

UUC Board Meeting Agenda January 11, 2024

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.

7:00-7:15

Chalice Lighting, Reading (Margo), Check-in
Review and Accept Agenda

7:15-7:30

Committee Report: Bill Baker will report on the Endowment Committee

7:30-7:35

Approve Consent Agenda

Minister's Report

Administrator's Report

Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report

Previous Meeting Minutes

Treasurer's Report

7:35-8:00

Old Business

- Quotes for playground fencing (Pam)
- Dancing through the Decades update (Laura)
- Isabel Berney award nomination (Fred)
- Determine date and procedure for Board to provide snacks after church (Fred)
- Clarification of budget process, dates? (Laura)

8:00-8:50

New Business

- Finance Committee recommendations for AV (Fred)
 - a. Recommendations to improve AV.
 - b. Recommendations to provide stipend.
- Finance Committee recommendations regarding grounds (Fred)

8:50-9:00

Check-out - Did we abide by our covenant?

Upcoming meeting:

Next Board Meeting – February 15, 2024

Reading for February Meeting - ?

Other activities?

UUC Board Meeting Minutes

January 11, 2024

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

Guests: Bill Baker

Chalice Lighting, Reading, Check-in and Review of Agenda

- Fred called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and Margo lit the chalice.
- The agenda was approved unanimously.

Report on Endowment Committee: Bill Baker

- Bill summarized the origin of the Endowment Committee, which began with the realization that we did not have a planned-giving committee. Original members were Bill, Linda Powers, *Dennis Moody, and *Johnny McCord (*deceased). Current members are Bill Baker and Jim Bohland.
- Why Endowment? 95% of our budget is fixed expenses, leaving only 5% to run programs.
- Upon advice from Dennis Moody, it was decided to invest endowment funds in the Unitarian Universalist Common Endowment Fund (UUCEF). UUCEF is unique in that it aligns investments with UU values (e.g., human rights, climate change).
- The committee has held talks and one-on-one meetings with those who might be interested, has created articles and brochures, and has a presence on our website.
- Committee members participate in quarterly Zoom meetings w/ members of the UUC investment committee and the UUA.
- About the UUCEF:
 - Total fund >\$234 million; we own \$42,829 of the total. The fund is audited annually. A little less than half comes from different congregations.
 - We do not have direct control of investments but do have input.
 - Asset allocation includes private markets, community investments as well as domestic and international. Includes SRI (socially responsible investments) and ESG (environmental, social, governance).
 - Shareholder engagement update: human rights, lobbying on climate, Mountain Valley Pipeline – so there is local interest.
 - The long-term view of UUCEF is good.
- How to contribute to the fund? One can make out a check at any time, but more reasonable is estate planning. Bequests; Tax-deferred retirement plans (IRAs etc.); life insurance proceeds.
- Future plans – would like to add 1 or 2 committee members; increase visibility; increase publicity through the website, newsletter, brochures; possibly offer small luncheons by invitation (Warm Hearth?).
- The Board needs to appoint 2 new members since, according to the Operational Plan: 1) Bill is overdue to step down as he's already served two 3-year terms, and 2) the Plan stipulates that the committee should consist of 3 members. The Board should review the Plan of Operation and other documents on the webpage and amend if needed.

- Discussion: Laura asked when this needs to be done. Bill replied, “When you can.” (As soon as reasonably possible.)
- Rev. Pam suggested, for advertising purposes, someone from the Communications Committee or someone working on the webpage would contact him.

Approve Consent Agenda

- Wayne motioned to approve the consent agenda and Rami seconded.
- Discussion: Wayne noted that the attendance report isn’t up to date. Pam pulled it up – more has been filled in than when Wayne checked it; link needs to be fixed.
- Discussion: Fred asked about Treasurer’s Report – some expected auction funds still have not come in. Chris Long is looking into the those who haven’t paid – could be a miscommunication about the use of a credit card.
- Discussion: Barbara asked Wayne to clarify some acronyms in treasurer’s report (e.g., P&L is ‘profit and loss’; PT is ‘pass-through’). Discussion about how to deal with restricted vs. unrestricted funds.
- After discussion, the Board approved unanimously. These reports included the following:
 - Minister's Report
 - Administrator's Report
 - Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report
 - Previous Meeting Minutes
 - Treasurer's Report

Old Business

Playground (Rev Pam):

- Derek’s quote: Materials \$2,500, labor \$7,500. We will get at least two more competitive bids.

