

**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Board Meeting Minutes
January 14, 2016**

Present: Board members Margo Walter, Tim Pickering, Molly Lazar, Bob Stimson, Carol Kern, Bill Baker, Linda Powers, Bonnie Wall-Lievsay; ex officio members Dara Olandt, Karen Hager, Lisa Evanylo; UUC member Jane Keppel-Benson

Molly lit the chalice, and Dara provided the reading. All checked in. Bob served as Process Observer (PO).

I. **Agenda** – Carol moved to accept the amended agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

II. **Staff Reports** – see written reports

A. **Minister's report** – Dara is working with First Presbyterian and other congregations to put together an interfaith worship service in April. Dara, Molly, and Hesham (president of Board of Islamic Society of NRV) met on Friday to discuss future collaborations. Dara will be in Richmond Feb. 1-3 for the second part of a clergy seminar series.

B. **Administrator's report** – Lisa had nothing to add.

C. **DLFD report** – Karen shared that the visit by adults and middle schoolers to the Islamic Society on Sunday received very positive comments from both sides.

III. **Consent Agenda** – Margo moved to accept the minutes from December. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. **Check-in from Mission/Vision/Covenant Board member facilitators** – Margo went through the training, led by Polly Stimson, with some from the Refining Team. The format was excellent and encouraged individual responses. To date, 60 are registered for the dessert parties. Dara stated that the Refining Team is doing an incredible job and has come up with the first edition. She encouraged the Board to think about how to be supportive of the Refining Team and facilitators.

V. **YRUU Request** – Jane Keppel-Benson (YAC member) stated that YRUU and YAC are making great progress this year, and that the program is much improved. Goals are being achieved such as good meeting attendance (at least 15/meeting) and participation in programs, giving back to the congregation (auction dinner, 2 services/year, coffeehouse), creation of task teams to get the younger youth into leadership roles earlier, greater participation of parents, and advisors that are not overwhelmed. To meet the goals of the LFD program (see attached sheet), we need to send our youth to a CON each year at a cost of about \$1500. This helps to strengthen their UU identity and to focus on their spiritual life. Also, the trip to Boston every 4 years is very costly at about \$5000. And as the group grows, costs go up. However, because much of their time is spent fundraising for these trips, they have not been able to focus enough on their list of objectives (see attached sheet). Therefore, YRUU is putting in a request for an additional \$1500 each year to attend a CON. They will still hold fundraisers (coffeehouse and one other) to raise about \$1000/year for the Boston trip.

Dara commented that including an item in the budget shows that it is important to the congregation. We should be brave about making fiscal decisions.

VI. **Treasurer's report** – written report attached. Linda stated that we had a \$10,000 loan forgiven leaving \$78,000 in member loans. As written in the attached Finance Committee minutes, Linda has asked National Bank about the possibility of lowering the interest rate on our mortgage which is currently 5.9%. She also contacted an accountant to explore the

possibility of having him/her do our payroll and accounts payable as she believes we are in need of a professional. In the future, she will separate pledges and basket income in her report.

VII. **Member's forum** – no comments

VIII. **Council Reports**

A. **Facilities Council** – written report from Molly attached. Linda stated that budget requests have been emailed out and are due back January 26. Some were sent to council chairs and others to committee chairs.

B. **Governance Council** – no report.

C. **Finance & Administration Council** – no report.

D. **LFD Council** – no report.

E. **Membership Council** – written report attached.

F. **Pastoral Services Council** – no report.

G. **Social Action Council** – Margo reported from the SJSC (attached). On January 20, the committee will be mapping (getting information from the community about pitfalls, where to go for mental health support, etc.). Members of SJSC will be having a common read, *Our Common Struggle* by Patrick Kennedy. Ten copies have been purchased. The 2 mental health support groups begin on Monday with 600 flyers distributed. Margo met with the facilitators. Twenty-eight have signed up for the mental health workshop on Feb. 6. Bob previously emailed minutes from the November CST meeting (attached).

H. **Worship Opportunities Council** – no report.

I. **International Partner Church** – we will hold a start-up weekend, Feb. 19-21. The committee doesn't have a home in the council structure yet.

IX. **Action items**

A. **PowerChurch access** – Linda passed out the current PowerChurch permissions chart. She would like to have limited access after she is no longer treasurer and requests that Bill Baker, as incoming treasurer, be granted limited access (read only) at this time. Bob moved to give Bill limited access to all areas of accounting including contributions, accounts payable, and payroll until he becomes treasurer July 1. Being on the Finance Committee, he already has access to fund accounting. The motion carried unanimously.

