

Church of the Larger Fellowship

Board of Directors

Minutes

Friday, October 7, 2005

Visioning and Covenant (2 groups, met separately to report later)

Board Reconvened

Present: Denny Davidoff, Frank Wells, Ken Gross, Laurel Amabile, Ken Gross, Jane Rzepka (Sr. Minister, staff), Lynda Bluestein, Iris Hardin (clerk, staff), Tad Crawford, Terry Robinson, Brad Greeley, John Lees, Harold Babcock, and Lois Reborne.

Reading, Laurel read from *How We Are Called*.

Vision Group's Report from Morning Session

Our vision for the CLF is a worldwide, 24/7 church without walls, inclusive and accessible, transcending life stages, connecting to people who need the UU faith and values through the best technologies available to reach the broadest membership. (This is for the Board – an internal statement – not the external community.)

Attributes:

- Growing numbers
- Broadening participation of congregation
- Culture of generosity of giving
- Culture of abundance
- Highly visible
- Fully staffed
- Fully funded
- In Right relationship w/ UUA, et. al.
- Brilliant RE resources: quality, diversity, quantity, delivery
- Members' deepening spiritual growth
- Multiple channels (media, technologies)
- Mass customization

Covenant Group's Report from Morning Session

“Walking together in mutual love and support.”

The Board covenants with one another to:

- Treat one another in a fair and respectful manner consistent with the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

- Cultivate an attitude of attentiveness, care, concern and understanding for one another.
- Commit to staying in relationship during times of disagreement, communicating openly and honestly, listening to one another, working toward and honoring a common understanding, ultimately speaking with one voice.
- To uphold a vision of the CLF that transcends our individual perspectives.
- Attend and actively participate in scheduled Board meetings, and in the board committee activities between meetings.
- Respond promptly as possible to email correspondence, phone contacts and telecoms.
- Be responsible for performing the agreed to tasks within the established time frame, reassigning tasks as needed to ensure their completion.

With staff to:

- To provide strategic direction, policy guidance, and reasonable expectations for the work of the staff.

With the CLF membership to:

- Enter into active relationship by developing channels of two-way communications.
- Commit to the transparency of our proceedings.
- Participate in the work of the congregations as members.

General discussion:

Conventional wisdom says it takes 2 years to move to policy governance.

Terry Robinson – Composition of the Board (Robinson)

Terry recommended that the board consider setting new criteria for the Nominating Committee that would include more diversity. After much discussion, it was decided that Terry would offer a motion to the board on Saturday morning.

April 2005 Minutes (Davidoff)

- Brad moved to accept. John seconded. Unanimously accepted.

Sr. Minister's Report (Rzepka)

Board members had received a copy of Jane's written report. Jane highlighted the following "news flashes":

- Jane negotiated a new uu&me contract – 13.5 to 17.5K, beginning July '06. The whole thing is going exceedingly well.
- PayPal – this online payment system will make it easier for younger members (CYFers to pay).
- Experimenting with different packaging to bring in small revenue streams – RE CLiF notes (online curriculum) and RE *Quest* columns. Subscriptions services for RE educators. Links actively go into their mailboxes.

- Update on Build Your Own Sundays – People will be able to search a database of more than 1000 of our worship service elements. We've been keywording these. People will be able to make their own services, with a printed order of service.

Denny requested a list of Grant Proposals twice a year – Board members serve on grant panels, know good language to use in grants, etc. Jane is all for that.

Jane says we need a Membership Volunteer Coordinator, Web Content Manager, Development Person, Web Worship Person, and Grant Writer. All part time positions. Board seems especially supportive of Development position.

Nominating Committee (Babcock)

Harold has been in conversation w/ Jane and Linda Lou Burciaga (but not yet Carol Orts). They will meet in the very near future. They have lots of names, but they are open to receiving more. They are replacing Brad Greeley, Terry Robinson and Harold Babcock from the Board. (Note: Laurel Amabile later announced that she would need to step down from the Board, having assumed a new position with the UUA. See below.) Harold will complete his term on the Nominating Committee. Carol's term is running out on the Nominating Committee. A Board person needs to go on the Nominating Committee.

