

January 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting Packet

FPBUU Zoom #1 Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/649089576?pwd=MFprL0lMWGZWenN2RUc1eDhDcGFNdz09>

Meeting ID: 649 089 576 Passcode: fpbuu

One tap mobile +13017158592,,649089576#

Covenant of the First Parish Brewster Board of Trustees

Entrusted by the congregation of First Parish Brewster, we recognize that ours is a sacred duty, and we will bring our highest selves to work on their behalf. Each of us commits to:

1. Applying professional best practices to our work as Board members.
2. Be willing to do things differently and experience discomfort in the process.
3. Develop an awareness of our own biases and prejudices. Be self-reflective.
4. Strive to create healthy partnerships; effectiveness to be measured by positive impact on FPB systems.
5. Be curious and listen to understand others.
6. Respect our collective wisdom.
7. When we disagree, we will remain committed to the mission, work hard to realize it, and speak with one voice once a vote has been taken and a decision made.
8. When lost trust is experienced, we will use this Covenant to guide an intentional effort to repair trust, including whatever amends or actions are appropriate.

Our primary commitment is to the long-range health of First Parish Brewster Unitarian Universalist Congregation.

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First Parish Brewster UU Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2024 4-7 pm In-person/zoom meeting

Present: Gail Webb (Board President), Jim Lieb (Past President), Karen Witting (Treasurer), Niki Popow (Clerk), Ed Klein, Kevin Lowey, Rob MacIver, Janet Treanor (Members-at-Large)

Absent: Leslie Rennie-Hill

Staff Present: Rev. Kaaren Anderson

Visitors: None

1. Call to Order, Chalice Lighting, Minister Inspiration

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. Reading of Covenant- Full reading of covenant by Janet

3. Endowment Board Report

The Endowment Board reported on their financial position, which is basically the same as last month.

4. New Business

- Jim presented the draft of the new By-law establishing the Minister Housing Fund. This will be voted on at the Congregational Meeting scheduled for January 26. Jim will place notice in the Angle about the Congregational Meeting and the by-law starting in January.

Rob made the following motion, which Ed seconded:

That the proposed By-law Article 12 establishing the Minister Housing Fund be approved and sent to the Policy Committee.

The motion was approved unanimously. The Policy Committee will review and the Board will respond to any suggested revisions.

- Record Retention/Survey: Ed has suggested that a Task Force be formed to inventory FPBUU's data and documents. Discussion was tabled until January.

- Consent Agenda

The Reports from the Minister, the Board President, and the Director of Administration and Finance were received. Reverend Kaaren had reported that it was the custom for the Minister to pay for the staff Christmas dinner, which this year cost \$560. She has used her professional expenses to cover this. At the beginning of Reverend Kaaren's term it was negotiated to lower her professional expenses in order to cover a higher amount of health insurance. She did not consider or expect this expense when agreeing to this adjustment. Kevin suggested that the Board find a way to cover this amount from a different fund, perhaps the minister's discretionary fund. Karen and Jim will look into this.

Reverend Kaaren also reported that the Building Management Committee (BMC) and the Facilities Manager had worked out their roles and responsibilities. The lack of a clear charge and position descriptions had led to tensions in the past. Kaaren and Karena met with the BMC and worked through drafts of positions and roles and together clarified roles and responsibilities for the first time. The BMC is changing its name to the Building Oversight Committee. They are responsible for long range planning and care of the buildings and special projects. The Facilities Manager is responsible for day to day maintenance and yearly scheduled planning and maintenance.

Kevin had circulated a draft policy update clarifying the ability of Directors to hire additional staff reporting to them without Board approval, as long as it was within budget. Some suggestions for wording were made. Kevin will send this to Jim and the Board will vote on it.

Karen moved we **accept the November minutes**; Janet seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

- Treasurer's Report

- 1) Karen moved for the **approval of Allison Coleman as a new member of the Finance Committee**. She has an impressive resumé and she is welcomed as a new member of the committee. Ed seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

2) Karen moved that **a new Special Fund be created for the Circle Alliance.** They have requested that this be done and the Finance Committee approves. The Circle Alliance has been shown as a budget line item, wherein the money goes away at the end of the year. (There are now 10 Special Funds.). The motion was seconded by Janet and it was approved unanimously.

3) Karen reported that the income is good for now.