B. **Vote on UUA congregational study/action issues (CSAIs)** - Linda moved to accept all 4 CSAIs as presented in the administrator's report. The motion carried with 7 in favor and 1 abstention.

X. **Board Development** – the Board discussed chapter 2 of *Serving with Grace*. All should think about someone who is a "saint" (role model that is valued as a leader) for next month's meeting.

XI. **New Business**

A. **Board fiscal priorities** – Dara stated that the Board has the responsibility to set clear goals on what we want to fund, what we are excited about, and to think about big picture priorities. The Board needs to get the congregation excited about the future. In February, Dara will make space in worship for Board members to start the conversation on dreams for the coming year. The Board should tell the Finance Committee what we care about. It was suggested to have a google doc for Board members to enter ideas. Molly will set it up and send out the link.

B. **Space Cadets III** – the 3 presidents and Dara discussed the need for a 3rd iteration to begin looking at how we use our space, how we can improve upon it, and to look at our storage space. The task force should have 1 Board member serving or acting as liaison.

XII. Information Items

A. Virginia Organizing meet & greet – following the service on Sunday.

B. Dara's Evaluation – Tim sent out the combined evaluation and needs input back ASAP. He will send a doodle poll for Board members to meet to discuss the evaluation prior to meeting with Dara.

XIII. Process Observer – Bob stated that it was a good meeting, and we stayed on task with an occasional reminder.

XIV. Next meeting February 11 at 7 PM – Bonnie will provide refreshments, Carol will serve as PO, and Margo will provide the closing reading.

Carol provided the closing words.

ACTION ITEMS:

All – think of someone who is your role model for leadership

Molly – set up google doc for fiscal priority suggestions

AGENDA ITEMS:

Should non-Board members be allowed to be present for check-in, Board development, etc. or just for the members' forum?

Budget priorities

Lisa Evanylo, Administrator

UUC BOARD MEETING AGENDA
Thursday, January 14, 2016

7-7:15 Chalice Lighting & Reading – Rev Dara Check-in Process Observer- Bob		15 Minutes
7 :15-7 :20 Review and Accept Agenda for current mtg.		5 Minutes
7:20-7:30 Minister and Staff Reports Administrator’s Reports DLFD’s Reports		10 Minutes
7:30-7:35 Consent Agenda and Old Business Previous Board minutes for December-- approve Check-in from Mission/Vision/Covenant Board member facilitators		5 Minutes
7:35- 7:45 Time requested by YRUU: address to the Board		
7:45-7:50 Treasurer's Report		5 Minutes
7:50-7 :55 Members Forum Members are invited to address the Board. Please keep your comments to 3 minutes.		5 Minutes
7:55-8:05 Council Reports Facilities Council Governance Council Finance & Administration Council Lifespan Faith Development Council Membership Council Pastoral Service Council Social Action Council Worship Opportunities Council		10 Minutes
8:05-8:15 Break and Refreshments	Provided by Bill	10 Minutes
8:15-8:20 Action Items PowerChurch access Approving December Board minutes		5 Minutes
8:20-8:35 Board Development—discussing Serving with Grace		15 Minutes
8:35-9:05		30 Minutes

New Business

Board fiscal priorities. Begin the process of discerning priorities for next fiscal year.

Space Cadets III

9:05-9:10

5 Minutes

Information Items

Timeline, special events

9:10-9:15

5 Minutes

Select refreshments, process observer, and closing words volunteers for February

Process Observer Report-

Extinguish Chalice- Carol

Next meeting: February 11

January's Report to the Board - Rev. Dara Olandt

Yearlong congregational theme: "Our Year of Living Bravely"

Worship

January's worship theme is "**Imagination**"

Highlights:

December: Christmas Eve service had a record 165 attendees! As last year, choir provided music.

With this level of attendance (and based upon the past 2 years) UUC Christmas Eve preparations will need to be similar to pot-luck Sunday mornings in terms of volunteer power (Coffeemakers, Greeters, Folks to set up/clean up), both before and afterwards, in order to accommodate all guests with success. A paid sexton and/or seasonal support will also be vital during the holiday season given the many events, including Christmas Eve service.

January:

Sunday, January 17th - Service for MLK Day, followed by post-service Meet and Greet with Andrae Hash and Keith Johnson from Virginia Organizing.

Sunday, January 24 — Images of the Sacred, please consider bringing pictures or images which have been important for you or hold significance for you in your journey of spiritual or religious growth and development. We will reference these and share them in the service.

Sunday, Jan. 31 - Rev. Dara's one Sunday per month out of the pulpit.

