

Approved by BOT

9/17/2013

Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church

Board of Trustees

Minutes

August 20, 2013

Attendance:

Board Members Present: Don Bliss (Chair-Elect), Kate Curtis, Anne Fretz (Secretary), Stew Grubman (Treasurer), Ariel Mora, Tim Persons, Lyn Peters, Paul Strella (Asst. Treasurer), Michael Thoryn, Susannah Vesey (Asst. Secretary), John Wing

BOT Members Absent: Maryann Dillon, Michael Murray

Staff Present: Rev. Abhi Janamanchi, Rev. Heather Janules, Sara Deshler (Church Administrator)

Staff Absent: Karen Lee Scrivo (Interim DRE)

Others Present: Michael Lentz, Sandy Shaw, Bob Harrison

Opening: The meeting convened at 7:30 p.m. Board members read the BOT Covenant together out loud. Board members and visitors responded to a question raised in *Governance and Ministry* by Dan Hotchkiss: **How has this church moved your spirit in the last month?**

Approval of Consent Agenda: The Consent Agenda contained the following items:

1. Minutes of July 23, 2013 Board meeting
2. Associate Minister Report
3. Administrator Report

The minutes were approved as corrected. The Consent Agenda was approved.

Senior Minister's Remarks and Discussion: Rev. Abhi Janamanchi

"Hopes and Dreams": Abhi outlined his priorities for the year ahead:

1. Worship- Abhi plans to create a strong culture of worship, as this is a prime avenue for drawing in longtime congregants as well as newcomers. He

mentioned that he would make changes in the format of Sunday services in the hopes of appealing to a wider audience.

2. RE Vision-- Abhi will be part of the RE Search Committee and anticipates that this will take a significant amount of time.
3. Finance- Abhi will focus his attention primarily on stewardship, though he will also be involved in other areas of church finance.
4. Policy Governance- He will work and learn with the Governance Task Force and the Board as Cedar Lane transitions to governance by policy.
5. Membership- Abhi plans to allocate considerable time to meet with many members individually and in small groups to establish a personal bond and to better understand the congregation. He also will commit his energies to welcoming new members and helping them integrate into the church.

The Board expressed general agreement with Abhi's priorities and will work with him over the coming months to set goals in each of the first three areas.

Start-up Weekend - October 4-5: The retreat, to be held in the Chalice House, will be facilitated by the Rev. Kenn Hurto, who is knowledgeable about policy governance, and Paula Cole Jones, Director for Racial and Social Justice at the Joseph Priestly District, for the purpose of clarifying roles and expectations and for considering priorities that lie ahead. On Friday evening, attendees will construct a Cedar Lane timeline based on stories told about the past; Saturday's focus will be to create a vision of the church's future. Don Bliss, Michael Thoryn and Paul Strella will work with Abhi on the logistics of the Start-up weekend, bringing in other Board members as needed.

Peter Morales Visit to Cedar Lane: The Rev. Peter Morales, UUA President, will preach at Cedar Lane on October 6, as part of the UUA's 'Join the Move' campaign. The Board agreed to donate the plate offering from the Sunday services to the UUA. Lyn Peters volunteered to help plan this event. It was noted that October 6 is also the date of the congregational meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Stew Grubman

Stew presented the Treasurer's Financial Report for August 2013 (**Appendix A**), commenting that because July was a quiet month, expenses were down, which resulted in a surplus for the year to date. He welcomes suggestions for improving the visual display of information on future financial reports.

Provisional 2013-14 Budget- Status: At the June meeting, the Board approved a provisional budget for FY14 with a deficit of \$134,291. At the upcoming October Board meeting, the Financial Task Force will present its recommendation for a four-year budget plan that will fund the deficit and produce a balanced budget going forward, enabling finalization of the FY14 provisional budget.

Status of the 2013-14 Pledge Drive: The pledge drive projection for this year has been lowered from \$902,000 to \$890,000. To date, the total amount pledged is

\$820,074 or 92% of that projection. Since we usually receive 98% of pledges, we actually need a pledge goal of \$908,000 to reach \$890,000 in collections.

