

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
Board of Trustees
268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
February 10, 2021

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Nathalie Edmond called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Sue Saddlemire; Treasurer, Jim Sanders; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Scribe, Michael Howe-Smith; Trustees: Jeffrey Lang, Michael Waas, Jamie Evanini, Patrick Kahney; Senior Minister, Rev. Kim Wildszewski; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; and DLFE, Robin Pugh. Also present were Marilyn Cichowski, Roger McCloughan, Denny Rodgers, and MJ Hansen on behalf of the Audit Committee, and Joe Schenk, Lynne Quinto and Marty Friedman on behalf of the Personnel Committee.

First Hour

Consent Agenda - see appendix for complete reports.

- The Board discussed the potential for offsite/virtual voting at future annual meetings and whether it is permitted in the bylaws as currently written. Current bylaws allow for virtual voting at the discretion of the board at this time details will be deferred for future discussion and action (by a group or task force to be determined)
- The Board discussed Reverend Kim's proposed process for hiring a contract minister for her upcoming parental leave. **There was a pulse check to approve the process as outlined**, which passed unanimously. Board Vice President Sue Saddlemire agreed to serve as the Board's representative.

Treasurer's Report and Related Discussion

Treasurer Jim Sanders provided a summary of current finances; key points included:

- UUCWC's financials are in extremely good shape; we are \$73,000 in the black, 30,000 of which was due to PPE loan forgiveness.
- January was strong in pledge payments, offsetting slower payments in December which were likely due to mail delays.
- Jim presented notes from the Finance Committee for transparency on their scope of work:
 - There has been a request from Joe Schenk for funds for short-term capital improvements for technology improvements related to security (see additional details below under *Audit Team Update*); need to reinstate line item in next year's budget for

technology, which is closely related to personnel considerations (e.g. aligning and optimizing people resources, processes and tools).

- When considering expenses for next year, we will need to consider how much of church may be virtual vs. in person.
- The annual year-end appeal yielded \$30,000.
- Plate income has been on or just above budget, with most contribution coming from a small core group.
- There have not been any extraordinary or unexpected expenses.
- Jim indicated gratitude for Mary Baltycki's efforts as Finance Chair in overseeing all these moving pieces.
- Jim responded to the Board's questions around spending vs. saving surplus funds, and the challenge of making predictions during a pandemic.
- Reverend Kim Wildszewski asked if it would be possible to get more details on the Finance Committee's projected budgeting timelines.

Capital Campaign Update

- Jim reported that the Capital Campaign Committee continues to work with the architect to address the best ways to offset unexpected costs to the proposed construction, as well as researching additional fundraising opportunities.
- As liaison to the Committee, Board Trustee Michael Howe-Smith reported that they are still reviewing the elevator and HVAC requirements (and related cost implications).
- The Board agreed that in the event any changes are necessary to keep costs affordable, the congregation will be consulted before decisions are made, and that communication with the congregation should be thoughtful, proactive and intentional. **ACTION:** At minimum, there will be an update presented by the Committee at the upcoming 2/24 Council Meeting. Jim will contact the Committee in advance to ensure alignment on overall messaging.

Audit Team Update

- Marilyn Cichowski, Roger McCloughan, Denny Rodgers, and MJ Hansen joined the meeting on behalf of the Audit Committee, as well as Joe Schenk to discuss a related security issue.
- The church bylaws require audits at intervals of not more than 5 years, with the last audit done in 2016. Per the Audit Committee, while some "low-hanging fruit" items were addressed, some major recommendations remain outstanding. The Committee's view is that these outstanding items should be addressed - and ensure that they're in alignment with the Board and staff's current goals, plans and priorities - before pursuing a new audit process from scratch.
- The Committee discussed some of the specific outstanding recommendations, mainly around technology and security as well as relevant business processes, information sharing, etc. It was recognized that these same issues have been acknowledged by other parties including church staff, the Finance Committee and the Personnel Committee.
- Joe Schenk, who has previous experience with the church's auditing efforts including the 2016 audit, suggested putting an annual line item in the budget to accumulate and pay for a 5-year professional audits. Joe also indicated the benefits of regular internal financial audits using an established process for random checks of bank records to ensure that we are represented accurately.