This will be a Lay-led service focused on aspect of Mental Health & Justice with Worship Associate support.

Hold these dates! February — **International Partnership Church Start Up weekend: Feb. 19-21.**

More details available soon from International Partnership Church Committee. For the "Start Up Weekend" representatives from the UU International Partnership Church Council will be visiting UUC to lead several workshops for UUC leadership, and offer a Sunday service helping UUC to develop a robust partnership with our new Transylvanian partner church.

Renewal Update/Reminder:

Voting members of Board to complete Rev. Dara's Fellowship Renewal due to the UUA February 1st, 2016.

Coordinator of Board effort: Tim Pickering.

Membership & Connections

Key dates in winter:

Next Newcomer Orientation: January 16th 9am - noon

Next New Member Recognition will be February 14th in service.

Social Justice & Prophetic Outreach

I continue to meet and support SJSC on as needed basis, primarily working with co-chairs. Please see SJSC and Social Action Council for more updates.

On December 23, I, along with many members of UUC, anchored a public, interfaith demonstration for Religious Freedom and Pluralism in downtown Blacksburg. There are many photos of UUCers standing together with members of other communities from this event. Attendance including UUCers was approx. 45.

In January, the following are priorities in this area:

- Meeting with leaders of Islamic Society of NRV to consider future collaborations.
- Speaking with neighboring Christian congregations in town about UUC hosting one of the annual Lenten suppers, in which different churches host an evening worship service, led by a guest minister, and have a shared dinner. UUC will likely welcome 1 - 2 neighboring churches to hold at Lenten supper at UUC. More details will be forthcoming as they are available.
- Working with interfaith partners (First Presbyterian, Blacksburg Jewish Community Center and Hillel, and eventually others) to explore the possibility of an Interfaith Worship Service in April. Theme is to be anti-gun violence. More details will be forthcoming as they are available.

Note: I continue to attend monthly meetings of the Blacksburg Ministerial Association and UU Blue Ridge Religious Professionals gatherings (when calendar allows).

Pastoral Care

I continue to meet monthly with the Lay Pastoral Care Ministry.

I continue to visit members of our congregation at home and in the hospital, as needed.

Congregational Life

Third meeting of the *Refining Team* occurred Friday, Jan. 8th.

Refining team will have initial draft covenant available for the first Desert Party, Mission-Shaping Focus Group on Jan. 14th. (see updates from Strategic Planning).

With Chair of Strategic Planning, I supported the training of Mission-Shaping Focus Group Facilitators, which occurred on Jan. 7th.

Dessert Parties will run through January and February allowing people to share ideas and thoughts on the new Mission-Covenant statement being developed this year.

Memorial Garden

Coordinating an End of Life Planning event at UUC later this year with Memorial Garden Committee, tentative date is April 3, 2016.

Upcoming Travel for Meetings:

Feb. 1-3 — I will be attending the second of 3 sessions for the Clergy Seminary Series at the Center for Congregational Spirituality in Richmond, focusing on Congregational Based Spiritual Direction. This is a program of 3 short sessions. (I attended the last one Nov. 9 -11th, and the last will be May 2-4.)

Dear All, here is a note indicating some basic Funding Priorities for fiscal year 2016 - 2017 with an eye to the overall wellbeing and promising future of UUC, from my vantage point.

Please note that I already support the continuation of the funding needed to continue our strong ministries in the core areas for which specific committees will offer budget requests, per usual (such as Worship, RE, Music, Social Justice, Lay Pastoral Care, etc, etc.)

So, what follows below bring attention to either emergent or timely priorities I see as being highly relevant for the coming year in the life of the congregation.

(Finally, items that I see as being important in the next 5-7 years, yet not necessarily for next year, I will share with Board and Strategic Planning next year, as the SP group and Board works on rough timeframe for any major building related capital needs and attendant campaigns for the near but not imminent future.)

Thank you much.

Warmly,
Rev. Dara

Timely Fiscal Proprieties from Rev. Dara for year 2016-2017

Re: Personeel

Continuing Funds for Sexton position — while we have had a challenging time getting a Sexton on board, I hope funds will remain in the budget for this much needed position. We may also need to raise the pay for this position in order to get it filled.

Following best practices and the responsibilities outlined in my Letter of Call, any other **staff related funding priorities** I will send to Linda and voting members of the Board independent of this email. (Thanks)

Re: Priority of Maximizing Existent Spacial Capacity of our UUC Building

Furniture for the Library — comfortable, multi-use furniture including easy to move and clean couches and better lighting for the Library
Cost estimates forthcoming, hopefully from a Space Cadets team.

