

First Parish Cambridge Governing Board Minutes
August 15, 2023 at 7PM
(Virtual meeting via Zoom)

Present: Governing Board Members 2022-23

Cade Murray, Chair	Sylvia Wheeler, Past Board Chair
Tod Hibbard, Vice-Chair	Rev. Rob Hardies, Contract Minister 2022-23
Jane Stabile, Member at Large	Carol Lewis, Director of Administration
Nina Lytton, Member at Large	Lindsay Lucke, Treasurer
Patrick Sullivan, Member at Large	Rich Lawson, Clerk
Grace Hall, Governance Advisory Committee	

Chalice Lighting & Check in –

Rich Lawson read chalice lighting words from Antoine de St. Exupery:

“If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the [people] to gather wood, divide the work and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.”

The first option for a check-in prompt was: what is *our* equivalent of the “vast and endless sea”, and how do we lead people to yearn for that? An alternate prompt was also offered: Are people already yearning *too much* for a vast, endless, perfectly blue, perfectly warm sea, and we should redirect them to gathering wood and dividing work...?

Consent Agenda

Lindsay Lucke made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Patrick Sullivan and then approved unanimously.

Board Priorities

Ministerial Transition

The board discussed the first congregational meeting on the ministerial transition that was held on the 13th of August. Tod Hibbard was pleased with the number of participants both in person and online. There are plans to offer child care in the near future so that parents with children can attend. Patrick Sullivan noted the degree of overlap on themes from all the breakout groups.

The ministerial transition team will consider suggestions for improvements to the process:

1. Participants may be prompted with potential priorities for development to review and discuss rather than starting with a blank slate.
2. Young adults and/or youth could have their own session to ensure their voices are heard

The Ministerial Transition Team is still seeking one more member, ideally someone who can represent parents with children.

Hilary Allen, from the UUA, then joined the meeting virtually to answer questions about the search process.

Her advice was to be honest and complete in describing FPC in terms of our recent history and current position. If there is more than one view within the congregation on an important topic, we should acknowledge that. When addressing the recent history of ministers, it will be valuable to go beyond just time in tenure to explain why there were transitions, and what learned from the transitions.

She also described how developmental ministry is different from called ministry, since ideally a called minister will also address congregational priorities. A simple way to differentiate them is to say that with a settled minister, the process is oriented toward finding an individual; for a developmental minister, the process is oriented toward what the congregation wants to achieve.

Tod Hibbard asked whether FPC completed a “congregational transition interview” when Rev. Adam left. Hilary Allen explained that we did not, but we still could if that would be valuable.

The board agreed that if we do consider a minister of color, we should assess our recent experiences with Rev. Adam and other ministerial staff.

Tod Hibbard will act as the primary liaison to Hilary Allen for any future questions about the process.

Membership Program/Team

Rev. Rob provided this update, with highlights from his report. Karin Lin and Susan Shepherd have stepped up to lead this program. They met for the first time over the past weekend and are off to a good start.

Rebuilding RE Program

Rev. Rob and Cade Murray provided this update. Jennifer Goodman is making progress on the three RE priorities: space, staffing, and connecting with parents. She has found a teenager who can work with your children. She aims to partner that person with someone older, ideally with experience in secondary education.

Nina Lytton suggested that a student at Harvard Divinity School might be interested in this opportunity as an internship. Rev. Rob would be the formal supervisor, and Jennifer Goodman would provide direct guidance. Nina offered to provide additional details and contact information.

Jennifer Goodman plans to hold an RE Council meeting. It has been a challenge to connect with parents recently, possibly due to summer holidays.

Carol Lewis reported that registration for Autumn RE will start in the next week or two.

Building Project and Summer Improvements Update

Sylvia Wheeler posted minutes from the last building committee meeting that includes a lot of details about the project. There is a lot of good news. The project manager gave a positive report about the performance of the contractor. The financial situation is also good. Change orders have been done at a reasonable cost, so it has been possible to add valuable elements to the original scope of work. The best news, though, is a very inexpensive quote from Kaplan to paint the South side of the meeting house.

Carol Lewis shared recent news that the Project Manager is not ready to accept the painting proposal yet. There may be work on the slate that had not been anticipated. This will be evaluated before finalizing an agreement for painting.

Carol Lewis also reported on progress with improvements to the interior, which is detailed in her report. There is another truck coming Thursday to remove another load of unwanted items. There is a call out to painters for the rest of the interior. The aim is to have that painting completed before homecoming.

Service Time Change

Rev. Rob described the survey results, which had been shared in advance. There was an excellent response to the survey: 67 people responded. This was twice what is typically received for a survey. More than 2/3 of respondents support an earlier service. The programs most impacted are music, RE, and the parents group. Rev. Rob checked in with each group. Each group can accommodate an earlier time, though some preferred the 11:00 time.

Some respondents indicated that they would not be able to attend at 10:00, and some indicated they could not attend at 11:00. No one indicated that 10:30 was not possible. This time was recognized as a good compromise. The board will continue to monitor this. If necessary, the time can be changed again in the future.

Jane Stabile made a motion to change service time to 10:30; this was seconded by Tod Hibbard. The vote to approve the motion was unanimous.

Overview of the Upcoming Church Year – Rob, Carol

- Identify any areas for board involvement

Rev. Rob noted that the board's goals from the retreat are aligned with plans for the coming church year: Ministerial transition, rebuilding ministry to family and children, membership, and the building project. The Board is involved in all of those priorities.

Carol Lewis also indicated that in addition to these objectives, there is a growing list of activities related to past commitments, e.g., the stewardship campaign, and celebrating oktoberfest

There are no plans to make significant changes to the music program this year. Rev. Rob expressed his delight with the music program we have.

Set Schedule and Location of Future Board Meetings – Cade

Cade Murray proposed times and dates for board meetings for the remainder of 2023:

- 9/19 (zoom)
- 10/17 (in-person)
- 11/12 (Sunday afternoon at FP)
- 12/19 (zoom)

Everyone supported this schedule.

Update on Cambridge HEART Endorsement – Cade

Cade Murray reported a suggestion from Lois Markham to invite one of the HEART directors to provide an update on the program to the Board. Rich Lawson will reach out to them to discuss this opportunity.

Rich Lawson also mentioned his meeting with City Councilor Marc McGovern. The meeting was very helpful. Notes from the meeting will be provided electronically, but in summary, Marc McGovern thinks that First Parish should support HEART since it will be valuable for those in the community who will not trust the police or other city agencies. McGovern was also clear about opportunities for the HEART organization to mature in their approach to politics, and in how their responders can gain the experience they need.

Digital Archiving of FP Records

Rich Lawson said that he asked Gloria Koursman if digital archiving was an option for church documents rather than printing paper copies and taking them physically to the Harvard Divinity School (HDS) archive. The HDS digital archiving staff will meet this week to discuss this, and will provide an update with options by the end of the week.

There were no objections to exploring this option.

Adjourn

9 pm

Chalice lighting/check-in monthly rotation

September: Lindsay

October: Nina

November: Jane

December: Patrick

January: Tod

February: Rich

March: Lindsay

April: Nina

May: Jane

June: Patrick

(Sylvia is a substitute as needed).

Respectfully submitted,
Rich Lawson, Clerk

Approved by the Governing Board on 19 Sept 2023

CONSENT AGENDA

- **Administrator's Report August 2023**
- **Worship Survey Individual Responses.pdf**
- **Worship Survey Compiled Results.pdf**
- **August 2023 Hardies Board Report.docx**
- **Board Minutes July, 2023**

MEETING MATERIALS

- **BAC Meeting Notes**
- **8-15-2023 Agenda**