

FUUSM Finance Committee Annual Report, 2022-2023

Members: Mike Lang (Chair), Joe Baker (Liaison for Buildings & Grounds Committee), Shari Ballantyne, George Banziger (note-taker), Kat Hawbaker (Minister, ex-officio), Ted Goertzel (Treasurer, ex-officio), Christina Thrasher. Shari, who staffed the Committee table at the Committee Fair of March 26, reported that Nathan Crowley and Kayla Campbell expressed interest in joining the committee, but they did not attend the March 27 meeting—although they were invited. Ted has been in regular consultation with Linda Lawton, previous treasurer, who served for several years until 2019.

The committee usually met on the fourth Monday every month this fiscal year. Thus far, a meeting has been held each month including December.

Committee goals were also established early in the fiscal year and included making a long-term plan for a balanced operational budget, monitoring the operational budget (in concert with the treasurer) on a monthly basis, oversight of the annual pledge drive, monitoring special funds, following best practices in fund raising, arranging for the annual service auction and yard sale, oversight of special projects, and drafting next year's budget (in concert with the treasurer).

The Committee also oversees the balance sheet which lists the special funds that are outside the operations budget, such as the minister's discretionary fund, the Green Sanctuary fund, and the trust funds; the task of awarding expenditure requests and monitoring of the trust funds is done the Board of Trust Governors. The Committee reviews these special funds in order to verify who the "owner" of the fund is and whether each fund is being utilized. The Committee also oversees the counting of collections, the schedule for which is managed by George Banziger through the online service of Sign-up Genius. Since worship services are now better attended than they were during the pandemic, the Committee reviewed the procedure at its March 27 meeting and communicated the details of the procedure to the counting team, which includes: Gillian Abbott/Bob Lanese, George Banziger, Ellen Bond, Virginia Henthorn, John Kidd, Mike Lang, Anita Newhart, and Christina Thrasher. A calendar for the Committee was established at the beginning of the fiscal year and is checked at the end of each meeting to monitor progress.

Important financial tasks are completed on a regular basis by Steve and Maggie Meyer who send out checks for occasional purchases and service costs (those not on automatic payments). They ~~then~~ deposit the checks and cash received in the FUUSM account at People's Bank recorded in Quick Books by our paid bookkeeper, Jennifer Schenkel of Wark & Wark Accounting.

The Committee oversees the Yard Sale, which this fiscal year was held in August, 2022. Shari Ballantyne coordinated last summer's Yard Sale, that took in a total revenue of \$1,746, which was above the \$1,000 budgeted for this item.

At its July meeting George informed the Committee that he had resubmitted the Chalice Lighter grant application to UUA/Central East. In September we were notified that the grant application was approved for \$20,000; in addition, FUUSM is obligated to raise \$15,000 from its own funds over the three-year grant period. In November 2022 Annie Warmke agreed to manage the Chalice Lighter Grant Membership Project, as she has named it. The Committee receives regular updates about the progress of this grant project, which began officially on March 1, 2023.

At its September meeting Ted Goertzel submitted a revised version of the Treasurer's responsibilities (i.e., job description). After the Committee reviewed and approved these changes, they were sent to the Board for their review.

In its oversight of the Pledge Drive (for the 2023-24 budget) the Committee received regular updates from George, who coordinated this year's pledge drive with the help of a pledge team, comprised of Brenda Lisk, Christina Thrasher, and Danielle Thrasher. A pledge letter with a pledge form, indicating the amount each pledge unit pledged in the previous year, was sent out in the last week of January. An additional challenge in the establishment of the 2023-24 budget is the need to raise an additional \$5,000 for the first-year match of the Chalice Lighter grant. George and the Pledge Team gave regular updates to the congregation at worship services throughout February and March. In March the Pledge Team conducted follow-up phone calls to those who had pledged the previous year and had not pledged so far

