

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN BROOKLYN

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MAY 20, 2018

(Draft May 23, 2018)

1:00 p.m. – Call to order; quorum; moderator

Mr. Wilde, as Clerk, called the meeting to order pursuant to notice and, based on a show of voting cards, determined that a quorum was present.

Mr. Wilde explained that, since a Moderator has yet to be elected pursuant to the new By-laws that made the Moderator a regular elected officer, the Board had appointed Michael Alcott to serve as Acting Moderator of the Meeting.

Preliminary matters

Mr. Alcott took the Chair. He appointed Patrick Gunn as timekeeper and Liz Davis as parliamentarian.

Mr. Alcott provided an overview of the agenda as set forth as ANNEX A and called attention to the Society's Right Relations Covenant.

Mr. Alcott read the Rules for the Meeting as proposed by the Board and set forth as ANNEX B and called for a motion to adopt the Rules. SO MOVED and SECONDED. PASSED ON SHOW OF HANDS.

Mr. Alcott called for nominations for inspectors of election. Dawn Elane Reed, Rita Pearl were NOMINATED and SECONDED. ELECTED ON SHOW OF HANDS.

1:09 p.m. - Minutes

Mr. Alcott MOVED to approve the minutes of May 21, 2017 (Annual Membership Meeting) and February 25, 2018 (Special Membership Meeting). SECOND. PASSED ON SHOW OF HANDS.

1:10 p.m. – Senior Minister's report

Ms. Levy-Lyons read the list of life cycle events since the last Annual Membership Meeting as follows:

Deaths: Rev. Donald McKinney; and Marie Shloeder.

Family deaths: Jeremy Safran, dear family friend of the Alcott's, the Wilde's, and the Prather's; Coco Wilde's mother, Rosa Moore; Coco Wilde's stepmother, Mildred Manning; Wendy Derevensky's cousin, Linda Storch; Lenny Derevensky's mother, Virginia Derevensky; Lee Pardee's father, Frank Pardee AND mother Gertrude Pardee; Crystal Huyett's mother, Susan Huyett; Garnett Losak's mother, Beverly Ann Farster; and Steve Richett's cousin, Kellene Richetts Nguyen.

Weddings: Jayesh Sheth and Andrea Johnson.

Births: Aranyani and Artemis Mehta, twin daughters of Amit Mehta and Marci Lucia; Micah Douglas Murray, grandson of Garnett Losak; Lucas Robinson-Henrie, child of Matt and Clare Robinson-Henrie; Rosanna Lea Schaffer, child of Kelly & Noah Schaffer; Wythe Van Every, child of Karen and Shawn Van Every and brother of

Oona Van Every; Elliott Yoder, child of Danny Yoder and Tara Kreider; and Cyril Shepherd, child of Sarah Morgan and Jack Shepherd.

Ordination: Stephanie Gannon, April 22, 2018

She reported that this has been a year of spiritual deepening for the congregation, including the adoption of new communal religious practices. She also noted that the congregation and she personally had taken actions related to global warming. She offered a special salute to the Society's music program.

1:15 p.m. – Report of Director of Educational and Family Ministries

Mr. Henry reported 124 children and youth are enrolled in RE programs and about 50 attend on an average Sunday. 10 middle school students are completing OWL. There are seven students in the high school youth group. The RE program is served by 18 volunteer teachers. Several adult education programs have been offered.

1:21 p.m. – State of the Congregation

Ms. Losak referred to the Society's mission statement and strategic plan and reported on activities that have occurred in pursuit of the strategic plan points.

She said the lift to the sanctuary would be installed in the summer or fall and should be ready by October. She said \$70,000 was raised from the congregation for the accessibility project and a grant of \$10,000 has been received (subject to completion of the project).

She reported that a membership of 286 was certified to the UUA in February.

She said the stewardship campaign has received 316,000 in pledges for next fiscal year from 172 pledging units.

She reported the staff has identified about \$9000 in savings in general and administrative items and the Director of Facilities has been able to adjust the heating system to save about ten percent in utility costs.

She said that the Society needs more Members to be active on stewardship and leadership development.

1:40 p.m. – Elections

Mary Most on behalf of the Leadership Development Committee MOVED that Sam McKelvie, John Carroll and Vonda Brusting be elected Trustees. SECOND. There being no other nominations and no contest, the motion was PASSED ON SHOW OF HANDS.

