

**The Community Church of Chapel Hill Unitarian Universalist
Minutes of Board Meeting of October 14, 2008**

Present: David Abels, Barbara Chapman, Alyson Grine, Mary LeMay, John Leopold, Erich Lieth, Susan McDaniel, Joan Meade, Susan Spalt, Penny Ward

Absent: Joel Grodensky, Richard Perry

Ex Officio: Maj-Britt Johnson, Jay Miller

Guests: Mary Hulett, Kim McNeary

Minutes: Penny Ward

Susan Spalt called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm. Alyson Grine, the Board Member of the month, lit the chalice and offered a quotation from Van Morrison.

BOARD LEARNING

Maj-Britt Johnson

Maj-Britt led a discussion about shared ministry

Question from MBJ to board: How would it be different to be doing a shared ministry as opposed to a committee?

Responses: More spiritual, better, flexible, less structured, joy, more demanding on a humanitarian/ethical/moral level. (I can miss a committee meeting, don't know if I can miss a ministry meeting) I feel that the work I do on a committee is a ministry. Psychologically more empowering and powerful than the word "committee." Sounds more important. Would expect it to be somehow more nurturing or fulfilling to the individual doing the ministry. More like a mission than an obligation. More appropriate to something you do at church.

Handout: MBJ has been working on this general idea for the past few years, and recently has talked about this with staff members, young people, others in church.

(Aside from Jay: Insurance company was very clear with him a couple of years ago that if you have lay members doing counseling you have to be really careful about liability. The minister is covered by professional liability insurance.)

MBJ's ultimate dream is to have a "staff" of volunteer ministers. Please see handout. A lot of writers in the past years have been advocating abolishing the laity and make everyone a minister. We want to make sure "ministry" isn't just a word, doesn't become just another word for committee. There can never be enough time for MBJ, staff, etc. to work with individual church members on their paths. It requires a large lay ministry. MBJ wants to offer BYOT, intro to spiritual practices, coming of age, etc. classes to help members.

Tool for all this is a care plan. (See middle of page 3 of handout.)

MBJ is interested in why some committees don't want to have chairs—is there an avoidance of leadership? It makes communications/continuity difficult.

Feedback/discussion:

J Leopold—a number of people who are not new members will feel like they've already done a lot of this. Would need to frame this to them as a self-assessment tool, not a starting at square one tool.

S Spalt—disconnect between the work that committees do and the spiritual components of that. It's like being at work; the spiritual sustenance gets lost.

B Chapman—sometimes it's not what you're doing, it's how you think about it. In reading "Simple Church," if something is important in a church, they don't do it separately; they do it as part of the existing structure. If this shared ministry and care plan is something we believe in so much, it ought to be a part of every single group. As we've looked at governance, this is where we've tried to go. So yes, doing this through the existing structure is a viable idea. It could help change the thinking and the existing structure.

E. Leith—all good ideas; could be done different ways for different people. Could suggest an additional round—ever since we did the cottage meetings he's been thinking about this—everyone seemed to come out of that experience invigorated. He thinks part of that feeling came from being physically separate from the church, getting together in a home, being able to talk openly—that could reach people in a particular way. One thing he thought was it would be great to have cottage meetings after MBJ is here so that she can experience that. In that kind of context it could be spiritually nourishing and solidify ties between people (and MBJ if she chooses to be involved).

M. LeMay—totally supports the idea. But sees it as something that will sort of have to ooze. It is a culture change. It has seemed to her from her experience in the public school system that often it's the same old stuff with a new set of nomenclature. This has to be genuinely, substantively different.

MBJ—she knows this can't be imposed as a set of rules. But maybe we can find a way to make everything we do sort of like the cottage meetings, or covenant groups—let's find ways to bring that spirit into everything we do at church. Let's do it as a discerning, mindful process.

E. Leith—how do we keep our eye on the goal?

S. Spalt: What do you see as our next step, what do we need to do as a board to help shape this process?

MBJ: I don't know yet. I'm meeting this week again with the COM and they might be an appropriate group to help get this going. For now she just asks the board to be supportive and give feedback.

SMcDaneil: Wants to sign up to take a workshop when they're available. If people have other thoughts they can get in touch with Maj-Britt.

