

CHANNING MEMORIAL CHURCH BOARD MEETING MINUTES FEBRUARY 10, 2009

PRESENT: Chris Yalanis, Coles Mallory, Sarah Mermin, Chris Laudon, Kim Shute, Don Mallinson, Bill Hawkin, Susan VanDerhoof

STAFF: Amy Freedman

MINUTES: The January Board minutes were approved with a minor change.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Before Coles gave his Finance report, Bill gave a report on the status of pledges:

As of last Sunday Feb 8th we have received \$109,260.50 of \$169,780 pledged for 08/09 fiscal year (95% or \$161,500 budgeted). That is 64.35% of total pledged with 32/52 weeks done or 61.54%.

The Sunday collections for the last month (4 Sundays) totaled \$421 in cash and \$170 in checks resulting in average total of \$147.75 per week but the total varied widely from \$97 to \$238. If this average over the last 4 weeks was same for the year total would be \$147.75 x 52 = \$7,683. This agrees well with FY08/09 estimate of \$7,500 but that is down from budgeted \$13,200. No new donations. No new wedding income for this year through June 31st.

Bill presented some ideas about how the financial secretary position could be restructured from a meeting with Patricia Hart and Don Mallinson in January. Bill will be leaving that position on July 1st, but ideally the replacement Financial Secretary would be identified in March to be involved with pledge and capital campaigns. Patricia Hart described how her Lancaster, PA UU Church currently does it. There is a "group" involved rather than just one person. The Sunday collection is done by one or more of a group responsible for doing it throughout the year. Then one or more of the group goes to the church office on Monday and works with the office manager to process into correct categories in the database (Smart Church) and prepare the bank deposit and then makes the deposit. The church treasurer was also sometimes involved (stops by to get report). Bill offered this for thought if a person doesn't come forward to do the job as it is presently. This doesn't include the additional time needed to put out approximately 140 pledge statements 4 times a year with all tax deductible donations indicted at end of year quarter. Also time spent setting up database and tracking pledge campaign in the spring of each year and entering new pledge data into the Power Church database.

Bill also connected with Membership committee to obtain good canvass and capital campaign data from the church's Power Church database. The results of mailings

and other contact with people suspected to no longer be active has been entered into the office database as of last week.

Bill is researching current RE parent and student list to compare with pledge list to determine average pledge donation for RE families. A look at Power church database from early January shows 87 total RE parents and students but quick look shows data to be out of date (example Wilkes Carr now 20+ is listed as RE student as well as several we know to be in college). Also some parents are shown as inactive or former members. Ruth Jernigan just reported to UUA RE enrollment of 71.

Proposed FY 2010 Operating Fund Budget

Coles reported the following: The budget is attached.

Channing has experienced major revenue reductions during the current fiscal year.

- Fewer weddings than anticipated will reduce revenue by \$10,000 to \$15,000.
- Our Sunday collections will be about \$5,000 lower than in previous years.
- Fund raising will be \$5,500 below budget.

In order to balance this year's budget we will need to borrow an additional \$10,000 to pay for property repairs – a practice that can not be continued in future years. We will also use all of our operating fund balance by the end of our current fiscal year. As a result, a substantial contingent must be included in next year's budget.

Based on this year's experience, we have lowered next year's revenue estimates for weddings and Sunday collections. However, we have substantially increased the revenue estimate for fund raising, assuming a successful service auction in the fall of 2009.

Other than changing cost estimates for expenses over which we have no control, such as utilities, we included only two expense increases in the proposed budget. One is a \$1,300 increase in publicity to better promote weddings. The other is a \$250 increase in the Membership Committee's budget to do a more aggressive job of recruiting new members. We view both as investments in the future of Channing.

The net result is that, just to maintain our current programs, our canvass goal must increase from this year's \$170,000 to \$187,000 for next year. (Note that the budget numbers reflect net pledges after factoring in our historical 95% collection rate)

Not included in the proposed budget are four major requests.

- \$4,400 to fund a three percent raise for our six employees.
- \$5,000 for critical property repairs.
- \$4,195 to fund a youth advisor, an additional two weeks pay for the RE Director, and additional funds for the OWL program.
- A \$4,700 increase in UUA support to meet our "fair share assessment".

The Finance Committee recommends that the Board begin a process of identifying the priority of the expenses that would be added if we exceed our canvass goal, and also the program reductions that would be required if we do not meet our canvass goal.

While increasing pledges by ten percent may seem difficult, it is actually a question of our commitment to Channing rather than a question of money. Consider that the \$187,000 pledge goal requires only \$26 dollars per week per pledging unit. Meeting all four of the unfunded requests takes just \$2.50 per week more.

Coles said that people need to understand that there is not much to cut. Chris Y. wanted to start making a list of things to cut and finish at March Board meeting. Amy thought a prioritized list will discourage, not encourage people. Chris pointed out that we did it like that last year and failed. Don wants to be sure that things are positive, not negative.

Chris Y. asked about how discretionary are the UUA numbers? It was pointed out that the district is facing the same kind of crunch that we are and that we want to maintain a good relationship. They are cutting staff at the UUA.

Some cuts that we could make for this year were discussed such as payroll processing costs, changing phone company to Vonage and copier rental costs?

Don reported that Bill Peresta has changed the email addresses for the Finance Committee. There use to be two separate addresses; one for the Pledge Secretary and one for the Financial Secretary, both of which went to Bill H. Now there is just one, financialsecretary@channingchurch.org. Bill Peresta has also created a new one for the Capital Campaign, capitalcampaignsecretary@channingchurch.org.

Don reported on the Visiting Steward Orientation that is scheduled for February 21st and 22nd. There will be a minimum of 8 people per session. No more than 15. Tricia says the apprehensiveness goes away after the orientation since they see they will get good support. The fair share chart will be given out previous to the training. We are aiming for more pledgers contributing according to the "fair share".

PROPERTY – Chris Laudon

The bid documents have been received from Structures North. They will go out to contractors in the next few weeks. This is a very specific job with special skills needed. John Whatney is pre-approving contractors. Approval from the Newport Historic Commission shouldn't be a problem, but we have to go through the process.

The bell people came today and Chris learned a great deal from them. Our bells were made in the Blake Foundry and are one of only 5 or 6 sets in the world. We currently have 9 bells, but can add bells up to a total of 23 if we wanted to in the future. We would have to plan now for additional bells by reinforcing or adding to the frame of

the steeple so it could support the added bells. The art of tuning the bells was lost for 150 years. In order to tune our bells the company would take the bells down with a crane and take them by ship to the Netherlands to be tuned.

Other property issues discussed included that the furnace is in and working. Chris Y. has been speaking with the Elks about the property between our two properties concentrating on what will happen during construction.

Chris Y. reported also that it has been decided that since it is difficult offering different discounts for different groups for weddings, such as UUA members, we are keeping our policy the same.

The last thing discussed was that Don has completed staff reviews and Janet has requested increasing the number of Sundays off for the year to 7. Chris Y. suggested giving her the additional days off and finding volunteers to cover the Sundays. It was pointed out that her salary is \$3 to \$4,000 lower than the going rate. Coles said we shouldn't support giving one employee a raise and not the others.

Submitted by,

Susan VanDerhoof
Channing Church Clerk