Ms. Most MOVED that Bruce Wilde be elected Clerk and that Michael Alcott be elected Moderator. SECOND. There being no other nominations and no contest, the motion was PASSED ON SHOW OF HANDS.

Alfred Blanco, Senior Deacon, MOVED that that Bob Bero be elected a Deacon. SECOND. PASSED ON SHOW OF HANDS.

1:45 p.m. – Committee on Ministry

Tom Check, on behalf of the Committee on Ministry, described the functions of the Committee, introduced its members, and invited anyone with views on the health of the Congregation or the ministry to bring those to a member of the Committee.

1:47 p.m. - Budget

Mr. Alcott requested that questions about the proposed budget be submitted in writing.

Lake Wise, the Treasurer, presented the budget as proposed by the Board and set forth as ANNEX C.

He said that an excess draws of approximately \$60,000 have been made in the current fiscal year to pay back taxes that were due.

He said that next fiscal year, the excess draw would be approximately \$42,000, nearly equal to the amount by which property taxes will be higher than amounts budgeted last year. He pointed out the budget provides for staff raises of three percent and for employing custodians instead of contracting for cleaning services.

He said that for future years, plans included seeking to offset or eliminate the property tax increase by seeking reimbursement from Imagine or by switching to a not-for-profit tenant for the daycare space and seeking ways to reduce spending on employee health insurance.

Lee Pardee, Chair of the Finance Committee, MOVED adoption of the budget. SECOND.

Mr. Alcott read written questions on the budget and answers were given as follows:

Q: Explain the total excess draw amount shown as \$111,000. Mr. Wise said it would cover the \$42,000 shortfall in the operating budget (to pay property tax) and to complete the accessibility project. Mr. Cooper said that does not include \$60,000 previously drawn for the accessibility project.

Q: Explain about the audit. Mr. Wise said the previous audit cost \$5,000 and was actually a limited review. He believes that a volunteer audit committee can do what is required at a lower cost.

Q: Will employed custodians receive benefits? Mr. Wise said they would.

Q: Who was the auditor? Mr. Wise provided the name of the firm.

Q: Is there a plan for a capital campaign? Mr. Cooper said it has been discussed, but that would be for the next Board to decide.

Q: How does the budget relate to congregational life? Mr. Cooper referred to Ms. Losak's annual report.

Q: What is the balance of the endowment? Were there tax penalties? Mr. Wise provided an endowment balance and said no tax penalties had been assessed.

Q: Will there be additional back taxes? Mr. Wise said no, but property taxes are higher going forward.

Q: What happened to the OFT contributions? Ms. Pardee said they have been spent on the accessibility project.

Q: What is the Society's fair share contribution to the UUA? Mr. Wise said it would be about \$25,000. \$500 has been budgeted.

Q: What are the consequences of excess draws from the endowment? Mr. Wise said the endowment balance and the available amount of the prudent draw would be reduced.

Q: What plans are there to prevent excess draws in the future? Imagine may contribute to the property taxes or it may be replaced with a non-profit. Capital projects will be completed and are not recurring.

2:22 p.m. – Mr. Alcott opened the floor for debate on the budget.

Mitch Major said he is concerned that, since the budget is already in a deficit during a bull market, the next bear market could threaten the survival of the Society.

Ms. Pardee said she is pleased the budget provides staff raises and would be in surplus were it not for the increased property taxes. She believes the deficit situation will prove temporary.

Nancy Wolf said she sees a continuing pattern of overspending. She thinks there should be an external audit. She would like to see a balanced budget.

Mr. Wanjohi said he thinks the endowment is for emergencies and that the unexpected increase in property tax and the need to pay back taxes was an emergency. He supports the budget as presented.

Connie Newsom said she is against using the endowment for the operating budget; that it should be reserved for capital projects. She observed the budget makes no provision for the fire safety project, which she expects will lead to further excess draws. She called for a capital campaign.

2:34 p.m. – Mr. Wilde called for the question. On a show of hands, Mr. Alcott announced that the question had been called.

The main motion then PASSED ON A COUNTED VOTE of 45 in favor and 15 opposed.

The agenda having been completed, Mr. Alcott adjourned the meeting at 2:39 p.m.