

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)

April 13, 2022

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Joe Schenk, Treasurer; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Michael Waas, Wendy Stasolla, Jim Sanders, Michael Howe-Smith; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh. were absent due to staffing discussions. Also present was Steve Saddlemire, Finance Chair.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote)

Budget Discussion

Treasurer Joe Schenk and Finance Committee Chair Steve Saddlemire presented a high-level overview of the draft budget. Key discussion points included:

- The draft budget accounts for the church's operating needs, as well as the wants and needs of the committees and ministries, and all expenses and income are reflected on a line item basis.
- It includes known and anticipated information including the possible use of reserve funds.
- The Finance team also put together a basic 2023/2024 projected budget to see what the high-level financial landscape may look like at that time, based on what we know about potential changes to funding sources. Projections for next year do not include any increases for income or expenses - it is meant to show the projected deficit before we account for inflation, program growth and staffing.
- Steve and Joe reviewed the unique changes year over year.
- Income: Reviewed fluctuations in pledge amounts, increase in operating budget due to unrestricted gift, impact of PPP loan forgiveness last year with no similar benefit this year
 - Net overall income overall shows a modest projected increase from last year.
- Expenses: Reviewed changes in personnel costs including new positions, reduction in hours of current positions which offsets some costs, elimination of proposed teaching roles, and compensation and benefit packages based on UUA guidelines.

- Total current staff expenses for next year decreased, but new roles were added, so there is an overall staffing cost increase of \$55,000.
- Reviewed changes in operating costs, program expenses, mortgage costs, etc.
 - All told, there is a projected deficit of \$76,269. Joe and Steve presented different scenarios for offsetting this amount by using an unrestricted gift.
 - Next year, expenses will continue to grow with mortgage, personnel increases, etc., putting us on track to expend reserves before the end of the 2034/24 fiscal year. The alternatives are to raise income, cut costs or exhaust reserves.
- The Board also discussed the potential impacts of Capital Campaign expenses on the main church budget, namely a potential construction loan that would ultimately roll into the church's overall mortgage and add to the deficit.
 - The Board identified that further clarification was needed with the Capital Campaign Committee on the impact and alternatives involved.
- Joe reported that the Finance Committee is in the process of reviewing relevant policies around reserve funds, endowment and gifts for clarity, uniformity and transparency.

Second Hour

Budget Discussion (continued)

- Board President Maria Baratta thanked Joe and Steve for their hard work. Joe expressed thanks for the contributions of Mary Baltycki and the entire Finance Committee. The Board discussed the general budget including positives and challenges.
 - A sign of overall congregational health is visible in planning as reflected in an aspirational budget.
 - A deficit budget requires careful planning and being cognizant of future issues and decision points.
 - We need to provide clear and compelling messaging to the congregation on how to meet our financial needs by raising pledge income so that we don't exhaust reserves.
- **There were Zoom polls** as follows:
 - Does the Capital Campaign loan need to be removed from the overall church budget? **ACTION:** We need further discussion with the CC team.
 - Does the congregation need to approve the specific use and timing of a \$55,000 unrestricted gift over the next 2 years? **Yes, unanimous consent.**
 - Is the Board agreeing to a deficit budget pending a formal vote of the final numbers, and not including the potential Capital Campaign construction loan? **Yes, unanimous consent.**
- The Board discussed its collective commitment to supporting year-round stewardship efforts and messaging designed to support the growth and health of the church as we navigate the deficit and build reserves back up.

- **ACTION:** Steve will present the final budget for Board approval in one month. It will be shared with the congregation at least 10 days before the annual meeting, with an opportunity to ask questions at a congregational budget review meeting.
- Maria and Joe thanked Steve and he left the meeting.

Housekeeping & Action items

- **COVID and vaccine guidelines for church affiliated social events:** Rev. Kim provided the update that Fellowship Hour starts this week but high risk level involves modifications - masks, going outside, etc. **ACTION:** Maria and staff will discuss in more detail.
- **Bucks County Interfaith Coalition for Refugee Resettlement.** Maria shared that this group will be presenting to CFA and asking for sponsorship.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer Reports

Executive Report - April 2022

The Board held its spring retreat on April 9th onsite at the church. All members were able to attend in person.

During the first half of the retreat we held a meaningful exercise regarding our Board covenant. We then had a discussion about where we see ourselves as a congregation during this time. A reading assignment prior to the retreat referred to the concept of a liminal action plan. A liminal state means between two different stages. Some members preferred referring to our time as being transitional, meaning we are moving from one stage to another that is not yet defined. We were in agreement that some church members are ready to jump back into the pre-pandemic church life they remember, while others are slowly exploring the new terrain in which we find ourselves. Others are embracing spiritual exploration through an all virtual church life.

We reviewed data regarding membership and attendance during the past few years and found that we are still bringing in new members and moving into a different form of church as a result of committing to our multi-platform church life. We know that currently about 1/3 of our Sunday attendance is in person, while 2/3 of our attendance is via Zoom.

We also acknowledged that we have experienced deep loss with the deaths of some long term members. Other long term members have moved away or are moving on.

