

First Parish UU Church—Bridgewater
Parish Committee Meeting
7pm– 9pm, Tuesday, January 17, 2023
Minutes

Join the ZOOM meeting at:

******* <https://uuma.zoom.us/j/8261399470> - this is the regular church zoom meeting room

Here's the link to the members' only side of the website for you to read other committee reports -
<https://fpuubridgewater.org/members-content/>

Attendees: AJ Derby, Scott Gillespie, Rev. Jennifer Johnson, Desiree Krebs, Laurie Lessner, Heather Mehdi, Bob Messing, Jan Thompson, David Wilson

1. Opening words (5 min., Rev. Jennifer) - Chalice Lighting

2. Reading of Covenant, Check-in (10 min.)

Rev. Jennifer told of an upcoming surgery and the low probability that she will have to do a service remotely.

3. Approve minutes of Dec. 20, 2022 (5 min)  PC Minutes - December 20, 2022 - Draft - (vote)

Motion - Jan, 2nd - Bob. Updates submitted and indicated as such. No discussion. All in favor.

4. Update to Share the Plate Policy- Bob

Talked to McKayla and how the deposits are handled so he's going to write down a procedure to give to the office manager. PC will review. Need to clarify the designations by the memo line. Laurie will find the minutes with the plate collection policy. -

Update (1/17/2023) At the Sept 2021 PC Meeting, during the discussion to approve the minutes from the June 24, 2021 PC meeting, was said the following, "Laurie made the motion. Heather seconded. Discussion: Bob asked, under "Parish Management" - share the plate - our normal take is \$250-280 per month, not per plate? Kat: "Yes, that's correct." Bob: "I think your point that you were making at the time was that \$400 was a pretty high bar. And so I think we did the right thing setting the share the plate at \$200."

5. Update about MOU Conversation with FPP-Rev Jennifer

Scott & Rev. Jennifer met with Desiree, there as FPP rep. They met to outline the issues of having FPP in the church. It was productive and they discussed the gifts and strengths - art, building community, FP members can participate and share their gifts and learn new skills. We also become part of the community and it's our identity to be supporting of the arts - part of our community life. Challenges and concerns - use of the space, scheduling, how the space has been left, competing needs around space, and money.

There was expectation FPP would be a fund-raising arm and that hasn't panned out. And they discussed if it's viable to raise money beyond sustaining the company. Immediate needs - address the FPP bank account, which is still in our account. They'll set up their own account and financial structure. They will also find out the debt that is owed and get that paid.

Questions - what amount of money is expected from that original loan? Scheduling another show - they decided not to schedule another show until this process is rolling. If we can figure out a relationship agreement, then maybe in the spring there can be a small production. Desiree researched having their own account, without being a business. They started working on the MOU and it was helpful to hear all the issues that are there. FPP can now outline their responsibility to the church. If this can get agreed upon and signed by Feb, that would be

time to do a production in May. If they can pay it back in full, they will but if not, they'll figure out a payment plan. They do want to pay back what they owe.

We'll need to look at what needs to be repaid. \$1500 was paid in 2018, which was put in the FP budget. The initial loan was for \$1200. Desiree agreed to come up with a budget and a repayment schedule. Scott is saying showing forward momentum is a show of good faith. Bob thinks repaying the debt isn't as important as putting in a use fee for future shows.

Laurie made a motion to forgive the original loan of \$1200. Jan 2nd the motion. Discussion -

Heather said she would be for this as a good way to move forward. AJ doesn't feel she has a complete understanding of all the transpired but she's all for debt forgiveness, especially since Desiree's taken a leadership role in FPP and all of the good the players do for the church. Bob said the money is already in our name so what we'd be doing is cutting them a check when they take out their own account. He doesn't like that idea. It is not part of our general fund but it is reported in our balance sheet. Scott thinks paying back the loan is a sign of good faith. He believes other congregants would not feel ok about forgiving this. Laurie said she thought it would be important to have the use fee be part of the agreement in lieu of the loan. Scott said these are 2 separate things and we should have a rental agreement as well as the repayment. Jan thought it being paid off, even gradually, would be a good sign of faith.

