

UUC Board Meeting Agenda for November 9, 2023

We, the UUC Board, seek informed collaboration and clarity in our work of supporting UUC ministries. We interact with respect, trust, deep listening, and curiosity. We affirm one another, and maintain fierce dedication to diversity and inclusion in our commitment to the community we serve. We communicate directly and with courageous love. When it arises, we engage in productive conflict. We are focused, accountable, and authentic. We laugh together. We maintain the trust and confidentiality of board members' contributions and speak with one voice regarding board actions.

7:00-7:20

Chalice Lighting, Reading (Rev. Pam), Check-in

7:20-7:35

Chris Long is invited to report on the auction.

7:35-7:45

Review and Accept Agenda

Approve Consent Agenda

- **Minister's Report**
- **Administrator's Report**
- **Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report**
- **Previous Meeting Minutes**

7:45-7:55

Treasurer's Quarterly Report

7:55-8:25

Old Business

- Response to Fred's request from finance committee (Fred and Wayne will discuss)
- Best practices for using unrestricted funds (Pam will report on her research)
- Discussion of auction item Dancing through the Decades (Laura)

8:25-8:50

New Business

- Report on the Past Presidents meeting (Fred, Laura, Pam)
- Proposed addition to our organizational chart (Fred)
- Check in about board experience (Fred)

8:50-9:00

Check-out - Did we abide by our covenant?

Upcoming

Next Board Meeting – December 14, 2023

Reading for December Meeting - ?

Other activities?

UUC Board Meeting Minutes November 9, 2023

In attendance: Fred Piercy, Laura Robinson, Wayne Neu, Margo Walter, Beth McClellan, Rev. Pam Philips, Rachel Craine, and Anna Tulou (via Zoom)

Guests: Chris Long, Ally Dehoff

Chalice Lighting, Reading, Check-in

- Fred called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and Rev. Pam shared a reading.

Auction Report

Chris Long and Ally Dehoff reported on the auction, in addition to submitting a written report:

- The auction went very well, bringing in just under \$23,000 (minus fees). They had originally thought it would be smaller because we had two auctions this calendar year (one in the spring) due to transitioning back from COVID; however, it was extremely successful.
- Having more volunteers (thus asking less of each individual) was very important to the success of the auction. Rather than having to attend every planning meeting, volunteers agreed to specific tasks with clear expectations.
- Fees do add up so it's much better if one can pay with a check, which incurs no fees.
- A discussion ensued regarding the food offerings. In the past we've had a general potluck, but for this auction certain individuals were recruited to offer more of a targeted menu. How did it go? In general people were favorable, although communication could have been better.
- Rev. Pam suggested that in the future a donation box is available for beverages, as done in the past.
- Fred asked should we keep future auction goals at \$20,000? Although this goal caused the present auction committee some stress, Rev. Pam suggested that it was reasonable given how the congregation responds so positively to the auctions.
- Chris will write a letter of thanks to all volunteers for the next newsletter.
- The Board praised Chris and Ally and all the volunteers for their efforts.

Approve Consent Agenda

- Wayne motioned to approve the consent agenda and Margo seconded. The Board approved unanimously. These reports included:
 - Minister's Report
 - Administrator's Report
 - Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report
 - Previous Meeting Minutes

Discussion of the Treasurer's Quarterly Report

- Wayne noted that usually this time of year a higher % of pledges have been collected. Rev. Pam commented that pledge letters just went out today so likely we'll see an increase soon.

- Balance sheet – reallocations to most of the TRNAs have been taken care of.
- Undesignated funds – we are in a comfortable position in regard to maintaining reserves that would cover 3-6 months of expenditures if needed.
- A discussion ensued concerning improvements to the playground. Rachel noted that it has been 10 years since the original proposal; Rev. Pam volunteered to follow up with the present Playground Committee to see where they are regarding the present playground proposal. Families shouldn't have to front the money for playground renovation. The discussion was continued under Old Business (below).

Old Business

- The Finance Committee responded to Fred's request to consider whether reserves should be kept as security for the future or used for funding new projects. The committee concluded that funds should only be used if a specific project is identified, thoroughly vetted, and brought before the congregation for comment.
- Rev. Pam researched best practices for using reserved funds by talking with other ministers.
 - A general consensus was to keep 3 to 6 months of the annual budget in accessible reserves.
 - One suggestion was to divide the reserves into three parts: restricted reserve, capital reserve, and unrestricted reserve.
 - Fred questioned whether the operating funds and facilities maintenance escrow are separate from reserves; Rev. Pam responded that they are.
- Continued discussion of potential projects – especially the proposed playground renovations. Currently the money allocated for the playground is only enough if the labor (e.g., for new fencing) is provided by volunteers. Rachel noted that it may be important to have a professional do the work due to potential liability issues.
 - Laura moved that the previous grounds committee get a quote for professional work for Phase I of the playground renovation (if they are still willing). Fred seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Laura reported on the Board's auction item of Dancing through the Decades (scheduled for January 27, 2024). Not many people have signed up so far. Laura will do a writeup for the December newsletter, with a link for sign-up. Perhaps also a video ad for families?

