

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN BROOKLYN

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

February 25, 2018

Bruce Wilde, as Clerk, called the meeting to order pursuant to published notice at 12:50 p.m. Based on a show of hands, he found that a quorum of Members was present. He turned the meeting over to Lee Pardee, who was designated by the Board to serve as acting Moderator.

Ms. Pardee called attention to the printed agenda, rules for the meeting proposed by the Board and the Right Relations Covenant.

General Assembly delegates

Dave Garvoille announced that the following persons had been nominated by the Leadership Development Committee as GA delegates and MOVED that they be elected:

Laura Manos-Hey
Lindsey Lee
Liz Komar
Helen Harris
Vonda Brunsting

Marty Bernstein SECONDED.

MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

12:59 p.m. – Finance update

Lake Wise, Treasurer, reported that expenses for the current fiscal year are on budget and that revenues are running ahead of budget, mainly because of higher than expected rental income. He said in addition to the budget, there were expenses for the accessibility project and that matching grant funds might be obtained for that project. He said the status of the fire alarm project was uncertain and that property taxes will be higher.

Mr. Wise said next year's budget will be challenging because (i) rental income is likely to be lower, property taxes will be higher and the prudent draw from the endowment is likely to be lower.

1:07 – Financial stewardship update

Koren Manning reported that \$186,000 in pledges have been received and pledges had been increased, but that more than half the pledging units had yet to pledge. Total pledges for the 2018 fiscal are expected to be \$311,000.

She said that funding staff raises is an important goal of the campaign.

1:16 p.m. – Accessibility project update

Cara Haft reported that the project received Landmarks Commission approval. A change in the specification to provide a larger lift to accommodate motorized wheelchairs will increase the cost by about \$7,500. Total cost is estimated at \$125-150,000. The Our Future Together campaign raises about \$65,000. A private foundation is considering an application to match the Membership contributions.

1:26 p.m. – Property tax issue

Roger Cooper reported that the Society lost exemption on both the parcels and faced a bill for full taxes for two years. The exemption for 48 Monroe has been regained at 50% exempt, which would translate into \$17,000 per year in taxes going forward. An application to restore exemption for 50 Monroe had been filed, awaiting determination.

Because of the uncertainty about the tax liability, he said, the fire alarm project had been suspended and no further sums would be spent on it for the time being.

Members raised the following questions:

- How can the Society avoid similar financial surprises in the future?
- Why is the Membership decision to proceed with the fire alarm project being disregarded?
- What is the current status of the fire alarm system? Mr. Cooper said parts of it work.

A Member requested that periodic written financial updates be provided.

1:52 p.m. – The Moderator noted that the discussion had run over-time. A MOTION to extent time for ten minutes was made and passed on a two-third vote.

Members raised the following further questions and comments:

- Noting a low amount of racial diversity in Society leadership.
- Comment that Board accountability to the Membership appeared to be weak.
- Comment that Member would like to know the building is fire-safe.

Mr. Cooper undertook to call further meetings to report further developments and information that becomes available.

2:03 p.m. – The Moderator noted that the time extension had expired and called for a motion to adjourn. MOTION TO ADJOURN MADE, SECONDED, AND PASSED.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 2:04 p.m.