Dancing through the Decades (Laura):

- There will be a birthday party the day before; decorations could be left up for the dance event. We are welcome to contribute any decorations. The plan is to bring decorations on Thursday so the birthday folks can use them to decorate on Friday.
- RSVPs thus far: two families + those who bought it at the UUC auction.
- We should look at the playlist and send any comments to Laura.
- Pam and Rachel can set up audio.
- We should sign up for what we’re going to bring. Laura and Rachel will provide a sign-up sheet.

Isabel Berney award nomination (Fred):

- We need to have 3 board members to convene a nomination committee. The committee will solicit nominations from the congregation. Margo, Wayne, and Barbara volunteered to serve on the committee. Committee should read Policies and Procedures (p. 33 in the manual); ask the board for help with how to advertise.

Date and procedure for providing snacks after the service (Fred):

- Lisa recommends we provide snacks after service.
- Fred will ‘chair’ and ask for volunteers to bring snacks.

Clarification of budget process and dates (Laura):

- Laura wants to make sure we're clear on what we need by when.
- Last year some members did not feel that the proposed budget was adequately communicated prior to the Annual Meeting. (There was an informational meeting, but was it not advertised well?)
- This year we need to provide adequate information before the Annual Meeting. In the past we mailed out the approved budget but now it's posted on the UUC website. We really need to advertise this at least 2 weeks before the informational meeting. Barbara asked if we can email it to everyone?
- Wayne – we need to have a goal by mid- to late Feb.
- Laura moved that we discuss and confirm the timeline at the February meeting. Barbara seconded. Approved unanimously.

New Business

Executive Session.

It was approved by Fred and seconded by Laura that the board enter executive session since personnel issues may be discussed related to certain proposals to be considered. The board entered executive session for approximately 25 minutes.

Finance Committee recommendations (Fred)

- Audio-visual recommendation
 - Wayne proposes we approve purchase of new sound system components as recommended by the Finance Committee. Rami seconded, and Barbara added a friendly amendment that we have it explained without acronyms. Approved unanimously.
- Facilities recommendation
 - Heating unit in nursery is failing; recommend changing from baseboard heat to heat pump that is compatible with our current system; extra head could be put in library. Wayne moved to approve Liz Craine's plan to replace the mini-split using reserve maintenance funds and approve a line in the current budget to cover the addition of a second head in library. Beth seconded. Approved unanimously.
- Grounds recommendations
 - Solar-powered lighting system: is the suggested \$800 for testing or for total cost? If the test is successful, is there an additional cost to install the entire proposed system? This proposal was referred back to Liz for clarification prior to a vote.
 - Expanding coverage of security cameras: A Safety Committee could answer questions, but one does not exist right now. Rev. Pam will put together a Safety Committee to look into this.

Other

- Anna (on Zoom) noted that this was a good board meeting, good balanced voices.

Upcoming

- Next Board Meeting will be held on Feb. 8.
- Reading for February Meeting will be by Rami.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 PM.

Leads Worship and Officiates Rites of Passage

Our December worship services explored the Gift of Mystery, but holiday celebrations were really the emphasis. Rachel Craine put together a magnificent multi-generational, no-rehearsal play that gave the entire congregation opportunities to participate. Victoria Taylor and Earle Irwin created a lovely solstice service, complete with a ritual planting seeds that are currently sprouting in the sanctuary. We had good in-person attendance at our Christmas Eve service and positive responses to the readings and hymns. We screened a sermon and time for all ages story from Rev. Sofia Betancourt on our New Year's Eve service, and we distributed words for the year ahead. Folks online could get words using this [link](#) (thanks to Akiko for providing the link even though we forgot to say anything about it during the service).

I was honored to officiate at the wedding of our fearless leader, Fred Piercy, and Pam Knox.

Provides Pastoral Care and Presence

I met with people at church and at their homes over the past month, and the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry has been busy as well.

Encourages Spiritual Development for Self and Others

Our Conversations on Our Faith group finished the Neil DeGrasse Tyson book ([Starry Messengers](#)) and has begun a new book by Vivek Murthy ([Together: The Healing Power of Human Connection in a Sometimes Lonely World](#)). I found the preparation for our Christmas Eve service especially satisfying, discovering new ways of thinking about the Christmas story and its relevance in our lives today.

I was spiritually and physically refreshed by a short stay in Playa del Carmen, Mexico.

Witnesses to Social Justice in the Public Square

I look forward to attending the MLK Birthday Celebration at the Church on Main this Sunday at 3:00 ("Inspired by the Dream: It Starts with me, Building a Beloved Community").