New Business

- Fred, Laura, and Rev. Pam reported on the recent meeting with past presidents of our board. It was heartening that so many showed up, and how they offered to be of assistance whenever needed. The biggest takeaway from the meeting concerned how many folks don't know who is on the board or how to communicate with us. Suggestions for the future include:
 - Create an identifying button for board members to wear at church.
 - Locate a suggestion container next to the board photos in Elarth.
 - Add the boards' email addresses to weekly announcements.

- Meetings with the past presidents should be a regular event, although not necessarily every year.
- Fred proposed an addition to the board's organizational chart that shows how we are guided by our mission, vision, core values, and covenant, to go in the policy manual and be posted on the website. After some discussion and minor revisions, Fred moved to accept it, Beth seconded, and it was approved unanimously.
- Fred asked each member how their experiences on other boards or committees can inform our current board. Responses include:
 - Bringing a diverse group of people together.
 - Importance of strong, focused presidential leadership, ability to see the big picture.
 - In contrast to some, our board is very active, hands-on, and prepared.
 - Importance of listening without a preconceived answer, following up with action.
 - Caring about one another; working on programs that are useful and enjoyable.
 - Levity, checking in with one another.
 - Working toward goals together, driven by values and beliefs.
 - AdMinistry – understanding that effective administration is vital to the church's mission and ministry.
 - Laughter.
 - Service.

Upcoming

- Next Board Meeting will be held on December 14, 2023.
- The reading for the December meeting will be by Margo Walter.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Leads Worship and Officiates Rites of Passage

Our services in October explored the theme of Heritage, including some of the earliest expressions of Unitarian and Universalism, the merging of the two denominations in 1961, and some of UUC's history. I appreciated all the resources Arthur Snoke has shared with me (past sermon recordings and a stack of newsletters from the 1990's) and a conversation with Holly Lesko about a meeting she facilitated prior to Rev. Dara's being called – all of which were invaluable in my research. The Ministerial Internship Committee participated in a service exploring our having become a teaching congregation, and Anna Tulou led a lovely Samhain service.

This month we're beginning an exploration of one of the core values of Unitarian Universalism that is included in the proposed Article II revision (in the UUA Bylaws): Generosity.

All the worship associates attended a very productive retreat on the afternoon of October 29th.

I officiated at the wedding of Keller Rose Collins, daughter of congregants Angel Collins and Keith Brophy and am looking forward to officiating at very small family wedding the weekend after Thanksgiving.

Provides Pastoral Care and Presence

In addition to meeting with small groups, I've made several visits to folks in local hospitals lately.

I got a phone call from a UU in Arizona who is starting a lay pastoral care ministry at their congregation and wanted permission to use our brochure (which they'd found online). This was a nice compliment to those who created the brochure and also gave me an opportunity to answer many questions and share other resources with them.

Encourages Spiritual Development for Self and Others

I am beginning to meet monthly with the YRUU again, discussing Street Spirituality, using a National Geographic video as a jumpstart to conversation. I've missed the opportunity to hear what these bright young people have to say about spirituality.

I'm enjoying reading and discussing a book on Humanism with the Conversations on our Faith group and the new Interfaith Book Discussion book -- [The Great Partnership: Science, Religion, and the Search for Meaning](#) by Jonathan Sacks. We'll be hosting the group at UUC on Sunday, November 12th at 4:00, discussing chapters 3-4. I highly recommend joining us; it has been a great way to forge relationships with people from different faith communities.

Witnesses to Social Justice in the Public Square

The Environmental Justice team applied for UUC to be recognized as a Cool Congregation through the Virginia Interfaith Power and Light.

We had a great turnout for the NAACP religious affairs committee-sponsored event on October 30th -- Dr. Sylvester Johnson giving a compelling talk on Politics and Religion. The host congregation -- Church on Main -- streamed the talk on YouTube, but sadly there was no sound.

We are beginning to plan an event for Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20th. It will probably be at 6:00, but I will give more details as soon as they are set.

Leads Administration

The research into UUC history gave me more understanding of past conflicts in the congregation, and I've consulted with Rev. Tyler Coles from the Southern Region to learn more about UUA resources to help Nancy Bodenhorn and members of the Conflict Transformation Team as they work to define their role. Nancy and I met to discuss their deliberations so far.

