

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF HUNTINGTON

## Annual Congregational Meeting Part I

Sunday, April 25, 2010

12 PM

- I. Call to Order
- II. Previous Minutes
- III. Annual Reports
- IV. Report of the Nominating Committee
- V. Elections
- VI. Affiliated Community Minister
- VII. Other Business
- VIII. Adjournment

**UNITARIAN-UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP  
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING, PART II  
JUNE 7, 2009**

Board of Trustees President Marc Leopold called the meeting to order at 12:25pm.

Other Board of Trustees in attendance: Maria Nielsen (VP), Joan Caly (Treasurer), Dorothy Burns (Secretary), Ken Buley-Neumar, Barbara Grey, Carol Lemke, Linda Paul-Elem and Ben Testa.

The meeting was held in the UUFH Main Hall. All congregants in attendance received the Annual Congregational Meeting Part II Handout. The Secretary noted that there was a quorum, as determined by the sign-in sheets.

Just prior to the meeting's "Call to Order", the President informed the attendees that a copy of the latest "Peacemaking Statement of Conscience" is available for review and comment. The Statement will be voted upon at the June 2009 General Assembly (GA).

After the "Call to Order" the President made the following announcements:

- The BoT passed a resolution at its last Business Meeting enabling each 2009 GA delegate to vote his or her conscience as to whom they prefer as our next Unitarian-Universalist Association (UUA) President, namely, Rev. Peter Morales or Rev. Dr. Laurel Hallman.
- A discussion will be conducted at the 2009 GA concerning proposed changes to the Unitarian Universalist "Principles and Purposes".
- The Budget Committee did an outstanding job to finalize the budget that will be presented at today's Part II Meeting. Special thanks were directed to Susan Peters (Budget Committee Chair), Joan Caly (Treasurer) and Kathryn Johnson (Canvass Chair).
- To please use the microphones made available at the head of the left aisle, the middle aisle, or ask for the hand-held microphone.

**Previous Minutes**

The Minutes of the April 5, 2009, Congregational Meeting Part I were accepted unanimously as written: David Yens (Motion-to-Accept)/Bill Hecker (Seconded).

**Annual Reports**

The following Annual Reports were distributed as part of the Annual Congregational Meeting Part II Handout: Paul Ratzlaff (Minister), Marc Leopold (BoT President), Carolyn Freud (UUFH Director of Religious Exploration), and the reports from the following committees – Endowment, Beyond-Our-Walls (BOW), Committee of Congregational Ministry (CoCM), Journey Toward Wholeness (JTW), Service Auction, Marketing & Advertising (MAP), Office Volunteers, and Sound Support.

After a brief review time by those in attendance, no comments were offered.

**The 2009-2010 Budget**

Joan Caly (Treasurer) presented the UUFH 2009-2010 Budget Proposal. Six slides accompanied her remarks:

1. How did the Budget Committee arrive at the 2009-2010 Budget
2. Possible ways to balance the 2009-2010 Budget
3. How pledges have decreased

4. How the Budget was balanced
5. How the Budget was balanced (continued)
6. Where are we now?

It was noted that about 40 congregants had attended the Sunday, May 17, 2009 Budget Forum. At that session, an unbalanced budget was presented, which in turn was published in the recent Beacon Newsletter.

Feedback received by those that were at the Budget Forum, as well as from those received by follow-up contact with congregants (verbal and emails), served as factors to the decision to present a "balanced budget" at the Part II Meeting.

In addition, it became obvious that a detailed explanation was in order to make the congregation understand what was done to enable a balanced 2009-2010 budget.

#### Points Noted:

- The need arose to overcome a \$54,126 pledge income deficit (comparing FY 2009-2010 with FY 2008-2009)
- The use of "institutional memory" (supplied by the Finance Committee) concerning situations where actual expenditure and budget gaps existed
- Forecast conservative ("realistic") projections of income
- Examine all pros and cons for each expense-savings and income-generation line-item and idea put forward, including its effect upon the Fellowship's mission and vision
- Employ three criteria to gauge an action's effect upon the deficit and the operation of the Fellowship:
  1. Reducing expenses (e.g., programs, building), including putting off the Beyond-Our-Wall (BOW) contribution, as well as the minister's mortgage payback, while increasing rents and fees
  2. Negotiate a cut in the current mortgage's interest rate, borrow from reserves, defer payback of previously borrowed reserves
  3. Cut staff position (RE Assistant) and staff hours (Fellowship Administrator)
- Make the tough decisions necessary to balance the budget
- To aid the financial decision-making the BoT will be holding "quarterly reviews" with the congregation, with the goal that those in attendance will leave the meeting both informed and invested.