4). The Stewardship Committee is asking for numbers to use in the spring pledge drive. We discussed what increases will need to be made and where savings could be found. Karen noted that if increases in salaries are made, it will increase other expenses. Reverend Kaaren reported that our congregational record states the proposed minister's salary is \$101,000 to \$120,000. If we held the top of the range to \$110,000, it would be the perfect opportunity to pledge \$10,000 a year to the Wampanoag language school. Niki noted that they would be happy even with a lesser amount; Kaaren thinks that our pledging to the Wampanoag could be a signature social justice event for FPB. Jim recommended we make no representation to the Wampanoags until we know we can pay the amount through pledges.

Karen reported that it is fairly easy to find savings in the \$500 to \$1000 range. After that, it would be according to priorities: health insurance, professional expenses for the minister, the minister's salary, and salary increases for other staff. Other options include cutting staff or staff hours. The LRE position could be cut to 20 hours to cover only the children and youth program (and not to include adult spiritual development).

It was pointed out that the Board had never voted to use the UUA guidelines for salaries; it became a tradition, We need to look at the total compensation package; the benefits are quite high at FPB. We need to work with what we have. Karen will put together the numbers at the beginning of the year, and send to the Board, along with underlying assumptions.

5). There needs to be an outside financial review this year, but no one has been found to do this yet.

5. Old Business

The Board discussed the following list of business priorities for 2025: Strategic Planning, Search Committee Update, Salary Review process, Personnel Manual updates including job descriptions, Breeze data, Financial Review Plan, data storage and archiving.

Additional areas to be included are a review of contracting procedures and an Implementation plan for the records retention policy.

A draft document outlining the minimum expected content of reports from First Parish Brewster Staff Directors to the Board was presented. Karen and Karena have discussed the document and basically agreed on its content. A motion was made by Ed and seconded by Karen **to accept the document “FPBUU Directors’ Reports to Board of Trustees” and to forward it to the Policy Committee, subject to additional input from the Directors.** The motion passed unanimously. The Policy Committee should review the document to determine if the content could be included in the existing “Board Meetings” Policy or elsewhere.

6. Executive Session

A motion was made by Rob, seconded by Niki, and passed unanimously to move into Executive Session to discuss a personnel/legal matter.

Karen moved to end the Executive Session. Rob seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

The following motion was presented:

Resolved that, Laura (Twinks) Hastings be dismissed from her position as the FPBUU Lifespan Religious Education Director; the terms and date of termination to be determined, but termination to be no later than the end of the 2024-2025 church year.

The motion passed by majority vote, with 6 votes in favor, 1 vote against, 1 abstention, and 1 member absent.

The Board returned to Executive Session to discuss further the personnel issue.

7. Check Out

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

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Minutes submitted by Niki Popow, Board Clerk

First Parish Brewster UU Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

December 28, 2024

9:30-11:50 am Hybrid meeting (In-person/zoom)

Present: Gail Webb (Board President), Jim Lieb (Past President), Karen Witting (Treasurer), Niki Popow (Clerk), Ed Klein, Rob MacIver, Janet Treanor (Members-at-Large)

Staff Present: Rev. Kaaren Anderson

Visitors: None

The Board met in Executive Session to discuss further details regarding the dismissal of Laura “Twinks” Hastings from her position of Lifespan Religious Education Director.

The Board ended the Executive Session.

Karen made the following motion, which was seconded by Janet:

Resolved, that Deb Selkow be appointed as Interim Director of the Children and Youth Ministries for the period of January 1 through June 30, with a stipend of \$4000.

The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50.

Minutes submitted by Niki Popow, Board Clerk

President's Report

January 15, 2025

1. So far, I have five people who have expressed interest in working on some sort of acknowledgement/ celebration of the church's 325th birthday that will be in October of this year. Kip Keene has drafted some designs for an outdoor banner and I've received one price so far from Staples to print it for around \$125. One interested party is the President of the Brewster Historical Society, Sally Gunning. I wrote to her hoping that the church could collaborate with them on something as the Town's history parallels the Meetinghouse. I'd like to put an announcement in the Angle to have some sort of brainstorming meeting that would result in a group of folks who could take this on. I'd love anyone's thoughts on this. I also think that this might be a good project for the church to think about instead of sad things. Elenita's sermon on Sunday is a good segue!

2. I've been thinking about "What I heard" at the listening session last Sunday that perhaps deserves a timely response. One is a HUGE need to connect with CYM parents. I heard from them loud and clear that they feel completely disconnected from the rest of the congregation. They repeated several times that we are "all over 65"! Ouch. I have talked with Rev Kaaren and Deb Selkow about this and will talk further about a strategy to invite more communication with them. They had a long list of grievances in addition to the loss of Twinks. I was dumbfounded at the level of frustration I heard from them in the private meeting I had during church and tried to reassure them that the church values their presence and would like to see more of them. I would like someone from the Board to assist Deb with communication and reach out to these parents. If anyone has thoughts on how to improve that intergenerational connection, please weigh in!! I have others but saving for later.