The Connections Committee is holding a Newcomers Orientation on November 11th. We will begin experimenting with having a dedicated Visitors Table in Elarth on non-potluck Sundays where people can meet for New to UUC conversations and to get a tour of the building. I'm very pleased that [Seth Leonard](#) has volunteered to coordinate a UUC Thanksgiving Dinner – at 2:00 on Thanksgiving Day. Please contact him if you plan to attend.

The annual Fall Put-the-Grounds-to-Bed workday was on November 4th, and they got quite a bit of work done. We had members of Chi Omega sorority helping out. The Grounds Ministry will have another less formal work day after the service on the Second Sunday (November 12th).

The Communications Committee has met, and the website subcommittee is meeting this Sunday (the 5th). We are hoping that the website will become more useful to congregants and visitors, with more up-to-date information.

I have done some research into the optimal amount of unrestricted funds we should have on hand. See the recommendations I've received from colleagues and a chart of the trends in the past few years [here](#).

Serves the Larger Unitarian Universalist Faith and Leads the Faith into the Future

I'm glad that the Blacksburg Ministerial Association has begun to meet more regularly, giving me a chance to check in with local colleagues.

Time away from Blacksburg and UUC

November 13-16 at The Mountain for a SEUUMA Retreat (Southeast UU Ministers Association)

November 23-24 in Charlottesville for Thanksgiving.

Administrator's Report to the Board

November 5, 2023

Vacation: I will be taking vacation the week of Thanksgiving and will be out of office the 20th-26th.

Rentals: UUC rentals are up and doing well. I would really like to have some sort of walk through/cleaning day in the near future to get facilities decluttered and more organized for renters.

Communications: Communications Committee met again this month to discuss further edits to the website. It has been decided that staff will update the pages as needed with the help of group/program leaders to get updated information. We have discussed updating the website so that it will be the primary source of event info and congregation resources as opposed to a newsletter.

ComCom also discussed this year's parade. We have sent out a form asking for participation sign ups as we'd need a sizable group to walk with banners and signs this year.

Lastly, ComCom has been discussing UUC T-shirts, designs, and vendors, hoping to get the ball rolling on orders soon!

Attendance/Members: See the [Attendance/Numbers](#) Google doc.

DLFD Report to the Board – November 2023

Children and Youth Programs:

- **Registration Numbers:** Currently 54 families and 96 children have registered for 122 activity/positions in the 2023-24 year.
- **Programming:**
 - Children's RE is going well.
 - 8-9 OWL is still going strong. Great feedback on the new format--Sunday mornings spread all year works better for families than our previous schedule.
 - YRUU has lots planned for November--: November 5th Pam joined them to talk about "What is God" and then they played a new game, Dixit, which was a big hit. On Nov. 12 they will have a "Friendsgiving," and on Nov. 19 Malinda Britt from Planned Parenthood will visit to talk about Reproductive Justice. They are also making plans for the Pasta making dinner experience they donated to the Auction, taking place on Dec. 10.
 - MSYG had a great time at Sinkland Farms last month and will be having a "Friendsgiving" this month, sharing a meal and also creating holiday cards and gifts for some of our older congregants.

Adult Programming:

- Building Bridges for Adults--In October, 10 people visited the Dharmapala Kadampa Buddhist Center and on November 5th, 9 people visited the Shantiniketan Temple. This week we finish our study of Eastern religions.
- Young Adult OWL continues to go well.
- The Parent Covenant Group will meet on November 11.
- Sunday Circle: 12 people attended the October 15 Sunday Circle (at 11:30)--Voter's Right. Only 2 people attended the Nov. 5 (8:30) presentation on Springhouse. Jamie and I decided to continue this year offering one early and one late Sunday Circle each month, but potentially move to 1 Sunday Circle a month, after services, for next year if the trend continues.

Other Programming:

- Scary to be Hungry was a huge success, with 8 families helping collect 1259 pounds of food, with food and cash value of over \$2400 (not including our half plate...)
- 17 buddies have begun exchanging notes in the Buddy Project.
- The Mitten Tree is up in the lower lobby--bring in your mittens, hats and scarves!

Other DLFD Activities:

I had a great time at LREDA with colleagues. Highlights:

- Inspiring workshops on using games in the congregation and using art in worship.
- Visit to the Black Holocaust Museum followed by anti-racism workshop
- Transgender Justice and Resilience workshop led by Alex Capitan #AwesomeHuman
- Completed UU Identity Renaissance Module—deepened my understanding of faith development

This month I will be:

- Helping Pam and Anna with a Transgender Day of Remembrance service on November 20
- Helping Pam with the multigen service on November 26
- Helping support our participation in the Holiday Parade on Dec. 1
- Planning for a Holiday Fun and Movie Night for Dec. 2

Time off: I plan to take Sunday, Nov. 19 off. Also, I will take vacation Nov. 22-25. (3 vacation days, one holiday)