Mary Hulett: Building update (financial component)

Mary had handouts prepared by Frankie Price-Stern.

We agreed by congregational vote that we'd have a 5-year fundraising period for the capitol project. We believed we had enough money by pledge to finance this.

[*Note change in figures on handout—we took out a mortgage for \$490,000, so last two figures on page need to be adjusted accordingly--\$490,000 approved debt level, \$55,000 increase in debt needed.]

We have done remarkably well on staying within our budget. The building project itself came in under budget by almost \$100,000. Unfortunately, the courtyard has come in over budget due to drainage and other problems. Two things happened during the project that hadn't been part of the original project—one was the sanctuary roof. The board agreed to go ahead with the roof and then go to the congregation to ask for permission to add that expense to the mortgage. The second unanticipated expense was repaving the parking lot.

It now looks like we're going to have to have a new Commons roof (est. \$25k), and \$5k additional drainage work done on courtyard.

The bottom line is that we need an increase in the debt of **\$55,000**. Mary recommends we make it \$20,000 more than that, because we don't know what we're going to find when we get into the walls in the Commons. We don't know what damage might be there from leaky roof and water intrusion from the sides. She suggests that we ask for about \$70,000.

S Spalt asked 2 questions. (1) She doesn't think it's safe in there—she had breathing troubles in there from the mold. (2) She doesn't like to ask the congregation to approve something for which we really have no choice. Do we have an alternative?

M. Hulett noted that here is no alternative, but we can't indebt the church without the congregation's approval. She further noted that the important thing is that we don't have to go to the congregation until the end of next year. Between the construction loan and the mortgage, we're okay until the end of next year.

J. Leopold, E. Leith noted that by the end of next year—by the end of 6 months—we'll know more.

J. Leopold asked whether the future income would require any further building capital solicitation from people. M. Hulett replied that it would not. The money that's on here assumes that we have remaining pledges that will be paid at a rate of 70%. We've actually far exceeded the estimates that we made on our pledge receipts. The congregation's done remarkably well on our pledges.

J. Miller and Mary Hulett noted that in looking at the whole 5 year pledge, we've collected a rate close to 90% of the whole pledge.

J. Leopold asked whether a conscious decision had been made not to ask new people for capital pledges. M. Hulett responded that the ABC is down to Mary Hulett and Frankie Price Stern. There's not enough of a committee to pursue this. The RE group postponed their plans for an RE pavilion, however they're still hoping that it will happen. That is one reason for not trying to raise more money for the past building project. Two of these things (both roofs) should not have been in the building program at all—they

should have been part of long-term maintenance... though a lot of the building project was intended to catch up on long-deferred maintenance.

S. McDaniel asked whether there was any reason not to open up a section of the wall and see what's there? We could see how much mold and rot is in there. Mary Hulett replied that she had been deferring to Bill and Gary. They agree it's important, but they've been concentrating on the roof, which is much more urgent. It will be looked at soon. S. Spalt noted that one way to look at this is that we have been playing catch-up with deferred maintenance. What we're really doing now is giving a gift to future members so that they won't have to deal with this. That's one way to think of this and make it somewhat spiritual. S. Spalt thanked Mary for being a champion through this whole process. M. Hulett noted that kudos also go to Cecilia Warshaw for all she contributed during the ABC process.

J. Leopold noted that it sounded like the board did not have an immediate decision to make.

M. Hulett: Our (M. Hulett and F. Price-Stern) biggest concern was (1) to see how we'd done financially and (2) we wanted to let you know because it's going to be the board who decides how and when to take this to the congregation. She shares S. Spalt's view that we have to get the mold situation taken care of quickly. She asked the board's permission to move on roof and courtyard and mold problem as quickly as possible?

Motion

Motion made by, ????, seconded by????

The board voted unanimously to give Mary Hulett's group permission to move ahead on getting repairs to the Commons roof and the courtyard.

S. Spalt also asked the board to vote to express board's undying appreciation to Mary for all she's done.

J. Leopold expressed the need to make sure we talk in future about timing of next building campaign.

D. Abels also expressed thanks also to Mary Hulett and her legal firm for straightening out the preschool lease, which has now been signed.