- Joe recommended a formal proposal for \$500 to hire an IT consultant to review and address any potential security gaps and ensure appropriate protections and protocols. MJ agreed that the need is important and beyond volunteer capacity. **There was a Board poll** on whether to pursue Joe's recommendation to seek consultative IT services. It passed unanimously. **ACTION:** Joe will initiate the RFP and vetting process and report back to the Board.
- Sue indicated that a 5-year audit process makes it more challenging to do ongoing course corrections if needed; annual reviews can allow for more flexibility and may be helpful in addition to formal 5-year audits.
- Denny indicated the need for formalizing processes and policies around internal financial reviews.
- The Board agreed that it would be helpful to have the Audit Committee looped into more discussions with the Finance Committee to understand and address areas of overlapping concern.
 - **ACTION:** It was agreed that representatives from the Audit Committee would attend a meeting on 2/16 with members of the Board and Finance to discuss plans for the evolving treasurer team and bookkeeping roles.
- Nathalie thanked the Audit Committee and they left the meeting.

Second Hour

Church Reopening Update

There was a poll on whether to extend the time of the church closure through June 2021. It passed unanimously.

Executive Session

The Board briefly entered executive session.

Personnel Discussion/ Planning for Next Year

- Lynne Quinto, Joe Schenk, and Marty Friedman attended the meeting to discuss upcoming short-term and longer-term staffing plans, and to discuss ensuring ongoing alignment among the Committee, Board and staff for ongoing growth. Key points included:
 - Who ultimately "owns" the process of decision-making when there is not agreement between Board and Personnel? How can all relevant parties be in better communication and relationship with one another?
 - This goes to the Board's goal toward a larger cultural shift of avoiding staff and volunteer burnout by considering:
 - How can we create a Board/Personnel culture that supports a quicker path to decision-making in ways that materially help with the challenges we're facing?
 - How can we make the need for these conversations inherent and intentional?

- How can we balance the needs of a planned budget with the need to be more fluid in times of need (e.g. the unknowns of the current pandemic)?
 - A key function of the Personnel Committee is to conduct in-depth research and make recommendations to the Board, based on budgetary needs as well as Board and staff input.
 - Hiring decisions are tied to annual budget practices, which limits shorter-term decision-making.
 - In the past we've successfully taken a longer-term strategic view for building year-over-year changes according to a larger agreed-upon vision. This approach can continue to work well, but the Board is also interested in understanding how more flexibility can be built into the process to respond to more immediate needs.
 - All agreed that this has been an unusual year due to pandemic needs/restraints and shifting priorities.
 - The current Personnel Committee's makeup is largely comprised of people with previous finance experience (within and beyond UUCWC), which influenced the bookkeeper review process.
 - There was general agreement that it would be beneficial to have increased clarity and open lines of communication around the overall process to reduce cycle time and avoid duplication of effort. Ideas discussed included maintaining Sue as active liaison, including Personnel notes in monthly consent agenda, etc.
 - A potential solution to short-term needs is hiring contractors vs. permanent staff.
 - Anything with financial implications should involve the Finance Committee.
- Nathalie thanked the Personnel Committee and they left the meeting.

Housekeeping and Other Action Items

- Board Trustee Sue and Kim will write the CrossCurrents article for April.
- There is a meeting on 2/16 with Board and staff members and the Finance Committee to discuss next steps for the treasurer/finance team.
- In April, there will be 2 Board meetings; the second will be on 4/21.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff and Treasurer Reports

Minister's Board Report February 2021 Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

Sunday service attendance is higher than ever, averaging around 190 attendees per Sunday, and our visitors are returning, engaged in the chat and rituals, and growing in their participation. From a leadership perspective, worship feels intimate, conversational and clear. (I welcome your reflection on what is working or could be stronger from a participant perspective). I am wondering more these days on how we might replicate the virtual worship experience, rather than replicate in person church for our online mandate.