What did any of the Board hear that we might be able to address to help the healing?

Report from Administration and Finance Director – January 2025

Financial Highlights & Pledges (see the Treasurer's report for more info)

- FY24-25, we have received, as of 1/16/25, 177 pledge units for a total of \$498,344.

For this month's report I am including the resignation letter to the board and congregation.

Dear Board of Trustees,

I write to formally resign as Administration and Finance Director of First Parish Brewster Unitarian Universalist. It has been my privilege to serve this congregation over the last 10 years through some very challenging times. It was never easy work, but it was work that was done by leadership and staff working together to support the many ministries of the church.

The last eighteen months have been exceptionally difficult. It started with the ill-advised decision to allow the interim minister, husband and multiple pets to live full time in and above the church office. The latest decision of the Board has solidified my decision to leave my position with this congregation. I realize now that I stayed longer than was best for me because I care deeply about both the people and the work that has been done by members of this congregation. That being said, the church is changing its trajectory with its current leadership, and our core values are no longer in alignment. This is heartbreaking. I wish only the best for this place that has been my spiritual home for nearly 2 decades. I am just not the one for the job any longer. My current plan is to stay until February 28, giving over a month's notice per Personnel Manual. I am confident that we all want the best transition possible to the new administrator, and I am open to discussing the details of what that might look like. I have attached a letter to the congregation I would like to send out this week.

In faith,

Karena Stroh

Beloved First Parish Brewster UU,

It is with deep sadness I write today to let you know that I will be leaving my position as Administration and Finance Director. It has been a privilege to serve this congregation and the Unitarian Universalist faith in this capacity for the last 10 years. Life is pulling me in a different direction, and I don't feel the alignment that I once did. Change happens and can be an important part of growing spiritually. I will always cherish the amazing people that I have worked with throughout these years; we have done some really wonderful things together! I know some of you wanted me to stay forever, and honestly part of me wanted that too. What I do know about life is that it rarely turns out exactly how I expect, but if I allow it to unfold it's always deeper and richer than I could have figured out on my own. THANK YOU! I am so grateful for all the different ways I have grown because of this work. I pledge to pay it forward. Continue to live the core values that we have shared. I wish First Parish Brewster UU all the best.

My last day will be February 28, and I will be working hard to prepare everything for my replacement. So please feel free to stop by and say hello (and goodbye).

In faith,

Karena Stroh

Music Director's Report

Despite the significant recent staffing change and subsequent altering/altering work atmosphere, the music program continues to thrive in its own right, thanks due largely to the multitude of willing and harmonious volunteers. Choir has a new tenor and possibly another bass waiting in the wings to join. We've had a little attrition in the soprano section, due primarily to people's work/life schedules, but there are signs that some of those folks will return (because they miss singing so much!). Our Wednesday evening rehearsals seem to cheer all of us up, and the choir environment ranges from focused to borderline boisterous (in a good way). Evidently we are focused enough to keep the Sunday morning songs coming, and have a good time in the making!

The digital piano has been working out fantastically for choir rehearsals. It provides just enough sound to support the choir without overpowering their singing. We have been able to safely store it during the week and easily get it out. It has also come in useful in the occasional worship, so it was an all around useful swap.

Rikki Bates has continued to see the audio-visual upgrade to completion. Dave and Rikki recently met up to install the improved video software for livestream. It will make things much smoother and simpler from the backend, although viewers may not notice a change. We are still anxious to get more volunteers.

November and December services had some notable highlights in music, including a guest cellist, the return of the new FPBUU clarinet ensemble, the handpan ensemble's Carol of the Bells in early December, then on Christmas eve two young flutists in addition to the beloved choir. The 9pm service featured a handpan duet.

The solstice service gave a lovely opportunity for a handful of non-choir people to participate in singing, and also allowed some other kinds of drumming to be heard. The unusual chancel layout made for a memorable experience. Perhaps it's a service that will want to be repeated in the future, with other elements.

We are looking toward Music Sunday March 30, when we will be excited to offer a worship service entitled "Trusting the Light" – music around the theme of light!

