

FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN BROOKLYN

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

MAY 16, 2021

(BRW draft 6/29/2021)

Pursuant to the Bylaws of the Society that provide that the Annual Membership Meeting shall be held on the third Sunday of May each year and a notice to Members, Michael Alcott, Moderator, called the meeting to order at 12:46 p.m. To maintain physical distance during the COVID pandemic, the meeting was held via ZOOM teleconference. Mr. Alcott announced that an examination of the participants in the Zoom meeting showed that a quorum existed.

Ana Levy-Lyons, Senior Minister offered opening words.

Mr. Alcott welcomed Members to the Meeting and referred to the Meeting Agenda (ANNEX A), Meeting Rules (ANNEX B) and Rights Relations Covenant (ANNEX C) that had been made available on the website.

Mr. Alcott announced that Lake Wise would act as Parliamentarian, Liz Davis and Mary Most would act as inspectors of election and Mary Most would also act as timekeeper.

12:52 – Senior Minister's report

Mr. Alcott recognized the Senior Minister. Ms. Levy-Lyons reported that the activities and response of the Membership in this program year have shown that First U was essential during the pandemic. She said the congregation has not just survived but thrived. She praised the efforts of the staff and noted that worship on ZOOM successfully adapted many of the congregation's traditions to the ZOOM environment. She said that pastoral care has also been maintained under the leadership of Ethan Loewi, Ministerial Intern. She also reported on life cycle events, including deaths and births in the congregation.

12:58 p.m. – Board Co-Presidents' report

Mr. Alcott recognized the Co-Presidents, Colleen Olson and Amit Mehta.

Ms. Olson reported that organizational changes include formation of a Legacy Society and the hiring of Bobby Blackman as full-time custodian. She said the winter appeal raised over \$15,000 from 92 donors and that a tech team has been formed to oversee an upgrade of streaming of worship on the Internet. She recognized Vonda Brunsting, Sam McKelvie and John Carroll, who are leaving the Board after completing their terms as Trustees, and Bruce Wilde, who is leaving his position as Clerk. She said the leadership expects to resume worship in the sanctuary September 12.

Mr. Mehta reported on highlights of the program year in the areas of congregational resources, spiritual growth, social justice and green justice. A Board committee was formed (TDI) to better match volunteers with congregational needs. A Capital Review Group was formed to develop short-term and long-term plans for building renewal and improvements. The budget achieves progress in moving to a sustainable level of endowment draws. He also offered a farewell to Chris Johnson and praised his accomplishments as Facilities Director. He also reported that a new space sharing agreement with Imagine is nearly complete and it will benefit the Society financially.

1:19 p.m. – Report of the Director of Educational and Family Ministries

Mr. Alcott Recognized Meagan Henry. She reported she has focused on building resiliency within the congregation by maintaining and building relationships and on training Sophie Major, the RE Assistant. She said a main goal for the coming year will be to reconnect with the young children for whom on-line RE has not worked well.

1:23 p.m. – Minutes

Lee Pardee MOVED approval of the minutes of the June 2020 Annual Membership Meeting. SECOND by Kay Corkett. Motion PASSED on a show of hands with none opposed and two abstentions.

1:26 p.m. – Leadership Development Committee and Election

Mr. Alcott recognized June Wohlhorn of the LDC. She reported that the LDC had nominated the following persons:

For Trustee: Carolyn Ellis (to complete the term of Andrew Bongiorno, expiring in 2022) and Mary Huhn, Judith Sedaitis and Jay Sheth (to three-year terms).

For Clerk: Elees Woods

For Moderator: Michael Alcott

For members of the LDC: Cara Haft and Sam McKelvie (to three-year terms).

Since no other nominations had been made, Ms. Wohlhorn MOVED as provided in the Bylaws, that the Committee's nominees be elected. SECOND by Nancy Witherell. Motion PASSED unanimously on a show of hands.

1:31 p.m. – Treasurer's report and Budget

Mr. Alcott recognized Pat Steele, the Treasurer. She reported the endowment is just over \$5 million, up 12% since January 2020. The endowment is conservatively invested, with no investments in fossil fuel, tobacco or weapons producers. The Board recently authorized investing a small portion in a portfolio of companies involved in counteracting climate change. The sustainable draw, based on the past 13 quarters, is \$166,145. She said that although financial planning has been difficult during the pandemic, she estimates that the Society will end fiscal 2021 with revenues of 94% of budget and expenditures of 93% of budget and that the final endowment draw will be \$38,000 in excess of sustainable (versus a budgeted \$57,000 excess).

She said that the proposed fiscal 2022 operating budget calls for an increase of 1% in revenues (with increased rental revenue being offset by a decrease in pledge income and fund-raising). It calls for a 2% decrease in expenditures (a slight increase in salaries (1.4% for all, except Sophie Major will be paid more because her hours are being increased) being offset by a decrease in program expenditures). The endowment draw is budgeted to be \$18,000 over sustainable. She also reviewed the proposed fiscal 2022 capital budget.

There was a question if green building improvements are included in the fiscal 2022 capital budget. Ms. Steele said they are not.

There was a question if repairs to the organ (included in the fiscal 2022 capital budget) would be done before September. Adam Podd said they would not.

There was a question if investment earnings are included in the capital budget. Ms. Steele said the capital budget includes earnings on the capital reserve fund.

1:55 p.m. Budget

Ms. Steele MOVED adoption of the fiscal 2022 operating and capital budgets as presented (and attached as ANNEX D). SECOND by Amit Mehta. Motion PASSED on a show of hands with none opposed and one abstaining.

1:59 p.m. – Capital Review Group

Mr. Alcott recognized Lee Pardee and Tom Check of the CRG. Ms. Pardee reviewed the developments leading to the launch of the Capital Campaign: repair projects on the buildings have continued during the pandemic year; prior to the pandemic, the buildings served numerous functions for various groups in the community; a 15-year plan for repair and maintenance of the buildings has been prepared; a separate capital budget has been prepared to isolate significant repair and maintenance projects from the Society's annual operating budget.

Mr. Check explained more details: the 15-year, 70-item, \$1.5 million repair and maintenance plan indicates the goal for the Capital Campaign should be set at \$500,000; all Members would be approached to make pledges to the Campaign, based on a guideline of three times each member's annual pledge.

Mr. Check MOVED approval of the 15-year repair and maintenance plan set forth as ANNEX E and that the goal for the Capital Campaign be set at \$500,000. SECOND by Ms. Pardee.

There was a question if solar PV panels has been approved for the building. Mr. Check said they had not, but are under consideration if the Capital Campaign is successful.

The motion PASSED on a show of hands with none opposed and one abstention.

2:23 p.m. – Internship Evaluation Committee

Mr. Alcott recognized Intern Minister Ethan Loewi. He thanked the Evaluation Committee and said that First U has given him an opportunity to grow as a minister and that he would like to be ordained by the Society. He also reported that he will be working next year as a chaplain at Massachusetts General Hospital.

Amit Mehta MOVED to ordain Mr. Loewi. SECOND by Mark Permuter. Motion PASSED unanimously on a show of hands.

The agenda having been completed, Mr. Alcott ADJOURNED the meeting at 2:31 p.m.