Funds for Sanctuary “Blinds” / Forward Progress on Funds for Sanctuary Blinds

Attractive, functional and unobtrusive blinds which can, when engaged, help make our sanctuary temporarily darker for viewing projected material. Proposal will come from Worship Services Committee who is sorting through options and aims to present Board with 3 strongest approaches. WSC Committee will also be working with Buildings folks and others to do much prior work on what could work well in the space. WSC is looking at other congregations. Options are varied and many —hidden or recessed blinds which automatically come down and up, blinds which can be activated by manual pull, blinds for side windows only, etc. For budget cycle 2016-2017, I hope that either this project can be fully covered, or a savings for this project can occur so that by the end of 2017 (at the very latest) UUC can begin to increase versatility of the sanctuary by having occasional projected capacities (for worship, special events, annual meetings, etc.) This need to have the ability to project material in the sanctuary comes up many times.

Cost estimates forthcoming. Options include \$500 - to several thousand dollars.

Re: Taking Next Steps on Two Key UUC Projects in Progress

Funds related to International Partner Church Travel / Forward Progress on Funds related to International Partner Church

Funds that will either help us to bring guest minister and family to UUC for a visit (for cost savings, we can combine efforts with the UU Ann Arbor Church, who is partnered with the second church of Rev. Istvan who is minister also of our partner church). Or help fund a UUC trip to visit our Partners in Transylvania. Some congregations bring their choir here or the US choir there, etc. There are several options for strengthening the partnership, and some funds will be needed. Thus, UUC may want to consider setting aside some funds in the

next budget for an International Partner Church line item tagged to a special goal for next year, combined with the Board consider allowing a special event fundraiser or two to fulfill that goal — or some approach related to the above.

Cost estimates forthcoming from International Partnership Church Committee and after International Church Start-Up Weekend

Funds related to website overhaul and new UUC logo design — website to be redone in fiscal year 2016-2017. Logo design is possible though not necessary (per se). We can ensure we take a cost-effective approach for the website, for example, consider using a new template by the UUA available on places like “word press”. Renewed logo design is possible though not necessary (per se) and we can look a volunteer options for this. Yet, we’ll need to keep in mind that realistically in today’s world a strong website is our virtual “front door”. It is as important as our “brick and mortar” “front door” for visitors and newcomers, especially. Thus, I strongly recommend making funds available for a revamped website presence a very practical use of money next year. An effective and aesthetically pleasing and meaningfully organized website which reflects and is integrated with the new Mission statement, will likely including engaging a dedicated, contracted person or additional hours for staff hours.
Cost estimates forthcoming.

Finally, and quickly, just a few more “standard” recommendations from me...

Contingency ought to be a continuing standard feature of our annual budget

Rainy Day fund ought to be a continuing standard feature of our annual budget

All Best.
Warmly,
Rev. Dara

Administrator's Report to the Board January 14, 2016

Childcare Update: We have a new childcare provider, Brooke Asbury, very highly recommended by Rev. Dara as Brooke helps out with Micah when needed.

Background Checks: For many years, we have been using First Advantage for our background checks as recommended by Church Mutual (our insurance co.). They recently recommended that we now use a new company, Trusted Employees, which does the same checks but for less cost. I used it for the first time for Brooke and was very pleased.

Attendance/Members: See online Google Doc.

Time Off: I will be away Jan. 15-19 to visit with my family. But will be available online and by phone, if needed.

Annual Certification with UUA: I will be submitting both financial information and membership/attendance numbers to the UUA by Feb. 1. It is also requested that we participate in a poll of Congregation Study/Action Issues seen below. In the past, the Board, as representatives of the congregation, has voted on the different issues. Please see below for how we may vote and for info on each of the issues. We will need to vote on each of these at the meeting.

Section 4: Congregation Poll

Your congregation is asked to vote on which of the following Congregational Study/Action Issues (CSAIs) should be added to the 2016 General Assembly (GA) agenda to be considered for selection. If a CSAI is included in the agenda, it will receive debate and be voted on for possible adoption (read more about the CSAI process at uua.org/statements/process). Only one CSAI will ultimately be adopted, selected from those that appear in the agenda. Twenty-five percent of all certified congregations must participate, and a majority of those congregations participating must vote in favor for each CSAIs for it to be included in the agenda. Up to five CSAIs are permitted to be added to the GA agenda (not applicable for this year, since only four CSAIs appear on the congregational poll).

For each of the CSAIs, your congregation may vote Yes, No, or Abstain. If all four CSAIs receive a majority "Yes" vote in the poll, and a quorum is reached, then all four will be included in the agenda.