Our church is a different entity than it was at the beginning of 2020, which brings lots of big feelings and questions about what comes next.

During the second half of the retreat, we reviewed the goals we set for ourselves last fall and what insight we've gained. A major theme we kept coming back to is the need for improving communication with our members and leaders.

Within this church year our congregation is addressing major staffing changes that result from maturational growth in the areas of financial management and Lifespan Religious Education. We will also see a staffing change with our music program as a result of Caryl's retirement. These changes all point to the fact that UUCWC is in a dynamic phase right now.

Finally, Jim Sanders spoke on the importance of stewardship and how stewardship is different from just asking for money. It involves relationship building and shared vision that are possible through financial commitment.

As we continue our gradual return to in-person church life, the Board has been asked to address how we should engage with people (members and visitors) who wish to attend church and church-affiliated events, but who are not vaccinated. This topic will be addressed at our April Board meeting with the church staff sharing recommendations soon afterward.

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for April 2022

Create Community

Monthly COVID rate update: According to the COVID Act Now metrics, as of 4/11/22, the 7-day average for Mercer is 20 cases per 100,000, while Bucks is at 6 per 100,000. Higher transmission rates put both counties at “High Risk”; we will assess if changes to current practices need to be made, notably the return of large group shared food events (Memorial Service receptions, Auction Preview Party, Fellowship Hour indoors).

Stewardship wrapped the formal campaign with approximately 50 pledging member households not responding. Of those who have pledged, changes range from decreases of 50% to increases over 100%; on average we have seen an increase of 13% for pledges received. Next are reach outs to households that have not responded.

Earth Ministry with Finance has been discussing the history, current status and long-range future of our solar panels and the SRECs program; our period to collect credits through the SRECS program is expiring in 2023. A few members led by Mark Pokryska, an engineer and project manager in renewable energy, will be touring the solar panel installation on Thursday. Though his expertise is in wind energy, Mark may be able to help us better understand the health and future of our solar panel system.

I continue to support the work of the Auction as they prepare for this important fundraiser through communications and logistic scheduling; as well I am working with the task force for Caryl Tipton’s retirement party on arrangements for this event taking place the day after a memorial service (see below).

Celebrate Life

With the signing of 6 new members, and decreases due to moves/culling inactive members/resignations, our current membership is 274 Church Members (includes 10 Virtual Members), 26 Friends, 37 Participants and 29 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 274, we are actively serving a system of 370, not counting children or visitors.

I have begun coordination with the Caring team and families for Jo Millner’s celebration of life on May 14th. We will also coordinate for the services and receptions for Beverly Railsback on June 11th and Tony Panzetta on June 25th.

Change the (UUCWC) World

I advertised the job openings for the Transitional Music Director and the Directory of Faith Engagement in various outlets, and responses were received for both positions.

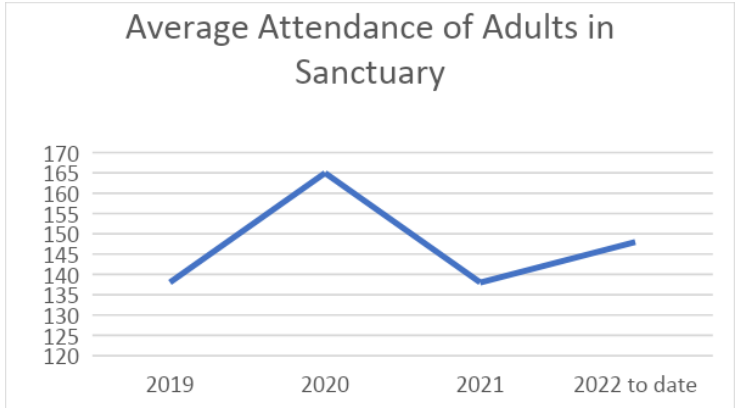
Our recent fire inspection led to two areas of concern by our new inspector: use of extension cords (not power strips) or daisy chaining of power strips in the Sanctuary, and not leaving 24 inches of clearance between ceilings and storage shelving, particularly in closets. These are being addressed and remediated. One additional violation requires PSE&G to close an open meter box in the facilities room; they have said it will take at least 30 days to address. I will request an extension from the Fire Department, and will continue to follow up on this with PSE&G.

I met with several current/past leaders from the Facilities Management Team to discuss the future of recruiting leadership and volunteer help for Building, Grounds and Memorial Garden; Denny Rodgers of Congregational Engagement initiated the discussion. There is concern about the ability to recruit future “infrastructure” committee leaders; as well there seems to be greater interest in project work than leadership roles. Currently there is no Building chair, help is needed for the Memorial Garden prep, and Grounds Team needs helpers. We are considering a change that will open specific tasks to members of the community who may want to assist but not lead.

Below are some numbers shared at the Board retreat. For the chart of membership comparisons for 2019-2022 (to date), note that as Rev. Kim, preparing for sabbatical in 2020, had more people participating in the Path to Membership (now Pathways) in 2019 as the class would be on hiatus during sabbatical. Annually, we review members and remove inactive (no pledge or payment for 1 year and no attendance); this was not done in 2020 due to the pandemic, so that number is artificially high. The numbers reflect this.

