

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



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

July 13, 2022

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Also in attendance: Jamie Evanini, Vice President; Joe Schenk, Treasurer; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Jim Sanders, Michael Waas, Gina Turner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh. Absent was Trustee Wendy Stasolla.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

There was general discussion on the reports including:

- Onboarding of new staff roles
- Treasurer report pending due to end-of-year close-out items in progress
- 9% of pledges were uncollected for the 2021-2022 fiscal year which is more than twice the usual amount; we need more detail/context from Stewardship

COVID Survey

The Board is planning to release a survey to the congregation to gauge how people feel about current and future COVID protocols including masking and vaccine requirements. Discussion centered around how to draft the survey to most effectively gather critical information. Key points included:

- Clarifying some of the draft survey questions in order to get more targeted information
- How to avoid conflicting responses
- How to get information on current behavior vs. predicted behavior
- **ACTION:** Board President Maria Baratta will tweak the survey based on feedback, and the survey will be sent out by the end of the month. The Board will then evaluate the results and have further discussion.

Capital Campaign Update

The Board reviewed the most recent status update from the Capital Campaign team regarding budget, scope, etc. While high level, a more detailed breakdown from the team is anticipated shortly pending details from the contractor. There was general discussion of overall timing impacts (e.g. permits, how long the bid is valid for, etc.), but overall the final project budget needs to be approved by the congregation first. At the executive board meeting, it was discussed that bringing in a third party to help facilitate discussion of the current project details may be helpful in framing a clear presentation to the congregation.

Second Hour

Financial Task Force

In consideration of the church's ongoing financial needs for the foreseeable future including the budget deficit, Capital Campaign expenses, changing demographics and congregational needs, etc., the Board discussed the potential for designating a task force designed to brainstorm and plan for ways to strengthen the church's financial future. The Board engaged in discernment and discussion around what the task force would look like, what their specific mission would be, etc. Key points included:

- Ensuring that the task force includes a variety of voices from all walks of congregational life
- The importance of having a defined focus - how narrow or broad should the task force's goals be?
- What is the desired end result of such a team's work - e.g. what type of information is desired and how will it be actionable?
- How can we expand not only fundraising ideas, but strengthen and support financial conversations and literacy in general as a congregational and spiritual practice?
- How do we balance potentially conflicting opinions about the deficit budget and how money should be spent?
- How do we balance short-term immediate needs vs. longer-term planning?
- How do we incorporate innovative ways of looking at the overall budget (e.g. sustainability funds, feasibility studies, etc.)?

ACTION: Treasurer Joe Schenk, along with Trustees Jim Sanders and Heather Edwards, will work on refining the task force's central mission and identifying potential volunteers. The Board will discuss in further detail at the August meeting.

Discussion of Somerville UU Proposal

Rev. Kim presented an overview of a proposal from a congregation in Somerville, NJ that is looking to join forces with a larger congregation such as UUCWC in some manner. General discussion included what potential support could look like; a spectrum of options from more formal to less formal; what cultural, fiduciary and logistical concepts would need to be considered; high-level potential pros and cons; how the idea reflects current UUA thinking and shifts around resource collaboration for the greater denominational good; how the concept has some practical parallels with government and non-profit models; the history of such collaborations within the UU church, etc. While there were a wide range of ideas and opinions discussed, the overall consensus is that this would only be the beginning of many intentional conversations to discern whether such a path is right for UUCWC. **ACTION:** Rev. Kim will facilitate a conversation between the Somerville leadership/task force team and Vice President Jamie Evanini, along with Trustees Jim Sanders and Michael Waas.

Housekeeping & action items

- The Board affirmed Vice President Jamie Evanini, Treasurer Joe Schenk and Secretary Colleen McCourt to continue in those roles for another Board term.

- The Board discussed potential timing for an upcoming fall retreat/social gathering. **ACTION:** Maria will send out dates pending Doodle poll responses.

Meeting adjourned at 9:06 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer Reports

