

OPERATIONS COUNCIL

Operations Council Annual Report 2017-2018

Purpose:

The Operations Council coordinates the activities of its four member committees.

Members:

- Tamara Bowman, Board Liaison
- Marty Atias, Co-chair, Audio Visual Technology Committee
- Brian Beard, Chair, Property/CIA Committee, currently in Puerto Rico
- Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Administrative Operations Committee; Co-chair, Audio Visual Technology Committee
- Steve Leete, Chair, Information Technology Committee

Highlights:

- The Operations Council (Ops Council) has met nearly monthly this year with an at-large board member as our board liaison, Tamara Bowman, who has been very helpful in coordinating our work with the board. The council consists of representatives of the Administrative Operations, Audio Visual Technology, Information Technology, and Property/Capital Improvements and Accessibility committees.
- The Ops Council has identified deficiencies in all our buildings, grounds, and equipment and is coordinating with Dream Builders and the Board of Trustees in planning for their restoration or replacement as decisions are made as to how to proceed with our building program.
- The Ops Council has discussed issues with rentals as to how they affect our buildings and operations currently and how that might change with modifications to our buildings. We also worked on how to set optimum rental rates and keep them updated. No specifics yet but we suspect that we are undercharging for rentals.

Challenges:

- We have not found a replacement for Mark Ferrenz who has chaired the Capital Investments and Accessibility Committee (CIA). That committee has been combined with the Property Committee. An additional consideration was that Dream Builders is doing similar work to what CIA has been doing. We do believe that once the building project is completed, either the CIA committee should be reestablished or the Dream Builders should be made a continuing presence to perform the functions that the CIA committee was doing. When active, the CIA was identifying current and future maintenance needs and planning to remediate them. That information was used by Dream Builders in their renovation and deferred maintenance remediation planning.
- A continuing challenge is the planning and financing for improving the maintenance and repair of our buildings and grounds and the computer and audio-visual services provided by our member committees. Our buildings have been a primary focus as they are not in good condition after having their maintenance underfunded for many years. Our recent Capital Fund Drive should help restore our buildings but with the plans not yet finalized, it is difficult for us to proceed with our part of this work.
- When proposing the creation of the Operations Council, we requested that a board member act as convener for the new council and liaison to the board. We suggested that this position be a VP functioning much like the Program VP does for the Program Council. Instead, the board has identified a board member to be a liaison to our council. This arrangement has really helped and the board has proposed and the congregation has approved changes so that a board member will be designated as Chair of the Operations Council. We look forward to working under this new structure.

Opportunities:

- We look forward to working with the new Chair of the Operations Council.

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom, Acting Convener, Ops Council

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Administrative Operations Committee Annual Report 2017-2018

Purpose:

Support the Ministers, staff, and church leadership in performing the administrative functions of the church.

Members:

- Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, membership and auction databases, Microsoft computing
- Nancy Dougherty, database, office procedures
- Mark Ferrenz, telephones
- Ken Iobst, corporate office services, logical email addresses, electronic file system, web calendar, UNIX computing, computer security
- Melinda Yalom, Church Administrator

Highlights:

- The new Operations Council structure has enabled us to focus more on office procedures and their documentation and the new membership database because the new Information Technology and Audio Visual Technology Committees have relieved us of the tasks that they now perform.
- Recording attendance data in the new IconCMO membership database is not as straightforward as it was with our old system that was customized specifically for our use but we have devised a format for doing that and it seems to be meeting our needs.

Challenges:

- We continue to invite new new members into our committee but, so far, with no success.
- We continue to need clear, up-to-date policies on building rentals. Since rentals are administered by the church administrator, issues with rentals become a topic of conversation for this committee. However, the rental procedures and policies have been the responsibility of Finance, and when functioning, the Rentals Committee falls under Finance.
- We continue to be involved in building issues, particularly failures of the old HVAC and alarm systems. Improved procedures for responding to these failures has helped us keep these systems functioning until they can be replaced.

Opportunities:

- The Archive Closet is full and doesn't have room to safely store building drawings and other large items. We are continueing the process of cleaning out what we don't need and digitizing what can be stored on our church server but our work on the new database has delayed any significant progress.
- We continue to study the Web Services features of the new database, such as an online directory, to see if and how they might be implemented.

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom, Chair, Administrative Operations Committee

AUDIO VISUAL TECH COMMITTEE

Audio Visual Tech Committee Annual Report 2017-2018

OVERVIEW:

The AV Tech Committee continues to provide technical support for all regular and special services, congregational meetings, special concerts, presentations, and film screenings.

HIGHLIGHTS:

We supported several concerts this year including the start of the Jazz@UUCSS series, plus meetings and several rentals which included music performances.

We supported a Strathmore East County Initiative concert at UUCSS and other churches which have went especially well. We expect to continue our partnership with Strathmore and other partner churches to provide cultural enrichment of our community and spark outreach engagement with neighbor houses of worship.

CHALLENGES:

The AV Tech Committee still consists solely of it's co-chair's, Marty Atias & Rob Dahlstrom, with John Sullivan occassionally serving as backup. Until we expand the roster by either recruiting new volunteers, starting an internship program , or paying outside people, we run a very real risk of no availability for any regular or special service. There have been several church and rental events this past year where we were not able to provide an AV tech, which risks valuable revenue for the church.

