

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Exeter
Minutes of Annual Meeting – Sunday, May 23, 2010

Call to Order: Jim Webber, Moderator

The 155th Annual Meeting was called to order at 10.22 a.m. Sixty-three voting members were in attendance. Opening words were given by Moderator Webber.

Review of Minutes of 2009 Meeting:

The minutes were approved, with no changes.

Committee Reports:

Accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report and Proposed FY 2011 Budget

Jim Breeling reported FUUSE was enjoying a “reasonably good year” in FY 2010 despite continued turmoil in the economy at large. Another positive sign was this year’s successful annual pledge drive which allowed for an increase in the budget planned for FY 2011 and a resumption of initiatives including salary & benefit adjustments and hiring a new sexton.

Budget planning, Breeling said, is now being conducted on a multi-year, rather than a single-year, basis with the aim of improving overall FUUSE management efficiency. In presenting a balanced budget of \$269,617 for FY 2011, an increase of 8% over the estimate for FY 2010 of \$250,504, Breeling noted the vital importance of pledge income (which accounts for about 88% of the total) and expressed thanks to the FUUSE pledge drive team and to the congregation as a whole.

At question time, David Spiegel asked how much thought had been given to FUUSE’s practice of transferring funds from its investment accounts to help balance the budget. Breeling replied that a decision had been made three years ago to end this practice, and the process of reducing transfers to zero was currently underway. An exception might occur, he noted, if a donor has given specific instructions allowing transfers of the donor’s own contributed funds to be made.

Spiegel also asked why the FUUSE Minister’s benefits differ from the benefits of other staff members, with specific reference to housing allowance and social security. Breeling replied that the housing allowance was a tax policy factor. On the social security question, he would research this before getting back to Spiegel and the congregation.

After a motion and second, the proposed 2011 budget of \$269,617 for FY 2011 was passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee Report

Introduced by Tish Lewis, all 14 nominations were approved unanimously including Corey Stevens who, unlike the others, had not been listed in the Annual Report or the Annual Report nominating committee revisions. Stevens was elected to a three-year term on the Finance Committee.

Here is a complete list of the 14 nominees and their respective committees:

Jessica Michelsen, Member, 3 Years
Ministerial Relations Committee

Cynthia Cary, Member, 3 Years
DLRE Relations Committee

Jim Breeling, Member, 3 Years
Finance Committee

Corey Stevens, Member, 3 Years
Finance Committee

George Gallo, Member, 3 Years
Personnel Committee

Sandy Straub-Wiernicki, Member, 3 Years
Property Committee

Dan Hummel, Member, 3 Years
Pledge Drive Committee

Stephanie Marshall, Member, 2 Years
Pledge Drive Committee

Debbie Merrick, Chair, 1 Year
Board of Trustees

Frank Heffron, Vice Chair, 1 Year
Board of Trustees

Skip Berrien, Member-at-Large, 2 Years

Jonathan Winsor, Member-at Large, 2 Years

Alex McCallum, Clerk, 3 Years

Jim Webber, Moderator, 3 Years

Old Business – Strategic Plan Update

Lewis expressed her thanks to everyone for the help and support she had received during her term of office as FUUSE chair. Amid applause, she noted that the majority of the items on the strategic plan had been accomplished, and handed over to incoming chair Deb Merrick, who proceeded to identify key issues that will be of particular concern during her own term, namely:

- 1) Inspiring FUUSE committees to work together more closely than in the past, to create better cohesion in our growing constituency,
- 2) Reviewing and making improvements to the Religious Education curriculum, for the benefit of our children,
- 3) Conducting further research into renovating the FUUSE property, including liaison with the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA),
- 4) Continuing a search for a permanent FUUSE Treasurer.

Merrick also noted that the first services of FY 2011, following this year's summer break, will be held one week later than usual, on Sunday, Sept. 19, 2010. FUUSE will be welcoming back The Rev. Kendra Ford from her six-month sabbatical. This decision was made to give as many FUUSE members as possible the opportunity to be present for Rev. Ford's return, including the FUUSE members who will be attending the Annual Retreat which takes place Friday, Sept. 10 through Sunday, Sept. 12, 2010. Merrick said this year's post-break schedule could set a pattern for future years, enabling Retreat attendees to be present on the first Sunday of the new church year.

New Business – Green Sanctuary

Sylvia Foster, invoking the seventh UUA Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part," presented two proposals for membership approval:

- 1) A proposal for FUUSE to apply to the UUA for designation as a Green Sanctuary.
- 2) A proposal to adopt a FUUSE Covenant (See Exhibit A – full text) incorporating Green principles and projects.

Speaking from the floor, Jane Oldfield-Spearman offered thanks to the FUUSE Green Team for the work it has already accomplished, and a suggestion that it was important for our children to be actively involved in the Green projects. In reply to a request by Jeremy James for greater clarity about the program, Foster said many of the requirements needed for FUUSE's designation as a Green Sanctuary were familiar to FUUSE from past Green projects undertaken and a number of these, in fact, would be included in the Green Sanctuary application.

After the Moderator asked for motions and seconds on the Green Sanctuary and Covenant proposals, both were adopted.

The meeting was adjourned after exactly one hour, at 11.22 a.m.

EXHIBIT A

Green Sanctuary Covenant

WE, THE MEMBERS and FRIENDS OF FUUSE,

- Recognizing the fragile and interdependent state of our Earth and all living things;
- Recognizing the need to preserve Earth's natural resources;
- Recognizing the need to join with others to bring forth practices based on respect for our planet and its life-giving resources; and
- Recognizing the universal rights of all beings to a clean Earth,

DO, THEREFORE, COVENANT, to the greater community and to future generations, our acceptance of responsibility for sustaining the vitality, beauty and diversity of life in our community and on Earth.

TO THIS END, as members and friends of FUUSE with guidance from the UUA and members of the FUUSE Green Team,

1. We pledge our encouragement to one another in personal and congregational commitment to living this promise through our Unitarian Universalist Principles, including the Seventh Principle, "Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

2. We pledge our commitment to specific projects and activities to

- Incorporate Seventh Principle values and practices into our worship services, celebrations and religious education programs
- Live lightly on the Earth, lessen our impact on the eco-system; and
- Design and/or support programs to raise awareness of human behaviors that promote the health of the living Earth.

Project and Activity examples:

- Our ongoing cleanup in which we clear debris and recyclables from a Seabrook Beach front each month. Families and individuals may join on a one-time or ongoing basis.
- One-time chapel and/or long-term Religious Education programs like "The Butterfly Effect".
- Working as a church and as individuals to reduce our carbon footprints.
- Offering an Adult RE film series on green living and invite other churches to join us.
- Working on an intergenerational Heifer International project.
- Offering Northwest Earth Institute's 8-week course on Voluntary Simplicity at FUUSE.

In short, creating projects together to build awareness and guide us in living our faith through showing respect for all living things.