Respectfully submitted,

Kaeza Fearn
Music Director

**2nd Quarter of FT 2024-25 Endowment Board Report
To FPBUU Board of Trustees**

Balance in Investment Account (12-31-2024)	\$1,334,134
Balance in Checking Account (01-10-2025)	8,283

Total Assets	\$1,342,397
Available for distribution in FY 2024-25	\$ 63,680
Already approved/expended for FY 2024-25	50,270

Remaining for FY 2024-25	13,410

Topper Roth
Financial Secretary, FPBUU Endowment Board
01-10-2025

Financial Reports November 2024

Reconciled

Submitted by Karena Stroh, Admin & Finance Director

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P&L Budget vs. Actual Summary

Statement of Activity Comparison Summary

% of budget should typically be at 42%

Points of Interest

Total Income is at 60% of budget

Total Pledge Payments received 61% of budget

Offertory is at 47% of budget

Thrift Store Income is at 55% of budget

Total Expenses are at 41% of budget

Split Plate Donations totals \$7,653 to 15 organizations for July-October 2024

Capital Expense Fund

	Actual Expenditure	Board Approved	Remaining	Status
Balance 7/1/2024	4,293.37	4,293.37		
Balance 11/30/2024	4,293.37	4,293.37		

Sustainability Fund

	Actual Expenditure	Board Approved
Balance 7/1/2023	68,218.00	68,218.00
Funds to Balance the Budget		-30,000.00
Balance 11/30/2024	68,218.00	38,218.00

First Parish Brewster UU
Budget vs. Actuals: Operating Budget FY25
 July - November, 2024

	Total			
	Actual	Budget	Remaining	% of Budget
Revenue				
Fundraising	31,834.40	43,500.00	11,665.60	73.18%
Investment, Interest, Misc	3,770.23	8,550.00	4,779.77	44.10%
Offertory	11,648.37	25,000.00	13,351.63	46.59%
Pledges	294,639.16	480,450.00	185,810.84	61.33%
Rental	5,309.00	8,000.00	2,691.00	66.36%
Thrift Store Income	78,971.15	142,397.00	63,425.85	55.46%
Total Revenue	\$ 426,172.31	\$ 707,897.00	\$ 281,724.69	60.20%
Gross Profit	\$ 426,172.31	\$ 707,897.00	\$ 281,724.69	60.20%
Expenditures				
Administrative	6,371.07	18,800.00	12,428.93	33.89%
BldgGrounds	49,432.09	100,201.00	50,768.91	49.33%
Committees	1,831.30	4,360.00	2,528.70	42.00%
Lifespan Religious Education	2,098.48	6,150.00	4,051.52	34.12%
Mortgage Loan Payments	3,078.05	7,400.00	4,321.95	41.60%
Music	454.07	5,900.00	5,445.93	7.70%
Staff	230,480.92	579,186.00	348,705.08	39.79%
UUA/NER Dues	5,000.00	12,000.00	7,000.00	41.67%
Worship	367.89	3,900.00	3,532.11	9.43%
Total Expenditures	\$ 299,113.87	\$ 737,897.00	\$ 438,783.13	40.54%
Net Operating Revenue	\$ 127,058.44	-\$ 30,000.00	-\$ 157,058.44	-423.53%
Net Revenue	\$ 127,058.44	-\$ 30,000.00	-\$ 157,058.44	-423.53%

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First Parish Brewster
Statement of Activity Comparison
July - November, 2024

	Total	
	Jul - Nov, 2024	Jul - Nov, 2023 (PY)
7 Revenue		
8 Fundraising	31,834.40	16,521.21
9 Investment, Interest, Misc	3,770.23	3,642.99
10 Offertory	11,648.37	10,693.02
11 Pledges	294,639.16	197,743.33
12 Rental	5,309.00	3,218.00
13 Thrift Store Income	78,971.15	59,383.19
14 Total Revenue	\$ 426,172.31	\$ 291,201.74
15 Gross Profit	\$ 426,172.31	\$ 291,201.74
16 Expenditures		
17 Administrative	6,371.07	6,355.69
18 BldgGrounds	49,432.09	42,688.45
19 Committees	1,831.30	2,467.65
20 Lifespan Religious Education	2,098.48	2,000.78
21 Mortgage Loan Payments	3,078.05	3,078.05
22 Music	454.07	1,106.70
23 Staff	230,480.92	205,009.00
24 UUA/NER Dues	5,000.00	4,170.00
25 Worship	367.89	2,910.70
26 Total Expenditures	\$ 299,113.87	\$ 269,787.02
27 Net Operating Revenue	\$ 127,058.44	\$ 21,414.72
28 Net Revenue	\$ 127,058.44	\$ 21,414.72

Thursday, Jan 09, 2025 02:11:10 PM GMT-8 - Accrual Basis