Since the last Board report, we welcomed community leader and activist Rhinold Ponder to preach on King Sunday; I launched the Stewardship Campaign two weeks ago with a sermon outlining a staffing plan and the monetary commitment required for our needs; and this past Sunday I offered reflections on questions asked by the congregation in our annual Question Box service. This upcoming Sunday we will participate in the UUA's Side with Love service; an opportunity to be led in worship by numerous UU Religious Professionals of Color. I continue to be grateful for and impressed by the UUA's ministry to its congregations this year.

Additionally, of note: At the end of February we will dedicate a Sunday to New Members, inviting them into a ritual of commitment. I believe on this Sunday we will welcome ten new members. The next path to membership class will occur on a much shorter timeline – over the course of 6 weeks, concluding in the middle of April – and I expect to have an additional 10-15 new members from that class, many whom will be permanent remote / far-flung (we need a better name for this) members. There is also a question being asked by a handful of participants – mainly from my home congregation – about holding dual membership.

A word on our numbers: You will see that our membership numbers are lower than in many years' past. Each year Susan, Robin and I have to make a decision about the engagement of person or family who we haven't seen or don't see often. This typically results in "holding onto" people who have signed the book but never became engaged members after that initial decision. This year we did a deep cull – similar to my first year with UUCWC – and these numbers accurately reflect what we believe are committed and engaged UUs and members of UUCWC. This is an essential practice and a marker of health. Our numbers are still impressive and strong and growing.

This past month I memorialized Bernardine Lewis, Angelo Lewis's mother, in an online service with thanks to MJ Hansen who put in an *incredible* amount of work – technical and relational – to make this happen.

I lift up that pastoral care these days is almost primarily mental health concerns within our children, but also our adults, tacked onto lack of access to inpatient beds or rehabilitation due to Covid. I am working to connect parents of children who have needed inpatient treatment, as a means of support for one another.

Create Community (Small Groups)

I continue to assist Robin in writing and facilitating our family ministry curricular: Family Chalice Circles and Tending the Flame. We are beginning to discuss how this year's culture changes in RE might permanently change how we do faith engagement for our children and families going forward. If you are someone who has participated, it would be extremely helpful to hear about your experience and your thoughts about what you hope comes next. (What do you miss? What do you wish to keep?)

Once every 8 weeks I participate in the Faith Forward curricula for the Q&A with the Minister; a great way to connect more personally with our visitors and find out generally what conversations we may need or want to have in the congregation.

I wrote a 9 page expectations and benefits of membership resource page for our potential new members; it is in the pre-read folder for your reference if interested.

Change the World (Serve)

We will hear from Caryl Tipton Wednesday night on some changes to the music program in 2022 and some preparations needed in acknowledgement of this.

Susan has taken on the lion's share of making sure we are certified with the UUA; I have assisted some in this effort.

I am working with both the Worship Associates and Pastoral Care Team to grow their ministry teams and therefore allow for succession planning; Pat plans to finish her position as co-chair of PC this June but Denny will stay on for an additional year to help stagger the leadership transitions. Both Pat and Denny plan to stay on the team but not in a chairperson role. Scott Cullen is currently the only chair of WAs, after Bay needed to move out of that position earlier than expected. Many of the leaders who were serving in longer term positions during the pandemic are needing to step out earlier than imagined.

This month I meet with the Worship Tech team for a retreat – to create a covenant as well as begin imaging what changes will occur for them once we are back in person and ideally have a staff person overseeing the worship tech work.

Right Relations continues to move through the congregation assisting in creating covenants. Their recent conversation at the Worship Associate meeting helped us completely revamp how we do scheduling. A simple task has become relational and intentional. It led to conversations about accessibility and privilege.