this year; in addition, some members & friends who have not pledged at all in recent years were contacted. There are still some individuals to be contacted, but at this writing the total pledged is \$115,760 (compared to \$114,980 last year at this time). There were 71 pledges received, i.e., pledge units, as compared to 66 last year. The average pledge was \$1,630 (slightly higher than last year), and the median pledge was \$1,200 (comparable to last year). Ted included a total of \$117,232 for pledge contributions in the 2023-24 draft budget since that is the total received last year at the time of the congregation meeting. The budget for next year shows a net ordinary income of -\$7,032 (i.e., deficit), but the bank account balance of \$101,341 will easily cover this deficit as well as a few more deficits in future years. It should be noted in this context that, in his long-term analysis of our budget, Ted noted that just 12 families account for over 50% of pledges. Due to family moves and deaths we have already lost some strong contributors to our pledged income. If we continue to lose many more of these 12 key families, our budget will suffer. This problem brings into focus the importance of what the Chalice Lighter Membership Project is attempting to do by building up our membership base for the long term.

The Committee also oversees and initiates plans for the Service Auction, which was scheduled this fiscal year for March 31, 2023 at the Gathering Place on the Marietta College campus. Christina Thrasher and Shari Ballantyne were the primary coordinators of the Service Auction, but they received assistance from many volunteers. Several items for the Auction are still ongoing, including the Valley Gem cruise, which was initiated by Virginia Henthorn. At this writing the net revenue for the Auction is \$13,364.50 (\$12,000 budgeted).

Two other minor sources of revenue are Amazon Smile and Kroger Community Rewards Program. Linda Lawton, who served as previous treasurer until July 2018, made an arrangement with Amazon so that FUUSM members and friends can designate FUUSM to receive 0.5% of every purchase made on Amazon. In January 2023 Amazon announced that it is discontinuing the Amazon Smile program as of March 2023; FUUSM members and friends have been informed of this change. The Kroger program is still operating, but few people are utilizing it.

A major item of business at each monthly meeting is the monitoring of the current operational budget. The treasurer provides by e-mail attachments beforehand copies of the profit-and-loss statement for each month (actually the previous month to each meeting). He also provides an update on the status of special funds (i.e., balance sheet), which are apart from the operational budget. The previous treasurer, Linda Lawton, had seasonally adjusted the profit/loss budget figures to account for variations such as the increase in fulfilled pledges during the months of the pledge drive.

In the fall 2022 Dave Ballantyne generously conveyed ownership of the solar panels atop the sanctuary building to FUUSM. This means that we will no longer be sending payment to Dave as reimbursement for his supplier costs. But this benefit to FUUSM has been clouded by an issue with our billing from AEP-Ohio. We have experienced an increase in electricity costs, from AEP-Ohio, which bumped us into a higher category of user, resulting in higher costs, because of our electrical usage. Thermostats were part of the problem, and have been reset, but the problem persists; we are monitoring our usage so that we can be returned to a lower category of customer demand by AEP-Ohio. Joe Baker of Buildings & Grounds Committee is continuing to investigate this question. Recently, Joe mentioned that the heat pump in the RE Building that is functioning as heater and air conditioner may be responsible for this higher electrical consumption.

At its March 2023 meeting the Committee reviewed the draft budget for 2023-24, which Ted had prepared in consultation with Linda Lawton. In building this budget, Ted focused on actual expenditures and income figures rather than those budgeted in an effort to provide the most accurate information. There were no staff raises included with this budget. Employee compensation (salaries, wages, fringe benefits etc.) represents the major portion of our budget (68.5%), and these expenses do not change much year to year.

The Committee usually oversees an audit of the most recently completed budget year. Early in the fiscal year Mike Lang had agreed to perform the audit, but he withdrew that offer in September.

Subsequently, he asked Wayne Waldeck if he would conduct an audit. Wayne agreed but deferred performing this task until after tax season.

We have much to consider about our FUUSM finances but much to be grateful for including a dedicated, generous, and caring congregation, which has responded effectively to our budget challenges. . Long-term sustainability of our operations budget, however, will depend on engaging our existing members/friends more seriously in congregation activities (increased engagement leads to increased contributions) and expanding our membership.

Submitted by George Banziger (with committee input)

April 7, 2023