Membership Comparisons	New Members Signed	Membership in Jan
2019	22	286
2020	2	296
2021	15	269
2022	6	282 (274 in April post cull)

Also shared at the retreat was a graph showing attendance information: I have recreated it as a line graph for better comparison.



.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: April 12, 2022

Re: Monthly DLFE Report _____

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I continue to recruit and train our Sunday hosts. We have 15 people so far. Our esteemed Maria Baratta is one. She mentioned to me: "This is so great; every board member should take a turn at hosting." Hosting gives Board members visibility and time to connect with all kinds of congregants, not just people they know. Please speak to me to try hosting one time.
- I try my best to connect with virtual members via email after they attend in person services. Because I am with the kids, it is difficult to connect with them before or after the service. (They have to arrive by 9:50).
- I continue to host a virtual Family chapel and Junior Youth firepit on the 1st and 3rd Sundays and Fridays of the month, respectively. These are going well. Family chapel is small and includes Betsy Young.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- I created budgets for the children's faith engagement program, the adult faith engagement program, childcare and congregational life/ membership.
- Our children's program is currently one classroom of children and youth from ages 3-15. Attendance is between 10-15 kids. The kindness and cooperation among kids of different ages is something I wished for when we had 7 Faith Engagement classes.
- The monthly parent meetings continue to be a source of connection and support for parents. I finished up the series on "Spirituality and Children". Kim and I are working on an exciting new program for the next few sessions.
- I continue to track and follow up on visitors that I can contact. We continue to get positive feedback.). "Your service resonated like a tuning fork".
- I continue to meet with our 15 Chalice circle facilitators monthly and lead 3 of the 10 chalice circles myself. New members will be joining chalice circles next month.

Change the World.

- I am facilitating the Wellspring class on Article 2 of the UUA By- laws. The conversations are rich.

This primarily serves as an FYI about my professional development opportunities that benefit my leadership at UUCWC.

Once a month I meet with UU religious educators in the metro NY area to share information about programs and offer support. I am in my second semester of Beloved Conversations Within for UU professionals. I am in my second year of a 2-year spiritual direction course for adults. I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

Treasurer's Report

April 4, 2022

Statement of Income and Expense as of the close of March was provided in the pre-reads.

Summary:

- All financial indications are positive with a \$21k positive variance to date (down from \$30k in December)
- Our Controller, Lynne Quinto is in her role and working with Mary Baltycki on assuming "full control" of our financial responsibilities.
- The software upgrade to Quickbooks Online continues to run in "parallel":
 - o Mary is processing on the legacy, desktop software while Lynne is running the Online books.
 - o End of Month, March reconciliation has identified no discrepancies
 - o Reporting and processing is planned to migrate to the Online version during the month of April
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.4 million:
 - o \$474k Operating combined balances
 - o \$682k Capital Campaign
 - o \$257k Endowment

Year to Date Finances as of 3/31/2022

Income	
Sunday "Plate"	19,625
Pledge	290,255
Gifts (includes Year End Gift drive)	29,640
Paycheck Protection Forgiveness	22,500
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	4,819
	366,839

Expense	
Staff	237,301
Operations	60,238
Program	18,277
Denomination	18,914
Debt Service	19,099
	353,829

Net Income (Loss) 13,010

Financial highlights are as follows for March 31

Overall Budget Tracking: \$21 Positive Variance Year to Date

1. Down from \$30k as of December 31
2. Expenses outpaced income for the month of March by \$1k:
 - o Pledge income was below target Budget by \$7.7k
 - o Overall income was above Budget by \$4k due too the recording of a \$10k gift (Jo Milner)
 - o Overall expenses were positive \$1.6k

YTD Income: *Negative* variance: \$28.3k (\$28,300 less income than budgeted)

1. Plate Income is lower by \$3.2k year to date
2. Pledge Income is lower than budget by \$37k year to date at \$290k.
 - a. Budget YTD is \$327k
 - b. In the prior year, \$312k had been collected at this time of the fiscal year
 - c. To make our budget after the provision for uncollectible pledges, \$123k will need to be collected before the end of the fiscal year (June 30)
 - d. \$90k was collected in the corresponding period in the prior year
 - e. *We may be challenged to have Pledge collections completed by June 30*

Expense: Positive Variance: \$49k (\$49,000 less spend than budget)

1. **Staff:** \$29k positive variance year to date reflective of sexton and other delayed staff expense
2. **Operations:** \$14.5k positive variance to budget Year to Date
3. **Program:** \$5.6k positive variance year to date reflective of reduced spend, most notably Adult & Children's RE and delayed CFA disbursement
4. **Debt & Denomination Expenses:** To Budget (no variance)

Reminder Items:

1. **A looming budget deficit** of an estimated \$82k for the next fiscal year – 2022-2023 based on current and increasing staffing plans including the Bookkeeper and RE roles will be partially offset by a Board-Approved 2021 gift of \$10k