The Worship Associates are also working on revamping our 5 Candles of Fellowship language around accessibility, leaning on Lauren Shallish's professional expertise to discuss disability, culture and language. It has reengaged this group from depleting conversations around muting and unmuting, to thinking about how we lead the congregation in change such as this.

I am meeting with my Coach, Rev. Jen Crow, of the 1st Universalist Church in Minneapolis, to discuss the process they moved through to hire an Adjunct Minister, Rev. Karen Hutt. Karen is a Woman of Color, and holds a very part time position for now (10 hours per week) but with the shared commitment to diversifying the professional worship staff at 1st U.

A question has arisen again around our relationship with Leadership Leaves, the group that schedules and organizes the money to help NJ UU Ministers take sabbatical. I've handed this over to Scott Drew who is knowledgeable about the program and the recent conversations about UUCWC's self-funding of our sabbaticals. I'll ask Scott to report back next month.

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for February 2021

Create Community

Communications work continues to be heavy and challenging. I have two new Communications Team members willing to work on the overdue website update which I am coordinating. As no one on the team wants the ongoing web editor role, I have taken over that work, including creating needed posts, webpages, online interactive forms and carousel picture creation/rotation, learning Wordpress software as I go. A good example of the challenge of this work was the updating of the Stewardship page and online pledge form for Stewardship Sunday: the deadline was tight and the work required better knowledge of Wordpress and some html coding, not something I know: Lynne Quinto guided me from afar. Lacking staff or a volunteer with the required level of Wordpress and/or coding skills, the team is exploring bringing in a consultant to teach what is needed and to assess our website for better user-friendliness.

As a result of a privacy concern from the audit team, I have obtained all but 38 members and 45 friend/participants publicity release permissions: I will continue to pursue getting instructions from this 30% of our population. Having permissions will allow us to use pictures from Sunday Zoom worship and other events on our website.

Celebrate Life

As part of the annual certification process, we reach out to members who have not been seen nor have made a pledge of record; this results in a reduction in numbers as inactive members are removed. As a result, our membership numbers always decrease briefly, but then increase with the next incoming "class". This year, we are certifying the congregation at 273 Church Members, 27 Friends, 47 Participants and 26 Attendees.

As part of certification, we were asked to conduct a poll asking if our congregation believes a [draft Statement of Conscience entitled "Undoing Intersectional White Supremacy"](#) should be on the GA 2021 agenda; of the available data, there were all "yes" votes and one abstention. The remaining parts of the certification, including financial information, diversity and congregational questionnaires, leadership updates as well as membership count have all been done, so our certification is completed for this year.

Change the (UUCWC) World

- I continue to coordinate staff and volunteers for packing, dismantling and storage of all the contents of the offices, lobby, Crossings Room, etc., prior to the anticipated construction.
- With input from Rev. Kim and Robin, I completed a survey from Faith Communities Today; our anonymous participation was requested by the UUA as part of a group representing UU congregations nationwide.
- I am working with the MJ Hansen, John Harvi, Andrew Kidd and others on current and future allocations of existing computer equipment, purchases of new equipment for the Sanctuary, anticipated consulting and support help, etc. both for existing network systems and upgrades to the Sanctuary.
- I am working with MJ Hansen and Joe Schenk to review our current network set-up particularly with regards to security and information sharing, addressing an ongoing audit concern.
- In addition to the regular tasks, this month's bookkeeping included issuing 1099 forms and W2 distribution, as well as closing out the Oceanfirst Bank accounts.
- I worked with FEFT leader Holly Bussey on a revised reimbursement request form to serve both regular reimbursements and FEFT disbursements; we are looking into making this form online as well.
- As mentioned earlier, the Communications Team is actively engaged in a website update which we hope to address in phases this spring. This work requires replacing older information with relevant material, a fresh look for the front landing page, and a cleaner "look" to the "inside" pages. No work has been done at this level since the website launch some 4-5 years ago.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Feb 8, 2021

