

Update to the Board of Trustees  
Unitarian Church in Westport  
Report from the Board Chair

Greetings to the Board of Trustees in anticipation of the November board meeting. This may be the first meeting this year being held on the originally scheduled date, and as such it hasn't been as long as usual since our last meeting, but quite a lot has happened in the past few weeks.

From the communication perspective, the first Town Hall meeting was held and very well received; I know Tom is reporting further on that separately. Attendance after the 9:00 service was quite good and we were therefore surprised by relatively light attendance after the 11:00, but there were several competing meetings at the same time that could have accounted for that. Nevertheless I feel that this was a great success in achieving our goal of two way communication and sets a great precedent for open dialogue. On the negative side, there was no board communication in Soundings last time around, so we need to determine a more organized approach to assigning responsibility for writing this update. Soundings was so content-filled that this wasn't a big omission, but it's a great platform for keeping information flowing that we should take full advantage of. In the last meeting, we turned over some ideas for continued communication outreach to Deborah as chair of the YRSC, and they have made progress in organizing outreach to members on a continuing basis.

It was wonderful to see such participation and energy at the Auction Gala, and while I haven't yet seen final numbers it was clearly a great success and a triumphant display of what a small but formidable team can accomplish (though of course in the end the team got quite large, the nucleus was very small and incredibly hard working). Deborah Quinn has provided an update of the most recent YRSC meeting and it's great to see that they have already begun organizing the upcoming canvass. I know I speak for all of us when I say how relieved I am to have this planning underway. Finally, we have all been looking to this month to understand how our the financial realities are shaping up year to date, and I am looking forward to Anne's update so we can all have a more complete understanding of our financial picture and what follow up work we have.

Regarding governance, we continue to feel our way in determining what is/isn't board work and how to delegate respectfully and appropriately. I am very much looking forward to the work of the Policy Committee and the Governance Committee updates, as well as the work being done on committee charters. These things are so important as the guideposts for us all. I feel about Governance like I feel about organizing my office: that state in between, where all the stuff is in piles all over the place, looks worse than what came before it but is really a necessary step towards getting it all organized – well, that's how I feel about where we are now. It may look messier than before, but it is actually a critical part of getting organized the right way.

Regarding some specific follow up work, Anne and I worked on finalizing the specific requests to the Endowment Committee as agreed in our last meeting; we have sent the formal request and related documentation regarding the Lift request but are still preparing the landscaping backup documentation. And Tom worked with the office to send out the followup letters to those members who no longer qualify for membership as per the annual board review of the member ranks; many thanks to Dorothy and Jan for the support on this.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all on Monday. Until then...

"Meet anger with sympathy, contempt with compassion, cruelty with kindness. Greet grimaces with smiles. Forgive and forget about finding fault. Love is the weapon of the future" - Yehuda Berg

Michelle