B. Chapman has a friend at Duke who does air quality reports (with a cadre of grad students). If we need to have that done she could ask her friend. B. Chapman has actually had students withdrawn from school due to mold. It might be the responsible thing to do at some point to do the testing.

S. Spalt noted that it was most important to work on the roof.

M. Hulett noted that some people had stopped attending church before the new roof was put on the sanctuary because of the mold.

Consent agenda:

Susan McDaniel moved for approval. Seconded by Barbara Chapman (?) Approved unanimously.

Points of clarification from consent agenda:

J. Leopold asked question of clarification: What is installation?

MBJ: March 8, formal recognition by church of MBJ as our minister. Worship service, guest minister from NY, other clergy guests will attend. We acknowledge this new ministry. A covenant between MBJ and the congregation will be read and affirmed during the ceremony. It will be a celebration of our new settled minister.

Scott Provan will begin as treasurer at the November 9 town meeting; Jay will stay on to assist until we get the 2009 budget drawn up and approved.

The Privacy Policy presented by council was included in the consent agenda.

Budget

S. Spalt noted that a committee is being formed to look at implementing new *Giving Beyond These Walls* procedures; the board did not need to address that during the meeting.

Jay Miller: Budget Report

Re 2008: We're going to be over on Building and Grounds; nothing can change that. In most of the categories we are within budget. Based on history, we're pretty far behind on pledges. Jay Miller doesn't know if there's anything that can be done about that. We don't give people a deadline for when they pay their pledges. But we're behind by about \$27,000, even allowing for the historical surge of pledge payments at the end of the year. MBJ noted believes that pledges are a commitment we've all made. She doesn't feel it hurts to write to people to ask, "we just need to know if you're going to be able to meet this commitment, so we know how to plan." What's wrong with writing just to ask?

M. LeMay asked whether we should enclose a post card.

P. Ward asked whether we should say that "Someone will be calling you?"

S. Spalt asked: Do we need to remind people that their pledge is important to the work of the church"? B. Chapman noted that she always appreciates wording: "If your financial circumstances change, please let us know about that." A targeted letter to tell people, "You're short on your pledge. We know that circumstances change. We need to be able to plan." She thinks about people who maybe don't want us to know how close they are to the edge.

E. Leith noted the importance of giving people the chance to adjust their pledge: “This is how much I will be able to give.” People get turned off by being asked for money.

J. Miller reflected on the way the meeting began. . We are talking about a ministry. If the letter is written correctly, in a spiritual sort of way, it can work. I like what Barbara said. It does need to be thoughtful. MJB noted that this gives people a chance to work it through, so they won’t just disappear as people sometimes do. I think if I were having difficulties I’d appreciate the opportunity to talk with someone confidentially about financial circumstances. E. Leith suggested that we give people the big picture—tell them what the shortfall is overall

S. Spalt asked who should the letter come from?

B. Chapman agreed to write the letter but noted that it should come from S. Spalt The board agreed.

J. Leopold asked whether this should be timed to go out after the stewardship campaign is over? There was a discussion of pros and cons of the timing. The Stewardship campaign officially ends Nov. 2.

S. Spalt noted that the letter could be sent after that date.

E. Leith noted that we needed to clarify in the letter that we’re talking about the 2008 pledge, not the 2009 campaign they just pledged for.

Andrea Sordean-Mintzer can draw up a list of names of people we should write to.

2009 budget:

Jay Miller noted that the reality of the last few years is that we’re coming up on a big list of “wants” which exceeds our projected income by about \$51k. If we do it the way it’s happened in the past, we have a town meeting Nov. 9 at which we present a preliminary budget. That will be drawn up by a very small number of people. Are we comfortable with that?

M. Lemay asked what Jay needed from the board.

Jay Miller replied that he was putting together a budget task force. He has already sent out an e-mail to people who’ve helped in the past. If anyone on the board would like to join, they are going to meet sometime before Nov. 9. Let Jay know if you want to be involved.

S. Spalt asked what choices the board wanted to present to the congregation at the town meeting? Staff salaries and building needs are not negotiable. We have to be clear to people what we’re asking their opinions on.

