

**FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY
PARISH MEETING
MINUTES
MADISON, WI
September 28, 2008**

ATTENDANCE

Sixty seven members signed the attendance lists for the meeting.

OPENING

Karen Gustafson welcomed the members and others in attendance and read Kenneth Patton's writings on "This House."

CALL TO ORDER

First Unitarian Society President Laurie Joiner called the meeting to order at 12:45 p.m.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Laurie welcomed all members and friends to the meeting. She pointed out the need to be careful with food and drink in the Atrium Auditorium. There has been discussion about whether to permit people to eat or drink in this room because of the vents in the floor and the cleanup costs. We have already had a Bat Mitzvah in this room and it went well. We are going to try permitting eating and drinking here and we encourage everyone to be careful with their food and beverages.

Laurie congratulated all of us for making this building possible. She read the recently passed Board Resolution thanking staff and everyone else who has made this building possible.

David Weber showed a picture of the campus a year ago to show how we have progressed. He also showed a list of the main concerns that have been expressed and explained how we are examining them and what we are considering as ways to address them. This is a work in progress and we encourage comments as well as patience.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Operating Budget. At the end of the fiscal year we ended up with a \$36,000 surplus. We had deferred raises for the staff so can we provide raises? There are financial challenges that we now face. We have had both boilers in the historic building fail so we are replacing them. The number of pledges for the current year is behind the pace we expected. We are working to hire a development director and this has not yet occurred. Finally there are uncertainties related to the utilities and maintenance of the new building.

In addition the senior staff is also undergoing review of how they are structured and what efficiencies can be obtained in staffing for the Society as it now exists. When this is done and we have completed the current fiscal year we should know better what we can do for the staff salaries. Until then we think it would be premature to provide increases.

Building Budget. The ultimate total cost is not finalized. We think we overspent the building budget by about 3.3% of the total project cost. We are currently about \$300,000 over budget. Our best guess is that we will end up about \$350,000 to \$400,000 over budget. This will represent about 4.5% over budget. Incremental expenses of \$120,000 were incurred for additional parking. That is the single largest item of the overspent amount.

Our long term debt was projected to be \$4.2 million when we were projecting back in June. It is now projected to be about \$4.5 million. We will have final numbers in 6 to 8 weeks. Then we will provide a detailed project cost update. As long as our membership grows 3.5% we can handle our debt. We are at our limit however. We do not have unlimited resources so we have to be prudent about any other expenses that we may incur.

Total cost of the project is \$11.5 million, including our interest payments until 2013. Brian reviewed the total cost and the total fund sources.

A question was raised about whether our growth assumption is too aggressive. Brian based the assumption on past growth while being a bit conservative. Nevertheless we do need to see the growth in members that we reasonably expect in order to remain balanced.

Laurie gave a big thank you to Brian for his work which has been exceptional.

STRATEGIC AND ANNUAL PLANS

Kathy Luker explained the planning process that we have engaged in performing. She quickly reviewed the four strategic goals that we have and then went into more specifics of the first strategic goal concerning strengthening worship and program areas. We have worked on developing measures to determine how we are doing in reaching our objectives.

Michael Goodman asked about the meaning of “radical hospitality.” It was described as being particularly open to the LGBT community and other groups.

Another member described making an inquiry about an issue and not getting prompt feedback that her inquiry was received. This is something we need to improve and the comment is noted.

Another suggestion was that we could have an introduction to the Society on the WEB site so we can refer those who we want to know more about us to that link.

Thank you to Kathy for leading the planning process.

THANK YOU AND FINAL COMMENTS

Brian Joiner asked the congregation to give a big thank you to Laurie Joiner for her efforts over the past year. Her efforts have been greatly appreciated!

CLOSING

EXHIBITS

1. Treasurer’s report including operating budget
2. Strategic plan