I met with Jim Bohland and Bob Stimson about a possible public witness statement regarding "the restoration and preservation of democracy within a pluralistic society." I encouraged them to engage the congregation in education and conversation, and we will have a service in February (monthly theme being Justice & Equity) that helps widen the conversation. They are holding a meeting after the service this Sunday (1/14) that board members might consider attending.

I also responded to an email from member Walt Pirie about his request for more social justice oriented Sunday services.

Kudos to Kimberley Homer, David Roberts, John Kelso, Joe Powers, Karen Holstein, Don Philyaw and all the many volunteers who have been taking good care of our guest through the To Our House program.

Leads Administration

I will be making recommendations to the finance committee regarding staff hours and compensation, which will take into consideration the need for more support for the Lifespan Faith Development program and the finance committee's recommendation for IT and/or AV stipends. I strongly recommend that we take into consideration fair compensation but also what systems/tasks are currently needing more attention (i.e. what problems need fixing) and how any recommended improvements will advance the mission and vision of the congregation.

Likewise, I believe the recommendation for installing six security cameras around the building should be considered by the Safety Committee before we move forward. We need to appoint some folks to this committee, as many members have stepped away. On a side note, there is nothing in our policy manual about such a committee, other than a reference to the Chair of the Safety Committee being the contact during emergencies. I recommend that we appoint members to the Safety Committee so that they can consider both the recommendation for security cameras and write a description for our policy manual.

Derek Rountree, member of the playground committee that put together the [Playground Committee's proposal](#) is getting estimates for labor to complete the fencing portion of the plan.

The Communications Committee is preparing to start a t-shirt design contest in which congregants make suggestions for designs that we can get on t-shirts, mugs, etc. Thanks to Laura Robinson for her excellent [Message from the Board](#) article for the website.

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

I'm pleased to note that our ministerial intern Anna Tulou has successfully met with the Ministerial Fellowship Committee and will be awarded Preliminary Fellowship upon the completion of her internship and graduation from Meadville Lombard Theological School this spring. She has also been cleared for search, meaning that she will be interviewing with congregations in search of a minister. I'm proud to be serving as one of her references.

Time away from Blacksburg and UUC

January 15th – 16th Charlottesville/Richmond for Joseph Jordan Cluster meeting

Administrator's Report to the Board

January 8, 2024

December Meetings: Held a meeting for the Communications Committee early in December. We discussed the budget and developed a plan to get ideas from congregants for UUC T-shirts.

Stewardship: I met with the stewardship team in December. We finalized the logo/theme for 2024 and pulled ideas together for this year's leader luncheon.

Annual membership number certification with UUA: I will be working with Pam and Wayne to submit up to date information along with other requested info (budget numbers, attendance, RE registration, etc.) by the February deadline.

Annual tax letters with donations for 2023: Letters will be emailed within the next 2 weeks to all who donated to UUC in 2023. Pledge reminder letters will also be sent out this month.

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

DLFD Report to the Board – January 2024

Children and Youth Programs:

- **Registration Numbers:** Currently 58 families and 102 children have registered for 128 activity/positions in the 2023-24 year.
- **Programming:**
 - Children's RE is going well, as is 8-9 OWL
 - Attendance has been very light in our middle school RE class. I will be looking into an updated building bridges program for youth for the 2025-26 cycle. Soul Matters offers a "Crossing Paths" curriculum that looks interesting.
 - YRUU will be having a coffee house fundraiser on January 20. Please attend if you can! We can also use donations of baked goods/snacks for the evening!
 - MSYG will be going bowling this month.

Adult Programming:

- Building Bridges for Adults—We will have our sessions on Islam this month, at our new time (6:30-8pm Monday nights) and visiting the Islamic Society of the NRV on Jan. 21.
- OWL for older adults begins January 14. We have 11 people registered so far—still plenty of space if you are interested!
- Parent Covenant Group—we are trying Friday night this month, hoping that this timing might work better.
- Sunday Circle: 6 people attended the Dec. 17 Sunday Circle (at 11:30)—Sustainable Blacksburg. 10 people attended the Jan. 7 (8:30) presentation on Bluebirds.
- Cynthia Luke's "Getting your ducks in a row" class takes place in Jan./Feb. and has about 25 signed up to take it!

Other Programming:

- The holiday pageant on Dec. 17 went well, as did the Buddy Project reveal afterward.

Other DLFD Activites:

- Teacher training took place on January 6, but we had to do it on Zoom due to the weather. I shortened the UU identity workshop I had planned and will probably include it in the next fall training instead.
- Had a great time off with family, and enjoyed attending Fred and Pam's wedding!

Happy New Year!!