Exec Team report - July 7, 2022

- Welcome Gina! - We are happy to have Gina Turner join the Board of Trustees in this new church year. Her term runs from July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2024.
- Congregational COVID survey - Now that all people 6 months and up are eligible for COVID vaccinations, UUCWC has hit the point where the Board said we would reconsider our safety protocols surrounding onsite church activities, including Sunday worship. Some members are asking that the masking requirement be lifted since everyone coming is expected to be vaccinated. Others are asking that the vaccination requirement be rescinded with masking still required. By preparing a simple survey for members and friends to relay their comfort level regarding their family's participation in onsite church activity, the Board will give people an opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns. Plans are to have the survey out before the end of July.
- Capital Campaign conversation - In June, Maria and Wendy met with members of the Capital Campaign Team (CCT) to ask some questions regarding the information the Team has shared with the Board to date. Highlights include:
 - It was stressed that the Board needs to see the full project scope and costs, and be able to ask questions, make recommendations to CCT. Full transparency is necessary for us to make an informed decision when endorsing/voting on the project.
 - CCT say that the project has been whittled down to the most basic elements, with the cost of making the building entrance accessible and adding the lift being the bulk of the project costs.
 - Financials - there appears to be a double entry for the \$35,600 listed as matching funds. George was going to review that and get back to us. Final projected costs are not yet available funds. CCT does not expect to need the full \$400k potentially available in the loan. The loan has a fixed rate of about 5% for the first five years and we will only be charged interest on the amount we draw down from the loan.
 - CCT expects to conduct another campaign round with the goal of getting members (new and old) who haven't already contributed on board.
 - Everyone agreed that the most significant aspect of this project is making our building accessible.
 - If/When there is another campaign round the Board will be asked to help promote/encourage giving.

- Once the CCT submits the final plan and detailed budget to the Board, the Board will meet together first then set up a meeting with CCT to hear their presentation and respond to questions submitted by the Board.
- There was a question from CCT about why the congregation would need to approve a loan since the congregation had already approved the project several years ago. Maria provided the bylaws detail, which indicates that the congregation must approve of expenditures that amount to more than 15% of the annual budget. Since a loan of any amount will total more than 15% of any annual budget, the congregation needs to approve that regardless of the fact that each year's loan payment may be under 15% of the budget.
- As we are entering a new church year with many opportunities and some fiscal challenges, the Board will consider creating a Taskforce to focus on our financial future. There will be more chances to explore this and give shape to the idea over the next month or two.
- In June, Susan received a letter informing UUCWC was in breach of copyright law for the unlicensed use of an image of Kermit the Frog back in 2015. Maria, Susan and Kim communicated over how to address the concern. Maria drafted a response to go out to the company working on behalf of Reuters, which holds the copyright of the image. More to be reported on this as it develops.

July 2022
Minister Board Report
Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

This past month in worship we:

- Celebrated our annual Flower Ceremony, for the first time as a multiplatform community. Reworking, thinking and writing out this old ceremony in a new way was both time consuming and energizing. I welcome hearing about your experiences as an in person or remote participant.
- Navigated our annual Question Box service with questions ranging from pastoral care, to balance, to masks.
- Heard the good insight and charge from community organizer Ida Beth Malloy.
- Celebrated Caryl's (rescheduled) retirement, welcomed Union Theological Seminary student and UU Ministry Aspirant, Erol DeLos Santos, and brought Sarah into Sunday mornings for the first time.
- Received the General Assembly Sunday morning worship service as our own.

Coming Up in July & August:

- In July I will offer a 3 part sermon series on our theological roots and modern Unitarian Universalism. These services are meant to remind, ground, and welcome folks no matter how long they have been a part of a UU community.
- In August we will focus on the practices of Unitarian Universalism. I am considering turning an entire sermon time over to the practice of sharing joys & sorrows. We will welcome 2 guest preachers in August.

Additional Notes:

- We continue to lead with flexibility as noted by the need to reschedule Caryl's retirement due to Covid.
- My intended time away in July was not taken due to rescheduling Caryl's retirement; the capacity and capability of our guest preacher, and the work that was needed to edit the GA service and get all worship leaders working together to produce that service.
 - o I am taking 2 weeks off in August but I am feeling the effects of needed time away that was not had. When the guest preacher isn't clergy, it takes a great deal of time and energy to pull a Sunday together which doesn't always allow for the rest and rejuvenation a Sunday off would otherwise offer.
- All guest preachers this summer are BIPOC
- I have been planning the worship schedule for 2022-23.
 - o We will reintroduce Sharing Our Stories in a new way.
 - o I've recruited guest and lay preachers for my Sundays off.
 - o I've scheduled some of my study leave including a training from The Management Center.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- This month I led Tending the Flame in a time of reflection and collectively created prayer. Our parents are holding so very much. I was also able to use some of that time to introduce Sarah to some of our parents.
- Pastoral Care continues.
- I am starting to help plan and gather resources for our upcoming Board retreat.
- I am leading the staff team in restructuring, onboarding, and visioning. Onboarding Erin, Sarah, and Robin into her new position has taken an incredible amount of time and energy for all of us. It is an exciting time for the staff team and, therefore, (I think) for the congregation.