Financial Task Force Four-Year Budget Plan- Status: The Task Force has been working to develop a four-year budget plan that will include recommendations for managing present and future deficits and will outline predicted financial goals and needs for upcoming years. It is likely that the budget will be based on a pledge goal of \$890,000 rather than \$902,000 as previously considered. Details of the plan will be presented for discussion at the September Board meeting in preparation for final approval at the October meeting. It was mentioned that the Board would need to communicate these budget matters, including the deficit, to the congregation. At the September Board meeting, Michael Murray will lead the board in a discussion of communication considerations.

Housing Allowance: Abhi presented “A Minister’s Housing Allowance Motion” (**Appendix B**) to the Board for approval. He will use this document for tax purposes in segregating his Housing Allowance from W-2 income.

Stew Grubman moved, and John Wing seconded, approval of “A Minister’s Housing allowance Motion;” it was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Blumenthal Bequest: Options: John Wing and Michael Lentz

Financial Task Force Proposal/Finance Committee Modifications: John and Michael, representing the Financial Task Force with input from the Finance Committee, led the Board in a discussion of the “Frank Blumenthal Bequest” report, revised August 20, 2013 (**Appendix C**). They outlined the six criteria developed by the Task Force to evaluate possible uses of this gift and then discussed the four recommended projects, emphasizing these points:

1. Blumenthal Future Fund (\$500,000)- The Fund would be used to make improvements to Cedar Lane’s grounds and facilities and to envision the kind of church we would like to be in 10-20 years. Funds can be used for design and modernization projects, such as expanding the lounge, upgrading the kitchen, utilizing the Cedar Lane Stage space behind the podium, etc. It also can be used as a challenge grant for a capital campaign. Implementation will take several years because the operating budget needs to be balanced prior to utilizing the Blumenthal funds for a capital campaign.
2. Support of Financial Recovery Plan (\$100,000)- This will be spread out over at least three years and used to reduce the projected deficits in the operating budget. The funds allocated each year approximate Frank Blumenthal’s annual pledge and represent a reasonable projection of the investment growth of the fund each year.
3. Social Justice Cluster Project (\$50,000)- The word ‘cluster’ expands the scope of this project beyond the Social Justice Council to include a broad range of social justice-related activities at Cedar Lane, such as the Partner Church and RE lifelong learning programs. It was emphasized that the

project should involve active participation of many members of all ages, including children and youth.

4. Outreach Program (\$50,000)- This project will significantly increase Cedar Lane's communication to the outside community by expanding programs of interest to a broad segment of the area population. The funds could be used to publicize sermons of broad interest, music concerts, the Forum, and other special events and activities.

The Board engaged in a wide-reaching discussion of the Financial Task Force proposal and will take action on it at its September 17th meeting. The Board thought that the Blumenthal Future Fund should involve a major project that would honor his dedication to Cedar Lane.

Congregational Communication and Consultation: The next steps will involve communicating the Blumenthal Bequest proposal to the congregation and soliciting feedback. It will be important to convey to members that the Task Force developed the proposal after lengthy discussions and careful thought, taking into account how best to create a lasting legacy in Frank Blumenthal's memory. It was suggested that use be made of the eulogy Heather gave at Frank's memorial service so that members would know more about him and his strong, lasting connection to Cedar Lane. It should be emphasized to the congregation that the bequest proceeds have been carefully invested in a mutual fund. The Board Chair agreed to write-up the proposal and request comments and suggestions from the congregation, which will be accessible, along with the Task Force report on the Cedar Lane Web site and the Trustee's Bulletin Board in the lounge.

Next Steps: To implement the proposed use of the bequest, the board will need to designate two or three task forces consisting of members representing a cross-section of the congregation. Detailed plans for each of the projects will be developed.

