



Spring Congregational Meeting Minutes
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Santa Rosa
8 June 2014

Quorum Count – Jeanie Bates, Board of Trustees (BOT) President confirmed that the counted ninety-five (95) member attendees exceeded 20% of membership, constituting a quorum.

Meeting called to order at 9:03 a.m. by Jeanie Bates

Board of Trustees (BOT) Members Present -- Susan Bartholome, Jeanie Bates (President), Lois Bell, Joe Como, John Farison, Laura Jean Hagemen (Vice President), Alan Proulx, Linda Stabler, Cathie Wiese, Marge Wright

Opening Words by Intern Minister, Bryan Plude: “Unending quest for wisdom and love”

Parliamentarian & Recorder – Ellen Skagerberg and Terry Graham were appointed meeting parliamentarian and recorder, respectively.

Agenda Review – No additions. Presentation of a slate of officers & steering committee members of A4SJ was deleted from the agenda.

Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the 16 February 2014 Winter Congregational Meeting were approved as submitted.

Treasurer’s Report – Linda Balabanian, Treasurer and chair of Financial Stewardship (FinStew) gave an overview of the first 10-months of fiscal 2013/14. Thus far, FY13/14 has been on budget. Pledge revenue is over 85% (5/6 of FY) of total budgeted for the year. Pledge revenue is expected to be approximately \$18K greater than that budgeted. Glaser Center net income is on budget. The Sunday basket, donations, and fund raising revenue are under budget. Expenses will be in excess of budget, primarily due to the electrical panel replacement. The Building Systems Replacement Fund is depleted due the effect of electrical panel cost, serving the purpose for which it was created. Employee expenses are within budget. Overall, finances are stable and we expect to finish the year on budget. Our pledge drive for next year failed to meet our budget goal which was \$1.2K average pledge per member/friend. To balance the budget, the Board has had to make some difficult decisions. According to the UUA, a congregation should fully support its operations from pledges, donations and other operational revenue. Fundraisers should be used for funding special projects, capital projects and giving. Our current budget doesn’t accomplish that. There are many special projects that continue to be on our wish lists as well as new hopes and dreams. In response to queries from the floor, Linda stated that (1) the Emergency Fund balance is at \$75K and (2) an e-Scrip educational series will begin in an effort to substantially increase e-Scrip revenue.

Endowment Fund Distribution – Jeanie introduced the BOT request for \$7K from the Endowment Fund for the purpose of start-up costs for the new UUCSR web site. Much discussion ensued before and after the motion was made and seconded from the floor to “transfer \$7K from the Endowment Fund to the Operational Budget for the design, implementation and first-year maintenance of the new UUCSR web site.” Discussion positions included (1) inappropriate for this purpose, (2) very appropriate for this purpose, (3) support for the proposed new web site, (4) tentative schedule for roll-out of the site, (5) the new site’s effect upon future web site operational costs and (6) volunteer roles in site maintenance. With a show of hands, the motion passed with 5 opposed and 4 abstained.

Presentation of the Preliminary Budget -- Kirsten Olney, Budget Task Force (BTF) chair and representative of FinStew listed the BTF members: Linda Balabanian, Sibyl Day, Laura Jean Hageman, Mary Louise Jaffrey, Kirsten and Janis Brewster, staff accountant. Kirsten explained that, per the By-Laws, three presentations of the budget are made to the Congregation: Draft budget at the Winter meeting, Preliminary budget at the Spring meeting (today) and Final budget at the Fall meeting. The BTF has compiled the input from the congregation committees, the staff, and received budget revisions from the BOT. The budget revenue estimate is \$5K greater than the FY13/14 budget, expenses are \$4K less than the FY13/14 budget and there is \$9K of transfers for FY14/15 compared to \$18K for FY13/14 to yield a balanced budget. Kirsten brought attention to the underfunded UUA and PCD dues and that there will be some adjustments as a function of year-end close and currently unknown insurance and staff benefit costs.

Nomination of Nominating Committee – Bob Barrows, Chair, nominated Linda Harlow to serve for a second 2-year term on the Nominating Committee. The motion and second from the floor to elect Linda resulted in some opposition to the concept of the Nominating Committee nominating its own members but the motion passed with zero nay & 1 abstention.

DA Delegate Report – Susan Bartholome presented the delegate’s report from the annual Pacific Coast District (PCD) Assembly in April. Susan was impressed with the inclusion of children and teen’s inclusion in the worship services and intends to work on increasing young persons’ participation at UUCSR. A workshop noted that the changing economy has brought about fewer volunteers for many congregations and a resulting increased need for paid staff. Another workshop offered the perspective on pledging as a “spiritual” practice. Mary Louise Jaffrey’s experience included a Leadership Day workshop entitled “The Antidote to Burnout” which provided creative examples of sharing the load and involving more individuals in solutions. Dorris Lee described the Assemblies as a “grand pooling of ideas” and encourages other members to attend. The DA delegates made a By-Law amendment to eliminate the position of Board of Directors Moderator and assign those duties to the President, which is how we operate at UUCSR. The board also voted to reduce the number of its members from 12 to 9. PCD has a new District Executive who is a psychologist and “a really good bass player” in his other life.