- Yes means your congregation wants the CSAI to be added to the 2016 GA agenda (note that a Yes vote does not imply your congregation's endorsement of the proposed CSAI, but does want it to receive debate at GA 2016).
- No means your congregation does not want the CSAI to be added to the 2016 GA agenda.
- Abstain means your congregation is participating only to contribute to the necessary 25% quorum.

- Congregations who do not wish to participate in the poll at all can opt out.

To view the complete text of the four CSAIs, go online to uua.org/statements/current.

A summary of each of these four CSAIs appears below.

A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON RACE

The blatant racism directed at President Obama, increased killings of unarmed Black men by police officers, persistent racial inequality, as well as attacks on the Black Lives Matter Movement show that our country needs a faith community to demonstrate leadership in modeling racial reconciliation through a national conversation on race.

THE CORRUPTION OF OUR DEMOCRACY

As corporations use “corporate personhood” and “money as speech” for their interests rather than the people’s needs, can a constitutional amendment be passed to protect us? Could this further Unitarian Universalist work for social and environmental justice and help protect the health and safety of the people and the planet?

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

What is the moral response to climate change? How can congregations work in solidarity with the oppressed? The problems of racism, economic injustice, patriarchy, ageism, and ableism continue. A vision with a plan for environmental justice is needed. Support human rights, care for the wounded, and defend Mother Earth.

ENDING GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

Gun violence in our country is epidemic. There are significant, societal, demographic, and racial issues to investigate. Our American gun culture must be addressed. There are no simple answers as the NRA would suggest – we need to listen, learn, and act.

DLFD Report to the Board – January 2016

Submitted by Karen Hager, Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Registration

- Current CYRE: 118 (unique children/youth)
- Children & Youth UUC “slots”: 168

LFD Council

- No meeting this month

This month:

- Spring RE teacher recruitment has concluded. Once again, an astounding 18 of our 20 teachers are returning teachers; 15 of the 20 taught in fall, and 3 taught last year. That’s a retention rate that would be admired in any UU congregation! Spring teacher training is on January 23, with the spring semester beginning on January 31. All classes continue with their current curriculum, with the exception of Gr. K-1, which begins “Picture Book Bible Tales” (Judaism and Christianity).
- Middle School RE and Adult RE will participate in a joint offsite visit to the Islamic Society of the NRV on Sunday, January 17. 15 people have signed up to attend.
- The start of the OWL 8-9 class has been moved back to February. Classes will conclude in April. Registration is light to date, with only 5 youth registered. This may change in the next week.
- The library will soon be set again with books. We are delayed while Rachel recuperates from foot surgery but expect to get it all set back up within the next couple of weeks. Feedback has been very positive so far.
- Most of my time this month is being spent on the upcoming teacher training and start of a new RE semester, and the start of the OWL 8-9 program. The Building Bridges curriculum and YRUU continue to occupy large chunks of work time, as well.

Dear Board members,

In preparation for our conversation this Thursday regarding YRUU, please take a moment to look over the attached YRUU mission and objectives. This document was created this year during a retreat of the adult YAC and YRUU advisors, and later ratified by YRUU youth.

Also, a survey was conducted of the YRUU youth at the end of last year. The results of that survey were considered in crafting the YRUU mission and objectives. The survey found that:

- 100% were interested in pursuing social action and/or social justice together.
- 100% were interested in learning more about the religions of the world.
- 75% were interested in theological discussions.
- 100% believed that it was important for YRUU to give back to UUC (currently achieved through donation of an auction dinner, and holding two YRUU services each year).
- 100% believed that it was important for YRUU to give back to the greater community or world.
- 100% believed that it was important to attend CONs and to go to Boston once every four years.
- 91% believed that OOCEs (Out of Church Experiences, or offsite activities) were important, and there were requests to increase the number of OOCEs during the year.

These points will inform our discussion Thursday as we begin the discussion on funding of next year's program.

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*Karen Hager
Director of Lifespan Faith Development
Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Blacksburg, VA.*

The Membership Council reports just a few items for our interest.

1. Leadership Development Committee is in the process of asking people to be on the slate for board next year. They have a good list they are working down but so far no positive responses. 2. The Quarterlifers (formerly known as young adult group) met recently for a hockey game and enjoyed themselves. 3. The Potluck group had a good attendance for the service and potluck for Christmas eve. Carole King is looking into pricing for an ice maker to go on the counter since folks have had to buy ice for events since our ice cube trays are cumbersome and not that helpful.