

**UU Congregation - Asheville  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
MINUTES**

**July 09, 2024 6:00pm-8:00pm (Zoom)**

**Present:** Kay Aler-Maida, Susan Andrew, Ben Fleming, Phil Hammond, Melissa Himelein, Mara Sprain

**Absent:** Juli Aultshul, Rev. Audette Fulbright Fulson, Will Jernigan, Monica Youngman

**Recorder** (in Monica's absence): Melissa Himelein

Opening

- Meeting was called to order at 6:10 pm by Mara Sprain (delay due to technical difficulties)
- Opening words read by Phil; chalice lighting
- Personal check-in: Brief UUCA bios and wish for the coming year

Consent Agenda was **approved**:

- [June Minutes](#)
- [Q'Pasa](#) (Rev. Claudia's report)
- [Youth Advisor Task Force Report](#)

We briefly discussed the Youth Advisor Task Force Report. Although the youth do not want an individual representative on the Board, it's clear they are interested in a more formal feedback system. In response, we recommend

- An amendment to the final sentence of the report to ensure direct communication with the Board (proposed amendment in red): "Therefore, this Task Force recommends... that the Advisor leading YRUU the day of these discussions would send notes to Jen, Rev. Audette, Rev. Claudia, **and the Board President** detailing any communications the group wants to convey to the Board."
- To ensure ongoing communication, offering a Board member to serve as a conduit between the youth and the Board. Ben volunteered to meet with the group in the fall to serve in this capacity.

Board Retreat Discussion

- Mara described last year's retreat, which was split into two half-day sessions. She noted there were both pros and cons of this approach vs. a one-day option. We are looking at weekend options in August and September; Mara will send out a calendar poll to assess availability. Rev. Audette would like to be involved for at least part of the retreat.
- What are the desired outcomes of the retreat? Mara explained that we will be deciding on Board goals and priorities for the year, considering the work schedule/calendar from the Governance document. We will also be addressing the congregation's financial issues, considering projections for the coming year.
- An additional item Board members would like to discuss is the Edwin properties (21 and 23).

Because there is a committee looking into this issue, we would like to be updated on their progress, including recent appraisals (if any) and what revenue streams are associated with each property.

### FAC Board News

- Mara met with Marta Reese, Chair of the FAC. Because the FAC is an advisory group to the Executive, she does not feel a Board representative is warranted.
- Marta mentioned that year-end numbers are not available yet, due to a software issue (shifting from a desktop to web version of the financial software). The books are closed for the 2023-2024 year, so any late reconciling of pledges will be in the 2024-2025 financial year.
- Other members of the FAC include Ann Cargill, Sammy Fong, Joanne Fox, Clyde Hardin, and Wink Zachritz.

### Financial Pillar Board Liaisons:

Each of the four pillar committees needs a Board representative to serve as a liaison between the group and the Board. The responsibilities of the Board rep vary across committees; for some, the Board rep is a working member, while for others they are simply conduits for the exchange of information. The following Board members volunteered to reach out to respective committee chairs to get a clear understanding of the Board member's expected contributions:

- Ben will reach out to Legacy Circle chair Gene Lambirth
- Susan will reach out to Long Range Planning chair John Bates
- Melissa will reach out to Care and Connect chair Tory Schmitz
- Kay is interested in the Annual Giving Drive committee, but a chair has not yet been identified. She will talk with Will in the meantime.

We discussed financial issues with the church, particularly the idea of fundraising. This topic then gravitated to the next agenda item.

### Engaging and Advancing External Fundraising and New Member/Visitor Connection

- External fundraising: Given our financial concerns, we will likely be attempting to increase the number of fundraising events in the coming year.
  - However, there is widespread acknowledgement that adding fundraisers for congregation members may not be well-received, given that members may feel they have already contributed as much as they can. Consequently, there seems to be agreement that new fundraisers should focus on external audiences. Examples of external fundraisers we discussed included a book sale, a jewelry and scarf sale, and a holiday sale.
  - We also discussed the possibility of applying for grants to supplement our funding. However, the UUCA does not have a Recognition of Exemption certificate from the IRS. (As a religious organization, we have tax-exempt status under 501c3 without filing IRS Form 1023 for Recognition of Exemption.) There was a group attempting to do this paperwork (the national UUA has done it, so there is precedent), but staff departures during the spring caused the effort to stall.
    - Susan has written many successful grants and offered to research this issue further. Her assumption is that religious organizations are most often barred from

applying for both private (foundation) and public grant opportunities, so it may not be an effective use of time to pursue 501c3 status.

- We discussed whether one or both of the Edwin properties could attract possible funding, e.g., if deemed a historical property or if slated for public use.
  - We also talked through grants from UUA, the possibility of a UUCA spinoff receiving 501c3 status, and the types of grants that might be of interest.
  - Susan offered to do some research and report back about this issue.
- New member/visitor connections: We brainstormed about ways in which new members or visitors can connect with the larger congregation. An outing at Highland Brewing for families was given as one possibility. Some pre-COVID activities that fulfilled this function have apparently not been revived.
    - This conversation morphed to questions about how we might bring in new members. Some people are comfortable actively inviting friends or neighbors; others are not.
    - Expanding membership was mentioned as a possible topic for the retreat.

#### Additional Topic: Ministerial Review

There was a question about how ministers are evaluated and to what extent evaluation is a responsibility of the Board. Members were largely uncertain, as this process has taken many forms in the past. Two relevant passages were identified:

- A UU Ministers Association booklet outlining a process for ministerial review
- Part III, Policy D from the Governance Document, “Accountability of the Executive”

#### Standing Items

- Collective Liberation Check and Process Observation: Kay reported on her observations: Everyone participated, some more than others; we provided lots of mutual support; the agenda allowed us sufficient time to explore things; the Chair kept us moving along and was clear about our goals.
- We look forward to meeting in person next month with the full Board.
- We discussed the possibility of Will providing “tech training” for us so that there are sufficient numbers of people who can assist with technology for hybrid meetings.

#### Closing

Closing words were read by Phil and the chalice extinguished. The meeting adjourned at 7:58 pm.