After the six-slide presentation, Joan Caly (Treasurer) moved that the budget be passed as presented. Sue McGovern seconded the motion.

#### Discussion of Budget Handouts:

A congregant asked for an assessment of what the balanced 2009-2010 Budget would mean to the "life of the Fellowship"?

- Rev. Paul commented on the effects of both labor cuts:
  1. Elimination of the RE Assistant -- most likely will affect the young families connection with the Fellowship in terms of services and attention given
  2. Lowering hours of Administrator -- not entirely possible to read what the affect will be.
- Other comments made by various Budget Committee members:
  - It was brought to the congregation's attention that to be able to create a DRE position at the Fellowship, it was necessary to state that it was "our goal" to hire an RE Assistant, hence the fear is that with the release of the Assistant RE we will be going backward and this may have ramifications with the UUA
  - The balanced budget will, most likely, mean that to provide adequate DRE and office support, more volunteer hours will be necessary
  - Congregants will be hearing "leadership-led challenges" that will ask for more congregants to get involved with Membership (retaining current and attracting new

- members), Stewardship (volunteering aspects), Fund Drives (ideas and support), etc.
- Paper is a costly item, and therefore to somewhat alleviate this expense, the greater use of email will be encouraged, as well as the use of lower weight paper stock for RE and Sunday Services
- Other questions and comments offered by congregants:
  - “Wouldn’t it be best to retain the RE Assistant since the DRE is scheduled to go on 6-month sabbatical?” Answer: Because of the fact that the current RE Assistant does not have either the qualifications or the UUA certifications necessary to undertake the DRE responsibilities, the DRE sabbatical will need to be coordinated to minimize any effects.
  - A congregant stated that a greater “intensity of ownership” of the Fellowship is necessary by all of our congregants, and thus we all need to “step-up-to-the-plate”, further noting that all congregants need to think of their contribution as comprised of one or more of the following: “Time, Talent, Treasure”.
  - Couldn’t we use “coffee duty”, and possibly event setup, or something along those lines, as a way to get new members to make connections within the congregation? The Membership and Sunday Services Committees have looked into this but have not recommended it be adopted for our congregation, however, we can look into some form of this as to its applicability at our Fellowship.

A congregant asked to clarify the term “Minister’s Mortgage”. The Treasurer indicated that it is a “reserve” used for a new minister if the new minister needs help to obtain a mortgage. Rev. Paul did not make a request for funds, whereas a number of past ministers have.

The Budget Committee Chair reported that the Fellowship does not use endowment income to cover income/expense shortfalls. It was noted that the current endowment is paying 6%.

#### The 2009-2010 Budget Vote

Bill Hecker made a motion that the 2009-2010 Budget being proposed be passed as is. Zoë Taylor seconded. **The ’09-’10 Budget passed unanimously.**

#### The 2008-2009 Budget

A congregant asked about this year’s (2008-2009) expected income vs. expenses, that shows a deficit of \$13,301 and how that affects the 2009-2010 balanced budget? It was noted by the President that the 2008-2009 deficit, whatever it turns out to be, does not affect the presented 2009-2010 balanced budget because past year deficits only affect the Fellowship’s balance sheet in terms of our net worth. This is the same manner, as deficit would affect the shareholders’ equity of a profit-making organization. Because of the 2008-2009 situation, the Budget Committee was careful to employ very conservative income projections for 2009-2010.

The President assured the congregation that the Fellowship has a very strong balance sheet, especially in the light that our liabilities are <10% of our total assets. He, and a Budget Committee member, explained that the Fellowship’s Budget is a “framework” upon which we can monitor our income and expenses, whereas the Fellowship’s Balance Sheet is truly a reflection of the financial history of the Fellowship and, in our case, the Fellowship’s financial strength.

## Bylaw Changes

- Beyond-Our-Walls (BOW):

A new bylaw, to be incorporated as Article VIII, Section 8.2, Number 11 was offered for a congregational vote. If passed, it will clarify succinctly the role, responsibilities and membership of the BOW Committee, thus making it a formal part of the Fellowship's structure and community.

The Treasurer made the motion to accept the BOW bylaw addition to the Fellowships Bylaws. Johanna Leopold seconded. No discussion ensued. Kathryn Johnson called the question.

