

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.

UUC Board Meeting Agenda
March 14, 2024
[\(Zoom Link\)](#)

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 (Laura), Check-in

7:15-7:45

Right Relations Team Policy Development – Nancy Bodenhorn
Members Forum

7:45-7:50

Approve Consent Agenda

Review and Accept Agenda

Previous Meeting Minutes

Minister's Report

Administrator's Report

Director of Lifespan Faith Development's (DLFD) Report

Treasurer's Report

7:50-8:20

Old Business

- Discuss fence purchase (Fred, Pam)
- Public Witness Statement: discussion of comments (Pam)
- Isabel Berney award update (Margo)
- Reconsidering May 19 date of Informational Meeting (Fred)

8:20-8:50

New Business

- Consider Anna Tulou's request that the UUC ordain her
- Finance Committee request that board consider establishing a long-range planning group (Fred, Wayne)
- Vote on whether we want to have a separate fund for playground, and half-plate for playground fund on March 17 (Pam)

- Discuss who can know pledge amounts (Pam)

8:50-9:00

Check-out - Did we abide by our covenant?

Upcoming

Next Board Meeting – April 11, 2024

Reading for April Meeting - ?

Other activities?

Leads Worship and Officiates Rites of Passage

Our February worship services focused on the values Justice and Equity, including services devoted to looking at the Article II definitions/covenant around those values, Defending Democracy, and Celebrating Black History. We had a “talk back” and a straw poll during the service on democracy, in part to help gauge the congregation's support for the public witness statement brought to the board by Bob Stimson and Jim Bohland. Participation was lively. Our March services will focus on the value of Transformation, starting off with the Collective Transformations of UUism and UUC (which also marked the kick-off of this year's stewardship pledge drive) and the Transformational Power of Call – led by ministerial intern Anna Tulou. We are looking ahead to an especially festive Pledging Party service on the 17th – all board members are encouraged to come ready to pledge and to send photographs of what they love about UUC to Rev. Pam (thanks for those already sent).

Provides Pastoral Care and Presence

In addition to meeting with the Surviving Spouses and Sages group, I've had pastoral meetings in the office, at health care facilities, and on the grounds (with the advent of warmer weather, this is especially welcome). The Lay Pastoral Care Ministry members have been busy supporting congregants. I'm especially grateful for the informal caring that goes on between and among congregants who are experiencing difficult transitions.

Encourages Spiritual Development for Self and Others

Facilitating a Soul Matters group continues to be a joy for me. I've been appreciating the UUA Common Read – *On Repentance and Repair: Making Amends in an Unapologetic World* by Danya Ruttenberg. We're discussing it in the weekly Conversations on Faith, but we'll also have a “lunch and learn” on March 24th for others interested in discussing it. Starting next month, I'll be leading a four-session workshop on Article II. This is designed by Wellspring and emphasizes spiritual deepening. People can [register here](#), especially if they are considering being a delegate to the UUA General Assembly where the proposal will be voted on.

Witnesses to Social Justice in the Public Square

I was pleased that our service on Justice and Equity provided an opportunity to discuss the public witness statement about defending democracy. The straw poll after the service was almost unanimous (one No vote). Bob Stimson transcribed the suggestions made on the paper and electronic surveys; [here are the survey results](#). I spoke with Molly Larson about being the convener of the Social Justice Team, but she has decided she cannot take on that role now.

Leads Administration

Much of my time this past month has been working with the Administrator Search Committee. We posted the job on Indeed and received 36 résumés, we requested application letters from ten applicants, and we have scheduled five interviews to take place on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. We hope to present a candidate to the board soon (after calling references and doing a background check).

I've also been spending a lot of time on the Stewardship Pledge campaign. The committee has been doing a phenomenal job preparing for the Pledging Party scheduled for March 17th. We decided to send out letters to pledgers, thanking them for their current pledge and suggesting a 10% increase. Because these letters included specific pledge amounts, I was under the impression that only the administrator and the minister were allowed to work on them, which meant that I spent hours printing letters and putting them in envelopes. [I looked at the policy, and it turns out the president and treasurer can also have access.] In years

past, the chair of the stewardship committee has also had access. I'd like the board to consider changing the policy to include the chair. For the time being, I would also like to give the ministerial intern access to the pledge amounts so that she can help input the data after the pledge cards have been turned in at the service this Sunday.