Change the World

- I am working with Personnel on a good many things including
 - My contract (the last contract I signed was my first!)
 - Letters of Agreement (including creating Robin's job description and clarifying Erin's, Sarah's, and Lynne's)
 - The structure, purpose and tenor of Personnel
 - Updating the Personnel Handbook; the last iteration was from 2013. This group has been working on updating it since 2020. There are many practices and expectations that are out of sync with the current UUA guidelines.
- I am leading a Council for Faith in Action & Congregational Engagement CFA retreat on August 13th. I have invited the UU Faith Action New Jersey leadership to join us and help UUCWC become more organized and supported in our efforts. There is, of course, a great deal of energy around the justice needs of our country and local communities right now.
- I am working with Right Relations on their structure, purpose and short term goals as they enter a new church year.
- I am recruiting and training new Worship Associates.

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for June/July 2022

Create Community

After a great deal of logistical planning, we held our first multiplatform Annual Meeting, welcoming 85 members (40 in-person and 45 online). In general, most aspects went well; I have some notes for future meetings and welcome any feedback on the logistics to improve the multiplatform experience next year.

I will be welcoming Justin Roth as our new chair of the Building Committee. Justin has great skills and knowledge and will bring a fresh outlook to this work; it will also allow me to transfer the responsibilities that I have been covering for the past year in the absence of a chair in this position, as well as having been the facilities' "boots on the ground" person during the pandemic.

"Do people read our emails?" is a common question in church/communications. A recent check of the reach of the emails sent to over 500 subscribers, measured in the industry by "Open" rates (opening an email) and "Click Rates (clicking a link within the email if one is available), indicates these metrics in an 10-week cycle:

	Open Rate	Click Rate
Weekly Email	66.6%	9.5%
Caring Email	74.8%	n/a
CrossCurrents (Jan-June)	63.0%	14%

According to Mailchimp, "With a 27.62% open rate, emails about religion came in third" highest in open rates (as compared to other industries with government email open rates highest at 28.77%). While "opening" an email doesn't necessary equate to reading the entire message, our open rates are far exceeding industry standards. I am hoping to update the look of the emails in the near future for even better reach and greater readability on mobile devices.

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 274 Church Members, 22 Friends, 37 Participants and 29 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 274, we are actively serving a system of 362, not counting children or visitors.

Since my last report, we held multiplatform memorial services and receptions for Jo Millner and Beverly Railsback as well as Caryl Tipton's retirement party (which was postponed from an earlier date). I worked with various groups as well as Roberto Santiago to manage the sometimes-complicated logistics for these gatherings.

Change the (UUCWC) World

I met with and secured a rental for several days this fall (no conflicts with our use) from a new organization that I have been working with since Feb. 2021. I am hoping this may lead to additional rentals from them in the future and will report more after their fall events.

I was happy to handle the Human Resources and administrative aspects of onboarding Erin Busch as Transitional Director of Music Ministry and Sarah Ahrens as Director of Family Ministry. I worked with both new team members on benefits, emails/drive set-up, and all the minutiae that comes with onboarding. I will also be creating and issuing letters of agreement for staff, with updated job descriptions for positions that have evolved over the past year.

Professional Development: I attended a Human Resources Management workshop offered by Jan Gartner and Sean Griffin from the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances. I also attended Pro Days from my professional organization, the Association of Unitarian Universalist Administrators (AUUA). Topics included updates from the UUA Office of Church Staff Finances & Office of Stewardship and Development, and workshops on including people with disabilities in congregational life and dealing with conflict in congregations.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski
From: Robin Pugh
Date: July 12, 2022
Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I was on 8 days of study leave (and 2 days of vacation) in June. I attended General Assembly remotely and I attended a 7-day centering prayer retreat in person.
- We celebrated our multigenerational flower ceremony for the first time as multi-platform. New rituals were created for our online folks.
- I continue to recruit and train our Sunday hosts. The job description is continuously updated as we make adjustments to being back in person.
- I continue to connect with virtual and in-person visitors via email.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- The bulk of my 2 weeks of working time this month was spent getting ready for the new DFM and onboarding her (which continues to take a lot of time well spent). There is a lot of UUCWC-specific knowledge to pass on.
- I continue to track and follow up on both in-person and virtual visitors.
- I continue to meet with our 15 Chalice circle facilitators monthly and lead 3 of the 10 chalice circles myself. Eight new members who joined UUCWC this spring have joined existing chalice circles. They will meet a small group of our members deeply and practice being in covenant.
- I am planning ARE classes for the fall. Wellspring requires a lot of effort (new facilitators, explaining it and encouraging people to take it). The knowledge and experience the class offers is well worth the effort to get it started.

Change the World.

The Wellspring class on Article 2 of the UUA By-laws that I facilitated ended. The conversations were rich. The importance of Article 2 was highlighted at G.A. this year.

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

I joined UUAMP, the Association of Membership Professionals. I plan to join their weekly check-ins in August. I am in my second year of a 2-year spiritual direction course for adults. I see a Spiritual Director monthly. I will take Wellspring Sources this year starting in the fall in an online group for UU Spiritual Directors.