**The new BOW Committee Bylaw, Article VIII, Section 8.2, Number 11 passed unanimously, except for one (1) abstention.**

The new Beyond-Our-Walls Committee (BOW) bylaw will read:

“The BOW Committee shall use its financial resources to support UUFH members in working toward social justice and social service in the larger community.

- The Committee shall consist of six members who shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees for staggered three-year terms.
- The Committee shall accept and evaluate written proposals from congregants for events/projects which will further the BOW mission. They will make recommendations to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- The BOW Committee will accept, review and approve requests for the Split-Plate Recipient for each month.
- The Committee shall make a report to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting.
- The Committee shall publicize, promote, foster and develop ideas within the Congregation to further their work.”

- Pledge/Contribution:

A change to current wording of Article II, Section 2.2, which gives the option to the congregant member the ability to make either a “pledge” or a “recorded contribution” was offered for a congregational vote. If passed, a pledge will be the sole means for a member to meet his or her financial responsibility to the Fellowship, notwithstanding fund-raising event participation (e.g., Service Auction).

The President stated that the BoT is recommending this bylaw change to ensure a “commitment” to the Fellowship, rather than also having a “recorded contribution” means of Fellowship support. The President indicated that it is important for financial planning to have pledge commitments in place when formulating the budget. It was also noted that the Fellowship has a mechanism for members to reduce their pledge during the fiscal year should that be necessary.

It was noted that if a congregant member fills out and signs a pledge card, even if it is for zero dollars (\$0) for that Fellowship Year, they shall retain their membership for that year. However the point being that they must fill out, sign and submit a pledge card regardless of the amount being pledged, even if zero dollars (\$0). The count of all signed pledge cards received adds up to the amount of members the congregation has, which is reported to the UUA on a yearly basis.

It was also pointed out, by the President, that the definition of a “Fellowship Friend” retains its current meaning as stated in the current bylaws.

The Financial Committee Chair indicated that at a minimum, a representative of the Committee, along with the Minister, review the membership list each Fellowship Year.

The Forward Through the Ages Program (FORTH) was mentioned as a possible means of working with the congregants to grow the advocacy of our Fellowship.

It was stated by a congregant that Emeritus Status for members who have moved to new locations beyond the ability to participate in UUFH life should be considered in the count of members. Membership will look into this.

Carol Towne called the question.

**The change to the Pledge/Contribution Bylaw, Article II, Section 2.2, was passed unanimous, except for three (3) abstentions.**

The revised Financial Support Article II, Section 2.2 will read:

“Each Member shall provide financial support to the Fellowship with an annual paid pledge. The minimum level of annual financial support shall be determined each year by the Board of Trustees. Cases of financial hardship shall receive individual consideration.”

- Borrowing From Endowment:

A change to the current wording of Article IX, Section 9.4.3 to expand the reasons to borrow from the endowment was offered for a vote: Adding “serious financial circumstances” as another permitted reason for borrowing from the Endowment Fund, keeping the approval for taking such action by a 2/3 vote of those present at a Congregational Meeting.

The Treasurer made the motion to pass the revised bylaw as written. Annabel Caner seconded.

Comments and suggestions to changes to the revision were:

- A question arose as to the legality of changing this bylaw, whereupon the VP indicated that they are familiar with NY State laws regarding endowments, and the wording being advocated is permissible
- The wording “such borrowing is secured”, means the congregation promises to pay the Fellowship back, hence the word “secured”
- The Finance Committee Chair made the suggestion that instead of employing 2/3 of the congregation members present to vote on borrowing from the Endowment Fund, the requirement should be ¾ of those present. This suggestion was considered a friendly amendment.
  - Susan Peters made the motion to accept the ¾ Proviso, Bill Hecker seconded the motion
  - A point-of-order to delay the adoption of the entire bylaw change was put forth because there seem to be some concerns
  - After further discussion, those present requested we proceed with the ¾ Proviso vote
  - Helen Boxwill called the motion to accept the ¾ Proviso

The ¾ Proviso was passed 20 For, 7 Opposed, 3 Abstentions

With the passage of the ¾ Proviso, Treasurer Joan Caly called for a motion to pass the Borrowing from the Endowment Fund bylaw as written and amended with the ¾ Proviso. Julie Owen seconded.

