

First Parish Cambridge Governing Board Minutes  
November 19, 2023 at 2PM  
(Virtual meeting via Zoom)

Present:

Cade Murray, Chair	Tod Hibbard, Vice-Chair
Carol Lewis, Director of Administration	Rev. Rob Hardies, Contract Minister 2022-23
Jane Stabile, Member at Large	Rich Lawson, Clerk
Nina Lytton, Member at Large	Grace Hall, Governance Advisory Committee
Lindsay Lucke, Treasurer	
Rashid Shaikh (Membership)	Mara Voorhees (Membership)

Regrets: Sylvia Wheeler

Chalice Lighting & Check in – Jane Stabile

The chalice lighting words were from a quote often attributed to Charles Darwin: “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.”

The check-in question was: When you were considering career choices, was there something really appealing you wanted to do that you chose not to do? And was that a mistake?

Consent Agenda – Cade

Tod Hibbard noted how wonderful Carol Lewis’s report was, and what a pleasure to read. It included so much good news, and such insight into the congregation.

Tod Hibbard made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Jane Stabile seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

Board Priorities

The objective of this agenda item was to approve the developmental goals proposed by the ministerial search team.

Tod Hibbard introduced this section by indicating that it was a privilege and pleasure to be part of this group. Through the process he found that so many people care so much about this congregation, which is heartening. He also indicated that the search team received a lot of valuable thinking and insight from the special purpose board meeting earlier this month.

Hillary Allen at UUA also provided the team with a helpful suggestion - think about the goals from the candidates perspective, especially the following questions:

- What will be the minister's role?
- What do we really mean by this goal?
- What is the history?
- How will we know success?

All the background thinking will go into the congregational profile, but the goals will be succinct. On a related note, Tod Hibbard said that the Finance Committee message for the end of the year would be coming soon. This message reflects on what we have accomplished together already. We're actually already well on our way with some of these goals because of the support of Rev Rob.

This set of goals is only one part of a much larger package that the applicants will review. There are many other elements of the congregational record that already have significant drafts underway. The board agreed that there was no reason to word-smith the language of the goals since the full package of information would provide important context.

Lindsay Lucke made a motion to accept the objectives presented as our developmental goals. Jane Stabile seconded the motion. There was unanimous approval.

Rashid Shaikh asked Rev. Rob how to make the best use of his remaining time, and how to characterize that in the congregational profile. Rev Rob replied that he was not sure how to frame that right now, but will give this more thought. There is a lot of activity around the 1st and 3rd goals right now.

Rashid continued the theme that the train of change is already moving. We want to maintain this momentum when the new minister gets on board.

For next steps, Tod Hibbard agreed to craft a letter to the congregation from the Board. Drafts will be circulated and reviewed and approved electronically. Eventually this material can go on our website. Rev. Rob has pointed to a good example from a parish in Baltimore. The team will work with Carol about the mechanics of getting this on the web site.

### Membership Program/Team

Rev. Rob provided an update on membership. More details are available in his report.

Two new members have recently officially joined First Parish. This would normally come to the full board for approval, but in this case it went to executive session to be timely. The new members are already getting engaged in our community; one has joined the choir and the other has volunteered with Tuesday meals.

We continue to have visitors coming to the newcomer table. In general the visitors are young and diverse. The next priority is getting them to keep coming back!

### Rebuilding RE Program

Rev. Rob reported that the RE program had another really good month. Attendance has slowly grown. The team has worked through some challenging behavioral issues. This was done in partnership with parents and is now in better shape. Family game night was a huge success, and we have had a good number of little ones in the nursery.

### Building Project Update

Carol Lewis provided this update, which was based on information in her report. The original exterior project is in its final days, though there is new work planned for 2024. The scaffolding should be down by early Dec. More good news is that the check from the City of Cambridge arrived yesterday.

The new work that needs to be addressed is a chimney outside Carol Lewis' office that is deteriorating and becoming a safety hazard. The building team is exploring options for dealing with this. This needs to be repaired within a year.

The date for the celebration is Feb 4th, the 1st Sunday in Feb. A number of special guests will be invited: the construction team and project managers, city contacts, and community contacts. Worship that Sunday will be followed by a short program and then a reception.

### Executive Session

No minutes were taken for this part of the agenda.

At 4:00pm the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Rich Lawson, Clerk

Approved by the Board on 19 December 2023

Note: Chalice lighting/check-in monthly rotation: December: Patrick, January: Tod, February: Rich, March: Lindsay, April: Nina, May: Jane, June: Patrick. (Sylvia is a substitute as needed)