Jay Miller noted that in the past, we have played with the COLA rate, so that aspect of staff salaries has been flexible. We never tied it into the Consumer Price Index.

S. Spalt also noted that the Orange County COLA had been used and that the board also considered strongly what the UUA recommended. J Leopold noted that any time that COLA number is known, it has a psychic impact if we offer staff anything less.

S. Spalt asked again, "What do we hope to get out of the town meeting?"

D. Abels reiterated the need for a very strong letter.

M. Lemay noted that it is not what we get out of a town meeting, it's what information we want to share with them. J. Miller emphasized the need for feedback. He further noted that in the past the board has gotten people's priorities.

D. Abels noted that we may just be giving people the reality of the situation. He also said that by Nov. 2 the stewardship committee would have a projection of our 2009 pledges. Alyson Grine will do an article about the Nov. 9 town meeting for the newsletter.

Endowment fund proposal

The proposal the board has is the result of the Endowment Committee. The committee is just asking to have it put on the agenda for the Dec. 14 congregational meeting.

S. McDaniel asked about the relationship of the endowment to the reserves?

S. Spalt noted that there was no relationship.

Jay Miller noted that he would like to see 5% of the endowment budget be available for the work of the board. But that's not how it's structured. That's traditional with endowments, however most of what you are spending is the interest.

J. Leopold noted that we are once again in difficult times. His initial question was "why do we do this when we haven't taken care of the building?" But he's come to realize it has nothing to do with our current or short-term budget; it's a way of putting money aside for future use.

E. Leith noted that there are people who are waiting to use that option. Even if we can't draw on the principal, the principal is going to be added onto, which will increase interest income. So that will potentially make more money available for spending.

J. Leopold noted that he did not think we should spend time on anything other than getting the foundation straight. Don't plan on spending anything from the endowment for 5 years.

E. Leith noted that if this is going to be implemented quickly, there has to be a plan for electing members of this committee immediately. S. Spalt replied that a committee existed, and they can be formally elected at the congregational meeting.

E. Leith noted that the way the Endowment plan was written, a slate of 7 people would be needed to elect a committee of 5. He further noted that terms of office would be to be spelled out, and in place before the congregational meeting. S. Spalt asked E. Leith to talk to Jim Magaw and ask him if he has a plan for that.

M. Lemay noted that we received was an incomplete/unclear document. It's not clear how committee is going to be constituted, chartered, etc. E. Leith stated that we can't have a congregational meeting in June. S. Spalt noted that we can have a congregational meeting (in addition to the annual one) any time we want.

Motion

E. Leith moved that the board put this on the December agenda and try as hard as we can to find a way to elect committee members immediately.

J. Leopold suggested that we approve the concept in December and have the election later? S. Spalt noted that the vote for members can be done by ballot, not necessarily at a meeting.

E. Leith amended his motion. He moved that the endowment proposal be presented to the congregation at the December meeting. To amend the current proposal to allow for an interim, startup committee that's operational for 4 months, so that the process can get started. This interim committee wouldn't be empowered to make any financial decisions, but that the endowment proposal will be on the agenda.

This is an amendment to the bylaws, which is why it has to be approved at a congregational meeting.

? seconded.

M. Lemay noted that it seemed as if the board was taking away the self-direction and impetus of whatever the committee may already be doing; that it was micromanaging.

MBJ: They don't yet feel empowered. They'll appreciate whatever we do.

S. Spalt noted that the committee will be empowered to do what they feel they need to do regardless of how we vote on this.

E. Leith: New and Final Motion: We approve putting the Endowment Committee proposal on the agenda for the December congregational meeting.

Approved unanimously.

Fundraising requests:

S. Spalt announced that the board had requests and one thing we're up against is trying to fine tune our fundraising policy. And as it goes, you make one forward step and get requests to change that step.

S. Spalt: Request to extend meeting to 9:15. The board agreed.

S. Spalt noted that our 20% policy was meant to address activities that use church facilities and staff. Examples would be benefit concerts or the service auction. This does not necessarily include things like people writing checks for particular IFC programs.

First and Second Requests for Exemptions

(1) Foster Children fundraiser: Appears to meet the criteria for not needing 20%.