Selection of Congregational Study/Action Issues at General Assembly (GA) – Jeanie explained that each year a study/action issue is selected by the GA which will be central for 4 years. A handout provided a paragraph description of each issue. This is a voting item, contributing to the whole of GA votes. Each UUCSR member was asked to vote on one issue. The resulting tally, which will be sent to GA, is as follows: (1) Empowerment: Age and Ability Reconsidered, Zero votes, (2) Ending the War on Terror, 9 votes, (3) Escalating Inequality, 35 votes, (4) Gun Violence: A Public Health Issue, 38 votes and (5) Renewing & Securing Our American Democracy, 12 votes.

County Living Wage Ordinance – Linda Harlow, Associates for Social Justice (A4SJ), presented a proposal that the congregation support a proposed County living wage ordinance. Linda addressed a handout describing the proposed ordinance. Following a motion and second from the floor and discussions of the proposal, the motion that UUCSR support the Proposed County of Sonoma Living Wage Ordinance passed with 51 aye, 18 nay and 26 abstained.

UUCAN – Linda Harlow recognized group members in addition to herself: Carol Kraemer, Deborah Mason and Helga Lemke. Linda cited North Bay Organizing Project (NBOP) goals & accomplishments, including a central action plan for to encourage people in precincts with low voting registration rates to register and vote as well as task forces on education, immigration, and transportation. NBOP offers opportunities to take action in these areas. Upcoming events include August 2, Noche Sabrosa, dinner, dance and silent auction at Sebastopol Community Church; September 12, Harvest Moon Fundraiser at the Laguna Foundation and October 5, NBOP Public Meeting.

Religious Education (RE) Report – Deborah Mason provided status of the RE programs. There are 54 children and youth registered in the RE program with increased regular attendance, making weekly attendance much higher than previously. There are 13 in the Thursday youth group which are not evidenced as such on Sunday mornings. In the first 3 months, Janet Burrows taught all 3 quarters while Susan Dickey, Mindy Graham, Lois Nagle, Jean Smith and Kitty Wells each taught a quarter. These 6 teachers plus Deborah attempted to accomplish the work of 12. Next year, the plan is to add an additional class exacerbating the problem. As many as 18 teachers are required. Deborah appealed for help, explaining that teachers need not teach the entire year. There are 4 3-month quarters to be divvied. Training for new teachers is scheduled for August 24.

BOT Reports

Community Support & Communication -- Susan Bartholome thanked fellow team members: Jeanie Bates, Lois Bell, Cathie Wiese and Marge Wright. Current initiatives were discussed including the goals to (1) Support communication between board members & congregation members; accomplishments include (a) developing "Ask a Board Member" table on Sunday. Board members have followed up and reported back to the questioners, (b) developed liaison relationships between individual board members & groups within the congregation, (2) Support congregational awareness of opportunities for involvement in our community; accomplishments included hosting the annual Activity Fair, representing many congregational groups, (3) Clarify policies showing administrative pathways; accomplishments included forming Governance Task Force to research governance models & offer results of research to the congregation for deliberation, (4) Increase congregational knowledge of and involvement in NBOP/UUCAN; plans to begin next board year with this as a priority.

Financial – Presented by team members Laura Jean Hageman, Alan Proulx and Linda Stabler. Goal: Assist HR committee to achieve competitive staff salary and benefits; Accomplishments: updated job descriptions and developed new job reclassification process and identified differences between UUA and UUCSR benefits re Life insurance & retirement. Goal: Support effort to increase Endowment Fund, and consider long and short term uses; Accomplishments: Endowment Committee will conduct congregational survey to identify uses of fund. Goal: Explore new methods to enhance financial resources with Financial Stewardship Team; Accomplishments: Promoted Sonoma Clean Power resulting in significant saving in electricity bill and supported changes to increase number of pledging friends and to canvass new members in a timely manner. Goal: Work toward long range financial planning with Financial Stewardship Team led by Treasurer, Linda Balabanian; Accomplishments: Developed plans to involve congregation in building and staff goals & priorities. A Pledge Frequency Distribution chart was briefly discussed, indicating the relatively low median annual pledge contribution with follow-up promised.

Infrastructure -- John Farison thanked his group co-worker, Joe Como. Ongoing activities include facility maintenance as well as analyses of the Sonoma Clean Power option and the electrical panel replacement which was successfully installed in 3 days in April. Plans for the immediate future include (1) new projector system in late June – a mounted overhead & controls sound system, (2) improving front-door intercom + camera, (3) noise reduction in the social hall including sound absorbing ceiling tiles for a currently unfunded \$40K and (5) ongoing infrastructure planning treating Board + Fine Stew + Building Maintenance Teams' criteria and priorities for physical plant additions and matching facilities with ongoing needs.

Appreciations – Cathie Weise presented appreciation awards to Janet Barrows, particularly for Janet's RE efforts and John Farison for his contributions to infrastructure accomplishments and resource championing. Jeanie recognized Lois Bell, John Farison, Laura Jean Hageman and Cathie Weise, who will be leaving the BOT at the end of FY13/14 and Bryan Plude, our Intern Minister who will further pursue his ministerial career.

Closing Words – Bryan Plude reading from "Celebrating Life, Employing People"

Meeting Adjourned by Jeanie Bates at 10:55 a.m.

Respectfully submitted -- Terry Graham