**The revised Borrowing from the Endowment Fund Bylaw, Article IX, Section 9.4.3, was passed: 26 For, 5 Opposed, 1 Abstention.**

The revised Borrowing from the Endowment Fund, Article IX, Section 9.4.3 will read:

“The Congregation may borrow from the Principal of the Fund, under serious financial circumstances or for capital improvements, provided such borrowing is secured and made subject to reasonable rates of interest and terms of repayment. Such loan must be approved at a duly-called Congregational meeting by a three-quarter vote of those Members of the Congregation present. The call to the meeting shall be mailed at least fourteen days in advance of the meeting.”

### ***New Business***

There was no new business offered by those in attendance.

### ***Adjournment***

The President called for the adjournment of the Annual Congregational Meeting, Part II, at 1:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ben Testa

## **ANNUAL REPORTS**

### **DRE RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

The DRE Relations Committee has met periodically with the Director of Religious Exploration, Carolyn Freud during the past year as needed. The Committee has provided positive input, support, and reinforcement relating to her goals. It also has provided a bridge for the covenant between her and the Fellowship. The DRE Relations committee also assists the RE Committee during Carolyn's sabbatical.

Submitted by Dove Thomas

### **NOT NECESSARILY SENIORS**

February 20, 2010

The Not Necessarily Seniors Group met the first and third Wednesdays of every month. There were between 12 and 24 attendees at each meeting. Several presentations were made by members of the group during the course of the year: Bill Hecker talked about the history of the Koran which was followed by a question and answer period, Marty Lipnick showed a DVD entitled “Three Cups of Tea” based on a book which described a program in Afghanistan to build schools, and Marsha Tovim gave the group a lesson in Origami. In addition, several field trips were taken including one to the Nassau County Museum of Art.

### **UU READING GROUPS 2009-2010**

The original UU Reading group was started by Marilyn Kopp-Hecker and Ann Scolnick 13 years ago and presently has 15 members. We discuss fiction, non-fiction, old and new books selected from suggestions by our group. Members take turns hosting and leading the monthly discussions.

Because the first group was fully subscribed, Anne Rattinger started a second group, which is open to all and announces its selection and meeting place in the Beacon.

Marilyn-Kopp Hecker, Anne Rattinger, Ann Scolnick

### **WILL HENDRIE BOOK STALL**

The Book Stall opens most Sunday after the service and is “manned” by Gerri Farrell, Coordinator. We sell CDs by many of our talented members and books of interest to the congregation upon recommendation by the minister, RE Director, or congregants. Some of the books are used in the Adult Education courses. We also do a brisk business in used books brought in by our members. Some of the used books are read and then brought back for a second resale! We have bumper stickers, bookmarks and other UU-oriented items. Our *UUFH Cookbook* and the *History of our Fellowship-50 Years* are also on hand for purchase at our Book Stall.

We also have CDs of the Sunday services and memorial services for borrowing. Come and take a look and maybe make a purchase!

Gerri Farrell

### **GOODBYE TO MOTHERS' GROUP**

Twenty years ago my infant daughter Danielle and I attended an afternoon mothers' group that was being run by Cathi Zillmann at the Fellowship. I loved the camaraderie and conversation with other Fellowship moms who had children the same age—women who are still my good friends today. But the conversations were so interesting that I found myself getting annoyed that our children—our original purpose for being there—interrupted us with dirty diapers and requests for juice and toy rescues. So I formed Mothers' Night Out, a tradition that has existed for 19 years, whereby we moms would get together without our children in one of our homes on a weeknight to laugh and share our thoughts on subjects I won't divulge here. It was a precious part of my life and I personally could not have gotten through the ups and downs of parenting without the support of these mom friends. And our Annual Ornament Exchange became a holiday staple that kicked off the season for us all. Many women can point to ornaments on their tree each year and remember my ridiculous rules (hopefully fondly) that led to them getting there. Nineteen years ago I also became chair of the Mothers' Group and until recently we provided meals, child care and support whenever a mom had a new baby or a crisis.

But my infant daughter is 20 now and many of the children who were in those early groups are even older. I have not been able to devote the time I should to Mothers' Group, and it has been a challenge for me to find moms to host a weeknight gathering. I'd like to think that the need that was so vital to me all those years ago is being met in other ways for moms of younger children in our congregation. If they're not, I'm sorry that I have not been able to make that happen. In either case, it's time for me to officially pass the torch so that a group that can better meet

moms' needs can be formed. I hope that someone else will want to revive Mothers' Group or create something new. I'm always here for guidance or to answer questions.

I have just one request: I would still like to host the annual ornament exchange before Christmas each year for all Fellowship women. The need for a mothers' group has perhaps passed for me, but never the joy I get from spending time in conversation with my Fellowship sisters.

Liza Burby