Brad and Harold represent 2 of our 3 Board ordained ministers. The CYF would like to submit a name. The suggestion has been made that the CYF submit 2 names – we may pick two, or one may have the best complementary skills. **The Nom. Comm. would like CYF names by February 1st.**

Letter from Bill Sinkford (Davidoff)

We got a letter from Bill Sinkford saying we contributed our Fair Share and gave \$16K+ -- more than 20% over what we gave last year.

Finance Reports (Lees, Dudley)

2005 –we're on track to meet or exceed our member contribution budget of \$246K. There is a \$4K contingency budget item, however, and we will likely not make that. We'll likely be \$2K under in jewelry sale profits. We're not sure if there will be a Katrina effect in membership contributions. It appears as if there will, based on Full Member electronic contributions and the number of checks Donna has received.

2006 – Brad thinks an 18% increase in member contributions next year is a very tough sell.

Only 3 churches contributed to 2nd offering. The biggest giver was Reading, MA at \$1,300 out of the \$2,000 given to date. The Board has lots to do on this front.

Brad made one call and, as a result, has a tentative date for a CLF second offering for Easter '06 with one church.

Even w/ aggressive revenue assumptions, we still have a \$9,200 deficit in this budget.

Cutting staff raises (excluding sr. minister and executive director) from 4% to 3% would save only \$1K. Cutting an issue of Quest would save \$4K. CYF will break even or be in the black in 2006.

There was some confusion over the uu&me budget item. Until the new contract, we've netted zero; with the new contract, we may net a few hundred dollars.

Reducing the draw against our Endowment has been tremendous. Thanks to John!

The board would like to know how the staff FTE's (full time equivalents) compare from year to year.

Investment Performance (Gross)

The UUA gets monthly performance reports, but they send reports only quarterly. Ken hasn't gotten September report yet.

We have roughly \$1.2M; but can't get timely endowment information even online. Ken will speak with the UUA Investment Committee in an effort to obtain more timely reports.

Ken will report an internal rate of return when he sends out endowment information. Historical numbers would be great.

Fundraising (Greeley)

- Spoke about stewardship.
- Board Canvass
- Passed out packets for member canvass calls.
- Second Offerings – Before calling churches about second offerings, callers will email Brad's letter about second offerings to remind them of the cause. Once a church agrees w/ a date, we'll send an informational packet. Lynda has a contact for John; this contact knows about churches that have tried second offerings. John has a commitment from Rev. Dan King of August, GA that King's church will do a CLF second offering sometime near the Easter timeframe. (Iris will snail mail John the District Pie chart to share with Lynda's contact.)

Laurel Amabile's Resignation

Laurel will have to resign from her CLF Board position because she will be working for the UUA starting in June. She will lead the Annual Program Fund.

Long-range Fundraising Plans (Wells) – Frank read through his report.

- Frank wishes we would communicate beyond *Quest* on a regular basis. More of a "touch" with congregants.
- Fundraising – we should consider raising cost of COL (subscription w/ credit card; \$35/mo); go after planned giving more aggressively (folks can give orders of magnitude more in estate gifts/assets). How do we go about "professionalizing" our planned giving? How do we do "the ask"? Would the UUA partner with us for umbrella giving? Major gifts – tied to a specific project or purchase.

- Stewardship – We’re missing the whole tier of top givers that most big churches see. Some of our members feel as though they are simply paying for a subscription to *Quest*.
- Occasional communication from Jane. Cultivation. Nothing to do with money. Denny and Frank will consult on the hiring of a Development person. Major donor may stake us for a year on the hiring of a half-time person.

2006 CYF Budget (Wells)

The Board decided to vote on the CYF '06 budget the following, but it will give the new Steering Committee a chance to tweak it (keeping the bottom line at zero).