For the last three years we have been enjoying improved sound from the music stage with high quality loudspeakers and a subwoofer on loan from Marty's company. UUCSS has had an an opportunity to purchase them at a steep discount. If there is no intention to fund the maintenance of high quality sound from the choir and music stage, they may be lost at any time, and this may jeopardize such programs as the new Jazz series and other concerts.

The fall-back speakers are very mediocre small club /band speakers driven by an amplifier that is also on loan from Marty's company. Using these would be a significant step down in terms of sound quality and aesthetics. Their inferior sound will not adequately support the quality of musical performances the music committee has been working so hard to provide.

We really want to purchase appropriate speakers for both stages and hang them up to eliminate the floor stands and associated cabling for both safety, aesthetics, and to improve the sound. Many congregants have complained that these speakers block views of our quilts.

We have not been receiving notification from the office of bookings in the sanctuary for which AV support is required. With only one person willing to help the church provide this valuable service, this makes scheduling exptremely stressful and risks leaving a special event or a rental without AV support.

Feedback and ringing (low-level feedback) from both the pulpit and the choir stage continue to be a very big problem causing diminished spoken word intelligibility and musical articulation. Room reflections cause the natural amplification of instruments such as piano and drums to be uneven and loud music to sound very harsh. The cause is rooted in the room acoustics as we've discussed before. Until acoustic treatments for the sanctuary are budgeted, band performances will continue to sound louder and harsher than they should, and the pulpit mic to either be operated at a lower level to avoid ringing. Ringing sounds like a tone that sustains between words and after speech has stopped.

Wireless Mics- We are operating with very old, inexpensive systems for two hand held mics and loaner systems for the hands-free mic. All the receivers are sitting on the mixer desktop with an ugly antenna farm that can be bumped into as people walk by. We have been wanting to modernize our wireless mics for several years.

Our stage lighting system is impossible to operate. The control position has NO VIEW of the music stage, the controls themselves are completely manual and chaotically organized, and they are inaccessible from the sound mixing desk, making them extremely difficult or literally impossible to operate during events when they are needed the most.

LOOKING FORWARD:

We need to emphasize the importance of volunteer recruiting for the AV crew.

We would very much like to improve the aesthetics and sound in the Sanctuary this year by mounting appropriate loudspeakers on the walls for the Pulpit stage, and hanging the choir stage speakers as well.

We want to upgrade our wireless microphone systems to be more reliable, improve their sound, make them physically secure, and improve their performance.

The Deaf Access Committee's videotaping and posting of sermons on the church web site have fallen by the wayside. This is unfortunate, as we know that churches who regularly publish well produced video of their services can do attract many viewers from all over and even attract plate donations.

Submitted by Marty Atias, Co-Chair, AV/Tech Committee

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Information Technology Committee Annual Report 2017-2018

The Information Technology Committee is a subcommittee of the Operations Council. Its purpose is to provide guidance and assistance as well as to approve expenses related to computers and networking. Our IT related services are used by the administrative offices, church web server, and audio visual team among others. Keeping our computers and other networking hardware updated and in working order is an ongoing effort.

Submitted by Steve Leete, Chair, Information Technology

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPORT

Property Committee Annual Report 2017–2018

The Property Committee members are Brian Beard (chair, currently in Puerto Rico), Marty Atias, Rob Dahlstrom, Larry McAneny, and Mark Ferrenz.

Highlights

- We replaced the carpet in the Community Hall, including removing the vertical panels along two of the walls.
- We signed a contract with Fusion Fire Protection to service our fire alarm and sprinkler systems.
- Marty Atias worked with a contractor to repair holes, cracks, and uneven joints in sidewalks
- Rob Dahlstrom and Jimmy Schreiber added exit signs with emergency lighting to the lower levels of the Community Building and Administration Building.

Ongoing Concerns

- Not unlike many administrative and functional committees during the past year, the Property Committee has faced many challenges, as follows:
- Heating system in the Community Hall is old and unreliable, with only one of the two ganged furnaces still working.
- The sexton position is underfunded and not able to fulfill all the typical duties that we need the sexton to do.
- The small size of the committee – basically, just two people who have roles in multiple other committees and the empty Chair position has made it difficult to accomplish much. We are having to rely more heavily on expensive outside contractors, and while there is a small core of willing volunteers, no one is willing or able to plan projects or coordinate them.
- The lack of clear lines of responsibility or a clearly defined authoritative relationship between the committee and staff, particularly in respect to rental contracts and outside contractors, the question of clear delegation of responsibility and autonomy from the board, and lack of representation on the board has complicated and confounded efforts to be effective stewards of our facilities and budget.
- With respect, these problems have been exacerbated by budget cuts, reduced staffing, an interim chief of staff, and the unusual critical tasks the board has had to tackle.
- Coordination of upgrades and repairs with the Capitol Campaign renovation project is ongoing, with many projects having to wait for contracts and scheduling to be done.

Submitted by Rob Dahlstrom and Marty Atias, Property Committee members