I've worked with Paula Markham to offer an AED (automated external defibrillator) and CPR training here in conjunction with Shadow Lake Village. It will take place on Saturday, March 23rd at 10:00 a.m. If we have 35 participants, we can get a grant toward getting a free AED. Please [sign up for the training](#) and encourage friends to do the same. Currently, we have 22 people signed up.

I am meeting with the Leadership Development committee this Thursday at noon, where we will begin the work of creating a slate of new board members to be voted on at the annual meeting.

The Communications Committee is still accepting suggestions for a new T-shirt design. Please send in your ideas (drawings or written descriptions) to administrator@uucnrv.org

The Committee on Ministries has begun analyzing the data from Feedback Groups on the Grounds Ministry and hopes to have a report for the board next month.

I met with the Grounds Committee again this month, and we created a list of expectations for the next chair of the committee. Jim Flowers has agreed to take on the role. We still need a "zone" steward for the playground.

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

I continue to meet with the Blacksburg Ministerial Association and UU religious professionals. Attending the Interfaith Book Group has also given me an opportunity to engage with other people of faith in the community.

I hope to attend the SEUUMA Spring Retreat at the Mountain the first week of April.

Anna Tulou will complete her internship and graduate from seminary this spring. We have begun talking about her ordination, which I hope will happen before I begin my sabbatical.

Time away from Blacksburg and UUC

Jamie will be having a knee replacement on March 19th, so I plan to work from home for at least the first few days of his recovery. I will be available by phone/text/email.

April 1st – 4th The Mountain for SEUUMA Spring Retreat (probably attending virtually, see above).

June – August Sabbatical (contingent on our having hired and trained an administrator by then)

Administrator's Report to the Board
March 10, 2024

Stewardship Update: Met with Stewardship twice in the last month as we prepare for our big stewardship pledging party. Worked with Rev. Pam to get pledging letters out and created a new pledging form for this year.

ComCom Committee: The ComCom committee will be meeting in the next month or so to discuss t-shirt ideas that have been submitted.

Newsletter: The spring newsletter that went out at the beginning of March was a success. I think it took a while but people are starting to get used to the seasonal publishing. Rev. Pam's website updates have also been a great help getting information out that falls between publishing dates.

Pledge updates: pledge balances will go out at the beginning of April.

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

DLFD Report to the Board – March 2024

Children and Youth Programs:

- **Registration Numbers:** Currently 61 families and 107 children have registered for 132 activity/positions in the 2023-24 year.
- **Programming:**
 - Children's RE is going well.
 - YRUU—was planning to go to the Mountain, but the Mountain canceled their youth con (conference). We looked into holding a con here, but ultimately decided on having an extended meeting on Saturday, March 23 instead, from 1-9pm. They would like to try to plan a youth con for next year, with more time to prepare and get the word out to other UU churches.
 - MSYG will be having an escape room this month.

Adult Programming:

- Building Bridges for Adults—Finished studying Christianity, with a final visit to Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, which was very welcoming to us (as were the Presbyterians and Catholics.) In March we will study Quakers and attend a Friends meeting.
- OWL for older adults continues to be well attended, with lots of positive feedback.
- Parent Covenant Group—will continue to meet on 3rd Fridays this year.
- Sunday Circle: 10 people attended the Feb. 18 Sunday Circle (at 11:30) on Crows, and 16 people attended the March 3 (8:30) presentation on Dog Behavior.
- The UUA common read, On Repentance and Repair, is being discussed in Conversations on Faith, and there will also be a lunch and learn at the end of March.

Other DLFD Activites:

- Robin Cooley has agreed to be the new YRUU advisor. I am still working on recruiting a new playground committee and library committee.
- I have gotten estimates on fencing the new playground and would like to move forward on this soon. (See spreadsheet in the folder for estimates)
- Summer RE lessons have been planned, using stories related to the new UU Values and incorporating Legos—which was popular last summer.
- Will begin teacher recruitment for summer/fall RE.

Important Dates for RE:

May 12—YRUU Bridging Service

May 19—Teacher appreciation/ice cream social

May 26—no RE

June 2-Aug 4—Summer RE

Aug. 11—No RE

(Aug 13—MCPS starts)

Aug. 18—RE starts for 2024-5 year