The CYF had a fabulous GA. The CLF made the decision to go ahead w/ funding in April, the CYF web site went live 2 weeks before GA. By end of GA, they had 100 members. A worrisome stewardship issue may be that all young adults see themselves as poor and expect to give as little as possible. Many appear to feel CYF should be free. Frank is trying to encourage CYF leadership to go to a more aggressive stewardship model.

Michael Tino is getting involved with the model, which is helping.

The Steering Committee was just elected; 4 carried over from the original start-up and 3 are new. **Frank will provide names and contact information:**

Erik David Carlson and Jonathon Craig are now working as web masters as ex officio members. There was a great article in the first online version of UUWorld.

Donald Wilson is trying to get money to pay for CYF scholarships for bridging members of YRUU going away to college.

PayPal is working, so CLF doesn't have to continue sending financial information to CYF.

Outreach (Hardin, Reborne)

2005 General Assembly – Iris' and Lorraine's Comments (presented by Iris)

- Booth – staff was busy; handful of volunteers, not involved in sales; they needed staff help w/ conversations; membership administrator's presence in booth generated meaningful conversations and new memberships (6-8); our new booth gave us high visibility
- Delegates – most don't assume any real responsibility, nor does the staff feel they should, as we don't cover any of their expenses. Lois isn't asking for high expectations from delegates, but she *is* asking for *clear* ones.
- The Board discussed the notion of a requirement of a gift of record in order for a CLF member to vote or be a delegate. **The Board is *considering* this policy.**
- **Brad made a motion that the Board will define and communicate their expectations of delegates early and often. Slots will *not* be allocated to people who have been delegates before and not fulfilled CLF obligations. Lynda seconded. Passed *unanimously*.**
- 2006 General Assembly – we will fill our workshop slot with our worship service.
- **Lynda will see what's involved in requesting a special seating area in plenary, so that folks can recognize each other and sit together.**

- Lynda says that CLF will get a free room for an ingathering. There could be raffle prizes, etc. A separate CLF covenant group could meet if there is enough interest.. Who will staff this ingathering?
- We would love to do a digital audio/visual recording of the service for the web site. This has always proven problematic. When an event request is submitted to Don Plante, it is important to attach to the request a letter from Jane Rzepka stating that the CLF has a rather unique need for high quality audio/visual recording as it is our only time during the year that we gather for worship. Also, due to more limited space this year, we should submit our request well before the February 1st deadline. **Lynda will support our efforts to secure a quality recording of our worship service.**
- Terry Robinson wants to be a 2006 delegate.

Process observation (Crawford)

Tad made the following process observations: The ability of Chair to improvise during the meeting was great; work of Vision and Covenant Groups was great; print materials prepared ahead of time proved invaluable; Iris's presence in Membership capacity was fabulous; there was fabulous positive attitude; and energy level. Denny added that the only negative is the sidebar conversations (talking over each other).

Saturday, October 08, 2005

Present: Denny Davidoff, Frank Wells, Ken Gross, Laurel Amabile, Ken Gross, Jane Rzepka (Sr. Minister, staff), Lynda Bluestein, Iris Hardin (clerk, staff), Tad Crawford, Terry Robinson, Brad Greeley, John Lees, and Lois Reborne.

Brad's Canvass Report –

The canvass of the Board the previous day resulted in a 35.8% increase in pledges over last year's Board canvass

Motion to sunset ECC –

Tad moved that the ECC cease to function as a committee of the Board. The Sr. minister will address the functions and goals the ECC had been charged to address.

Tad amended the motion to read: The ECC will cease to function as a committee of the Board. The Sr. Minister and Staff are charged with the responsibility for all electronic communications. Seconded by Lynda. So moved.

Action: Denny will communicate with the ECC members about the change.

Consideration of a Membership Relations Committee

A Membership Relations Committee could create better communication between the board and the congregation. After some discussion, Tad and Lois offered to create a report for the website about this meeting.