Vote: 2 in favor, 4 against. Motion denied.

Jan made a motion for the treasurer to create a repayment plan to have the loan repaid. All in favor - 6.

The payment plan will be brought to the PC. Laurie asked if the FPP could show frugality in their choices. Desiree said the last musical was picked because they could scale down the sets and not need too many rehearsals.

6. Discussion about Special Meeting (30 min.)

- Overview of Plan for Special Meeting
 - Introduction-Heather - to go over proposed vote (see original message below) Voting on a preliminary budget so we can negotiate a new contract in good faith.
 - Registrar will count if there's a quorum
 - Rev. Jennifer - will discuss what will do with the extra time
 - Budget Presentation -Bob and Kat (if needed)
 - [Budgets Historical](#)
 - Stewardship Follow Up- Jenny
 - Q &A
- How does rest of Parish Committee want to be involved?
 - Desiree will person Zoom
 - Laurie will take minutes
- any more reminders need to go out?
- sending out the proposed budget on Friday
- print out some handouts
- coordinate with Alan for Projecting - also have the people on zoom able to be shown on the screen.
- Question- where to find the specific protocols for structure?

Notice of special meeting:

To the First Parish Bridgewater membership,

On December 20th, the Parish Committee enthusiastically voted to recommend entering into a contract with Reverend Jennifer for one year of three-quarter time of ministry. Reverend Jennifer voiced an interest in providing additional ministry to our community. The Parish Committee felt this can be accomplished by extending Reverend Jennifer's ministerial contract for one year,

while increasing the scope of ministry from half to three-quarter time. This will allow the congregation to expand the ministerial role in a fiscally responsible way. In contract discussions, Reverend Jennifer was frank in saying she would not be able to continue in a half-time capacity. Our congregation has, for many years, expressed an interest in greater than half time ministry. The Parish Committee felt comfortable that we are in a good financial position to commit to three quarter time.

A special congregational meeting will be held on January 22nd at 12 noon after the service to allow for the Parish Committee to present the proposed budget, for the congregation to ask questions, and for members to vote on the proposed budget increase.

We know how beloved Reverend Jennifer is to our community. There has been much anticipation, and some anxiety, as we have determined a course for the next year. We have worked diligently together knowing how important this decision is. The Parish Committee strongly support this proposal and are looking forward to presenting it to the congregation at this Special Meeting.

We hope this is a Happy New Year message for our community and blessings for deeper spiritual relationships.

- The Parish Committee

Meeting adjourned 9:05 PM

The Covenant of First Parish Church, Bridgewater, MA

In unison:

Love is the spirit of this church
and service its gift.

This is our great covenant:

To dwell together in peace,
to speak the truth in love,
and to help one another.

Heather:

To bring the above statements to fruition, **we pledge to** each other, our fellow Church Members, Church Leadership, Church Staff, Minister, and our Youth to:

Laurie:

Maintain personal integrity
Nurture each other's spiritual growth

AJ:

Communicate honestly and directly, maintaining confidentiality and avoiding gossip

Listen sensitively and patiently, without judgment

Desiree:

Keep an open mind on all issues

Tolerate differences of opinion

Scott:

Support each other in joys and sorrows

Serve as models of appropriate and respectful behavior

Bob:

Focus on the common goal of creating a vibrant religious community, remembering that such a community requires our time, talent, and financial support

Use this Covenant as a guidepost in making decisions

Heather:

Honoring these pledges will enable us to have “an inclusive community of love, truth, justice, stewardship, and service within and beyond these walls.”

Revised for Approval–September, 2013

Drafted by Sam Baumgarten, Rev. Anita Farber–Robertson, Jack Hart, Mary Maruska, and Lisa Rue.