(2) GAYT: Done by UUSC; ongoing event; is not expected churches would take a cut.

E. Leith thinks the distinction shouldn't be made—the fact that something does or doesn't use church resources is irrelevant. We don't want to start getting into gray areas to have to make decisions.

S. McDaniel agreed.. Even writing these proposals has already used staff time.

P. Ward believes the sheer ill will we would generate by taking money off the top of IFC fundraisers, etc. would not be worth the money we get.

E. Leith noted that the board can't automatically exempt anything that's done for organizations outside the church, because we do a lot of fundraising for outside organizations.

Request # 3 Football parking:

This was already underway before we passed the 20% operating costs policy. So should it be exempt?

M. Le May expressed concern because this is an intricate and touchy policy—if people who get out there and do the work and they feel that only 80% of the money they're raising is going to their cause, would it affect their willingness to do it? Jay Miller believes it's already affected people's willingness. There is backlash that's already happening. Some members see it as double taxation. Yes, Marion has already spent time on this, but it's in our budget to pay her. Discussion ensued about the need to change the advertising or raise the rates?

B. Chapman objected to committees getting out of these obligations because that's how we got into the situation we're in now.

MBJ: It feels like what you're trying to work out is territoriality. Parking is a huge resource here. So it doesn't seem fair for one group to stake a claim to it from now through eternity. I'm all for saying it can't be a territorial thing.

Joan Meade noted that several months ago the group came and said can we have football parking forever? And the board said no, only for this year. That's a way to change the rules. They aren't guaranteed to have this next year.

S. Spalt noted that in effect we have grandfathered them in this year,. We can then work it out for next year. She further noted that the board has talked about getting a fundraising policy for over 5 years. This is a board that has finally gotten something on paper. There's going to be some pushing and fiddling around with it.

E. Leith stated that he could go along with the grandfathering. But one thing this raises that we need to make explicit in the policy is that a fundraiser has a specific time period. Events which occur annually have to be approved annually, with sufficient advance notice. The other point he made is that the board has really fallen down in educating the congregation, staff, council and committees. The board passed the policy, threw it into some people's laps. They don't know the reasoning and spirit behind that. We need to educate people, including the staff, so that they can be supportive as well.

B. Chapman asked whether the amounts that are in the budget for Habitat in addition to what's raised here? Everyone answered: Yes.

Who ????Motion to exempt all of these, the first two because of giving directly to outside groups, the third because the policy was approved after the program began

Unanimously approved.

Who ????Second motion to exempt football parking for 2008 only.

Unanimously approved.

Coffee house:

Coffee House Committee signed a contract with Richie Havens to have a coffee house here on December 7 before even finding out if the space was available, let alone asking for approval. Mary LeMay and Erich Leith will inform them of the 20% stewardship; allow them to have the event without prior approval this year; and then make them go through the approval process for all future events.

E. Leith believes that the Coffee House needs to be reexamined. They need to have a charter. M Lemay noted that they have one. They got reconstituted several years ago and are an official committee of the church.

E. Leith noted that we need to look at the charter, then. But it's going require more input from the board. He is uncomfortable with them running a separate budget from the church. The reasons that they do aren't applicable anymore. There is a need to examine how it fits in with the mission of the church. He would like to see that happen before they propose any more events.

MJB: Where does the other 80% (not the church's share) go to? That's not clear.

B. Chapman asked what happens if the revenues don't meet the performer's fee?

S. Spalt noted that she Tony that Pat needed at least a week's notice if he wanted her to put a flyer in the bulletin.

Motion by Barbara Chapman to approve the December 7th date, that 20% of the receipts go to general operating funds, that all future dates must be approved by the board, that they adhere to the tabling policy, and that they adhere to deadlines for publicity.

Approved unanimously.

S. Spalt noted that the board dealt with a lot of difficult subjects tonight, and kept to the terms of the board covenant.

She expressed the hope that board members would attend the TJD meeting this weekend.

Next meeting, November 18, meeting be a joint meeting with Council and will probably be in the activity room. Council will have its meeting for an hour before, then we'll join them; then we'll have additional meeting time after Council leaves. Desserts will be needed!

Meeting adjourned at 9:22.