Re: Monthly DRE Report _____

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- We've had 142 visitors since August. Of those visitors, 53 have come to services at least 4 times. These are people who like what they see. 26 have taken the first step toward knowing UUCWC better and are "participants" (regular attenders of worship who engage in an additional offering at UUCWC). Kim is having a new member Sunday on Feb 28th. She will start the next "Path to Membership" class on March 1st. I've invited 18 people to take that class. Next month, we will find out who signed up for the class.
- Kim and Susan mention in their reports that our membership numbers are down. One reason we have been able to accurately reflect our membership numbers this year is that we have an accurate count of who participates at UUCWC. With everything virtual, we have attendance for all worship services, and all adult and children faith engagement opportunities. We have reached out to those not attending, to find out if they need pastoral assistance, are taking a break from UUCWC while it is virtual or if their commitment to UUCWC has changed.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- For parents and families, Kim and I continue to work collaboratively to create programming for parents (the UU parenting class) and families (Family Chalice Circles for families with younger kids and older kids). These are programs that we expect to continue next year. Below is a photo of a Family Chalice Circle in action.



- We also just completed the Adult Coming into Connection. One parent participant told me: “It was a great experience and one I never would have been able to do pre-quarantine” (because it was virtual)
- 7 chalice circles with 49 people in them are up and running. I am currently facilitating 4 groups, with new facilitators co-facilitating 2 of the 4. I am currently looking for 4 more facilitators. My plan is to transition out of co-facilitating by May. I believe there is enough interest to start an additional chalice circle this month.

Change the World:

- This month’s theme is “Beloved Community”. The small group packet asks people in chalice circles to reflect on white privilege or engage with specific films that show racism in the US among other exercises. People are sharing deeply in the circle. It is a good space to bring people into UUCWC’s antiracism work. I am hearing from people who have not participated in one of our antiracism offerings. Now they are interested in doing more.

February 2021 Treasurer Report to Board of Trustees

ANNUAL PLEDGE:

The attached P&L report for January reflects totals to Annual Pledge of 200% for the month and 97.5% of budgeted anticipated receipts for the first 7 months of the year. The pledge payments in January vs. December is a function of the slower US Postal service and limited office access during this time.

END OF YEAR APPEAL:

The End of Year Appeal brought in an additional \$5,060 in January bringing that to an impressive total of \$30,280. The generous spirit was evident in both members making some significant extra gifts above and beyond pledges as well as support from our “virtual frequent visitors”, who saw this as an opportunity to make a gift.

PLATE:

The plate continues to come in at or slightly ahead of budget – one that we developed Pre-COVID-19, which is now funded by a small but steady group of donors via PayPal and by regular checks.

PPP LOAN:

The PPP loan has been formally forgiven and is posted as of January as grant income. It was moved from loan to grant, so no new monies are being reported here.

EXPENSES:

No irregular expenses to report for January, however it is a recommendation from myself and Finance to consider adding back in a non-office technology budget line item to our existing and future budget conversations. The logic is that the Office Administrator functions as the lead on technology purchases and eventual support or contracts, i.e. Verizon, Copier, Computers, etc.

The refinancing has been completed and increased our Deb Service expenses for the year by \$4,360. This is being offset by all future savings on loan payments moving forward for remainder of year.

NET INCOME:

We end the first 7 months of the current fiscal year \$72,42.65 ahead of budget. Much thanks go to Mary Baltycki for her tireless work on our refinancing and SBA Grant. We should look at this bottom line number as a current state of an ever changing new way of doing church, which we don't know what the next 5 months will bring us and we have expenses in personnel that have not yet been budgeted. However, this gives us a good understanding of what virtual costs. Now we will move forward to budget the next year, starting at the end of February which most likely will be 6 months virtual, 6 months hybrid with a capital construction project thrown into the mix.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sanders

Treasurer, UUCWC