-in prompt was: "Some memories have a lot of sensory details: visual, auditory, olfactory...Please share details of something you remember from your past. It might be an event, or a place that was important to you."

Consent Agenda

There were several topics that required discussion in the Consent Agenda. The updated version of the Personnel Policy Manual Book needed Board approval. It had been approved by the Personnel Committee.

Patrick Sullivan moved to approve the updated manual. Lindsay Lucke seconded the motion. It was approved unanimously. The Board offered thanks to the Personnel Committee for all their work.

The GAC submitted a request regarding annual reports. No vote was required from the Board, but it did receive unanimous support.

Summary of discussion of board retreat from Grace. This was not ready to adopt at this meeting. There is a lot of content that needs to be processed. The June board meeting will be target for approval. Rev Rob noted that the weight of voting leaned into community. We recognize our need to strengthen community. Top-level take-away

The meeting minutes from last month's board meeting had an error in the title and document name. Patrick Sullivan moved to approve the minutes with those minor corrections. Jane Stabile seconded the motion. It was passed unanimously.

Board Priorities

Ministerial Transition

Carol Lewis noted that an updated draft of the contract for the minister is now available. Rev Rob has not read it yet but will do so soon. He spent his afternoon listening to sermons from five candidates as part of selection of part-time minister.

Membership Program/Team

Rev. Rob provided the update on membership based on his report. Karin Lin and Susan Shepherd could join the board next month to discuss plans. Tod Hibbard made a note of that for the agenda.

Rebuilding RE Program

Jennifer Goodman joined the meeting and provided a summary of this year. The nursery has grown to about 5 children per week. The Pre-church childcare is down to 1 on choir weeks. In the children's program upstairs for 6-12 years old there is an average of about 6 per class. Attendance has gone down through late spring, which is typical. In January the team started a Teen program. 6 teens have been participating, which represents almost all those eligible

The teaching staff is solid. There was a dip in Jan/Feb when Lisa had an injury. She has returned. One teacher left, but a replacement has been hired There have also been many volunteers: 17 people total volunteered in classes. Others are serving on the reconstituted RE council. In addition to the classes, the RE team has sponsored game and pizza nights, which have been great community building activities. There have also been outings for the Teens: including a field trip to Walden pond and help with Tuesday meals.

Overall there has been a huge development of trust with parents and children this past year.

There are plans to build on this success for even more progress next year. There is an aim to have Intergenerational services occasionally. A workshop for children called "Embrace Race" might be ready next year. OWL will be offered to 8th and 9th grade students. People from outside the congregation are expected to come. More facilitators are needed.

There are also plans to bolster the RE council to distribute responsibility. It would be valuable to have volunteers for child care for annual meetings and other events. The team will meet with Jen Hayman to discuss ways to involve children in the music program.

The Board recognized the impressive amount of progress over the past year and thanked Jennifer Goodman for all her work to make this happen. Rev. Rob pointed out that she started from zero. Even spaces for classes and the nursery had to be organized. There were some significant and long-standing challenges with some children. Over time, Jennifer's patience and flexibility resolved the issues. One child was initially angry and ill tempered; they now cuddle.

Building Update

Sylvia Wheeler provided this update. The Building Advisory Committee (BAC) is looking at ongoing issues. They accomplished a lot with the money available. David Torry and Jeff Lucire evaluated the North Wall. The wall continues to be stable. The BAC will continue to monitor this. The main issue is the chimney.

Tod Hibbard discussed options for funding this work via a line of credit extension that will be presented to the congregation for approval at the annual meeting. Tod presented material that was originally prepared for the investment committee. Chimney cracks need to be addressed. The estimate for the work is \$360k - 400k. Work can start and finish this summer if we move quickly to get permits, certificate of appropriateness.

There is a budget gap of somewhere between \$83k - 233k. The Cambridge Historical Commission (CHC) may not be able to provide a grant as large as we hoped (\$150k). We still need to have funding in hand before we sign the contract. If we get the grant, we can use that pay down the line of credit.

The proposal is to increase the amount for the line of credit to \$1M and extend the maturity date to June 10, 2036. To vote on this use of the endowment requires a 40% quorum.

A motion to approve this proposal as presented by Tod was made by Jane Stabile. Patrick Sullivant seconded. There was unanimous approval. This will now be added to the warrant for the annual meeting.

Tod Hibbard then presented the Budget to the Board. The budget increases represent investment in growth: New music ministry; DRE; Part-time minister for pulpit continuity. The sources to support the increase are: 1) a great result from the stewardship drive; 2) a proposed increase in annual distribution from endowment to 5%, which is within the band allowed by policy (4.5 - 5%). A larger proportion of the distribution of the endowment will go to the Staff and Program budget.

A motion to approve the budget was made by Patrick Sullivan. This was seconded by Jane Stabile. This was approved unanimously.

Annual Meeting Preparations

The Board discussed appropriate candidates for the moderator and parliamentarian. Tod Hibbard agreed to reach out to Gloria Korsman and Mike Wiggins for those respective roles

The Board also discussed a long-standing interest in eliminating the requirement to follow Robert's Rules of Order. Carol Lewis pointed out that the AUUA does not use Robert's Rules. Those meetings are simply run by a moderator. Since this requirements is in Bylaws, it will be necessary to have a congregational vote. Appropriate preparation will be required in advance of that, which is realistic for the 2025 Annual Meeting.

There were no votes required for this agenda item.

Tod Hibbard adjourned the meeting at the end of business.

Respectfully submitted by Rich Lawson, Clerk

Approved by the Board on June 18th, 2024

Please Note the new Chalice lighting/check-in monthly rotation for the next church year – July: Rich, August: Julie, September: Patrick, October: Nina, November: Jane, December: Lindsay, January: Julie, February: Rich, March: Patrick, April: Nina, May: Jane, June: Lindsay. (Cade is a substitute as needed