Stewardship Report and Discussion: Bob Harrison and Sandy Shaw

Bob, Sandy and others emphasized the following points during the discussion on stewardship:

- Reframe the message by creating a long-term culture of generosity in the church. Proclaim the passion and purpose of our congregation by celebrating all we do in terms of social justice and other aspects of our mission; move away from emphasizing the need to pay staff and cover other items in the operating budget.
- Develop a more personalized approach to the stewardship program this year.
- Board should provide guidance for stewardship: Should we have a mini-campaign this fall to raise money to cover the deficit? How would this impact the campaign next spring?
- Decide on dates for spring stewardship drive- start in early February and wrap up by mid-March so that at the Annual Meeting in April a

possible gap can be discussed and the budget can be approved. In the future, perhaps the stewardship campaign should take place in the fall.

The Board requested the Stewardship co-chairs to give serious consideration to a fundraising effort in the fall that would help achieve this year's pledge drive goals.

RE Report:

Search Committee Selection Process/LDNC: Tim Persons reported that the LDNC has decided on six candidates for the RE Search Committee. As of meeting time, three had accepted; the committee hopes to hear from the others soon.

Status of the RE Leader Position Description: Lyn Peters reported that she and Vicky Strella are working on the RE job description for either a credentialed RE director or minister. The proposed job description will be discussed by the board in September and finalized by the RE Search Committee.

Status of Interim RE Program: Abhi stated that in communications with Karen Scrivo, they have discussed the immediate tasks to be accomplished to launch the RE program this fall. Linda Gianessi and Gale Luce will provide assistance during Karen's absence due to caring for her mother. Heather mentioned that she has sent out an announcement requesting applications for the youth coordinator position and has received several resumes in response.

Requests for Assistance:

Rummage Sale: Don Bliss mentioned that the rummage sale is still in need of a leader; two names were mentioned as possibilities. It was also suggested that the Alliance could assist. It is hoped that the rummage sale would net about \$8,000.

Kensington Labor Day Parade: Anne Fretz requested that board members sign up to participate in the parade on the morning of September 2. She will be in the lounge after services the next two Sundays to provide information and sign-up additional participants.

Pancake Supper: Paul and Vicky Strella are organizing this event scheduled to take place on Sunday, September 22, 5:00-7:00 pm. As this was last year's Board donation to the auction, members of last year's Board are expected to assist.

Congregational Meeting: Lyn Peters has offered to organize the congregational meeting on Sunday, October 6 and welcomes assistance from other Board members.

Community Lunch: Stew Grubman and Anne Fretz will decide on the date. Board members will be asked to contribute food and assist during the lunch, including helping to set-up and cleanup.

Closing Words: Kate Curtis shared two quotations from Martin Luther King and words from Leonard Cohen's song called "Anthem."

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm, after which several members met with their cluster teams to discuss committee liaisons.

Respectfully submitted,
Anne J. Fretz
Secretary

Appendix A- Treasurer's Financial Report for August 2013

Appendix B- A Minister's Housing Allowance Motion

Appendix C- Frank Blumenthal Bequest, Revised August 20, 2013

Outstanding Issues/Topics for September Board Meeting:

- Four-Year Budget Plan discussion- Stew Grubman
- Provide guidance for Stewardship: Mini-campaign this fall; Dates for 2014 pledge drive
- Resolution on the allocation of the Frank Blumenthal Bequest and leadership for carrying out the plan- John Wing
- Review and discussion of the RE leadership position description- Lyn Peters
- Congregational communications strategy- Michael Murray
- Rummage Sale- date and leadership
- Planning for October 4-6 weekend: Retreat, Rev. Peter Morales visit, congregational meeting

Dates to Remember:

- **Kensington Labor Day Parade-** Monday, September 2, 9:00-11:00 am
- **September BOT Meeting-** Tuesday, September 17, 7:30 pm (closing words- Ariel Mora)
- **Multigenerational Pancake Supper-** September 22, 5:00-7:00 pm
- **Start-up Weekend-** Friday evening October 4, Saturday October 5
- **UUA President Peter Morales Visit-** Sunday, October 6
- **Congregational Meeting to vote on Nominating Committee slate for RE Search-** Sunday, October 6
- **BOT Community Lunch-** February 2, 2014
- **Rev. Janamanchi's Installation-** March 8-9, 2014