A motion was presented that the Exec Committee be charged with proposing to the Board a committee structure that addresses the following functions and activities: governance (in relation to board and staff, staff and membership), strategic planning, finance, two-way communications w/ our membership, stewardship, and CYF.

Seconded by Laurel. Unanimously passed.

Vision and Covenant

Tad proposed that the output of both groups (both outputs appear in this document under the minutes of 10/6 as **Vision Group's Report from Morning Session** and **Covenant Group's Report from Morning Session**) be adopted as working documents. They will tell prospective Board members how we intend to function (especially the Covenant's Board-to-Board section). The Board-to-Staff section can't be accepted until the staff is brought in to work on it. Laurel Amabile will plan a meeting for that purpose to be held before the end of the year.

Tad moved that we adopt the Board-to-Board section of the Covenant Task Force document, with the Task Force continuing its work with the staff. Lynda seconded. So moved.

Frank moved that we adopt as a working document the output of the Visioning Task Force. The Task Force will continue as an ad hoc committee, moving from a working draft to a final document, and it will ultimately (at a date to be determined) place the final document on the web site as the CLF Board's formal vision statement.

Motion withdrawn, since the Vision statement is still a rough draft. Franks' motion should be viewed as an informal agreement, instead.

Terry's Motion about Board Composition

Terry and Lois proposed the following language:

The Board recommends to the Nominating Committee that special attention be paid to the following when selecting Board nominees this year (not necessarily one person w/ all of these characteristics, but all characteristics represented on the board):

- Sole church membership at CLF
- Economic diversity -- offering more support as needed for tech access and travel costs
- Non-traditional indicators of skills, education, and experience. Offer mentoring one-on-one.
- Geographic isolation/diversity.
- UU less than 5 years.

Terry moved that we accept the above language adding to say, "special attention *continue* to be paid." Brad seconded.

A vote was taken, and it was so moved.

By laws: non discrimination clause:

Vote on Bylaw amendment Lynda voted to accept; Brad seconded

This is the non-discrimination article. John is worried about us having illegal aliens serving on the Board. Several scenarios were discussed.

Denny has appointed an ad hoc task force on the Non-discrimination clause to report at the February mtg. How did the UUA pass this? What does it mean, and what are the implications? Frank (taking the lead) and Brad will investigate and report their findings.

Vote on 2006 Budgets: CLF and CYF

CYF – Assumption in CYF budget is that membership will increase at same rate and that organization will do better at getting CYF members to pay for their memberships. CLF staff time should decrease after the start-up year. Hopefully, Jane's and Lorraine's time will decrease significantly. To allow the new CYF Steering Committee to work on their budget, the following motion was passed:

Tad moved to accept the CYF budget at net zero with the provision that the new CYF Steering Committee present a detailed budget by January 1st, 2006.

Brad seconded. Unanimously accepted.

CLF – Brad moved to accept the CLF budget. John seconded.

Lorraine projected an increase of 18% in the membership donations because, in July, the year-to-year actuals made that assumption look reasonable. John thinks that membership donation number may be \$10K too high, 2nd offerings may be \$3K too high, jewelry may be \$2K too high, and projected deficit may be \$10K. John, therefore, sees a \$25K problem with this budget. John also wants an audit, which will cost \$4K, and which we haven't had in several years. That's a \$29K problem. The Board agrees we're overdue for the audit. The Board is also uncomfortable with income projections (most comfortable with \$240K in membership donations).

Brad withdrew his motion to accept 2006 CLF budget.

John wanted to send the budget back for staff re-evaluation.

Tad wanted to charge the Exec Committee to work with the staff to either cut costs or find ways to make more money (better canvassing, other fund-raising sources, etc.).

Tad moved to charge the Executive Committee to work with the staff to bring in a balanced budget by the end of the calendar year.

John seconded. Motion carried.

Ken made a motion to create a Finance Committee, which will bring its charge to the Executive Committee with "all due haste".

John Lees seconded. Unanimously passed. Frank, John, and Ken agreed to serve on the Committee, with Frank taking the lead.

Benediction (Greeley)

Adjourn