

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
October 12, 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; Treasurer, Joe Schenk; Secretary Colleen McCourt; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Wendy Stasolla, Jim Sanders, Michael Waas (joined at 8:08pm), Gina Turner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang. Absent was Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

Rev. Kim did not have time to submit her report due to study leave/ vacation, so she provided a short verbal summary:

- Attendance numbers have been high both in person and online recently - over 150 each Sunday since Water Communion 80-100 in person and 50-60 online on average.
- Erin Busch's music program has had a big impact as well as Sarah Ahrens getting the RE program started.
- We will begin to track in-person financial affirmation collection each week and see if giving goes up when we have guest musicians.
- Rev. Kim's time on study leave was a management training with valuable takeaways, including transferring some responsibilities to other staff members.
- Pastoral care is on the rise as expected recently.
- In the next few weeks Rev. Kim will be interviewed by the River Towns magazine featuring 10 worship leaders.
- The Princeton UU church had a table at the Hopewell Harvest Fair and Rev. Kim has asked Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh to look into similar opportunities

Treasurer Joe Schenk asked about one of Robin's report notes on locking the doors on Sunday. Rev. Kim reported other houses of worship in our area and around the country have been targets of vandalism or other acts. Robin is going to be having a conversation with local police to see what we should be doing at minimum. We will be locking doors about 10 minutes after the hour during service.

Joe applauded the work to bring the Har Sinai Temple in as a rental and was wondering how much they were charged. Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang reported they were very pleased and she thinks they will continue to use our space as long as they have a need. They were charged the rental rates that Steve Saddlemire and Susan reviewed last year - this brought in just under \$2,000 but the rate would be different if they were going to be a long term regular renter.

Review of Capital Campaign Project Status inc. Chalice Lighter Grant

General discussion prior to 10/16 congregational vote

- The Board discussed the messaging that has gone out to the congregation and whether we should allow questions prior to the vote. There was consensus that we should. Board President Maria Baratta reviewed the wording of the questions and how they will be framed. Susan reviewed the logistical details of the meeting and voting procedures.
- Chalice Lighter Grant: Jayme Trott has been the lead and the letter of intent was submitted. The next step is to come up with a strategic plan for submission by Dec. 1. Susan has started to compile details that Jayme will need to support the plan. **ACTION:** Susan will share notes with Maria and assign relevant pieces out to committees for data gathering.

Board Retreat

Dates still pending. Maria and Rev. Kim will provide potential dates or we may pass on having a board retreat during this half of the year - or possibly use next month's meeting for this purpose.

Council Meeting

Vice President Jamie Evanini is working with Robin to determine dates and organize the meeting.

School Boards/ Community Response Ministry

Trustee Heather Edwards and Jenny Ciccolini are co-leading this ministry and have identified 8 school districts that are most represented in the congregation and hope to identify liaisons for each of these districts to let the congregation know when action is needed. An organizing meeting is being held the following week.

Financial Sustainability Task Force Update

As liaison, Heather reported:

- The task force has been working on a draft survey to put out to all congregants and then also to invite specific targeted groups of people to fill out (for example new members or parents).
- An email went out to finance "experts" in the congregation to ask what information they would want to learn from the congregation
- Heather will share survey questions with the board when the survey is more finalized.

The Board discussed interest in understanding the congregation's financial giving culture, as well as the need for Stewardship Committee members and a finance chair and treasurer.

2nd Hour

Somerset Hills update (Kim, Michael, Jim, Jamie)

Per Rev. Kim, the Somerset Hills task force were mostly very positive about the proposal though some felt the fee-for-service model was too business-like. They are giving themselves until January to make a decision; could be next year or as late as 2024/25. The Board discussed the positive potential revenue and cultural impacts.

Vaccination Protocols

The Board reviewed the possibility of revising the church's current vaccination protocols. After discussion about factors such as current risk levels, feedback from the recent congregational COVID survey, timing going into a potential fall surge, etc., **there was a vote** to keep the current protocols as is for now and revisit them again in a couple of months; there was unanimous consent.

Housekeeping & Action Items

Jamie is writing the October/ November Cross Currents article.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 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 - Oct 2022

- Following 2 congregational question and answer sessions regarding the proposed capital project, a congregational meeting has been called to vote on whether or not to approve potential financing of the project beyond the funds raised. An information packet prepared by Wendy Stasolla (thank you, Wendy!) Anne Godlasky and Jessica Mark with input from the CCT was submitted along with the announcement for the congregational meeting. During the question and answer sessions there were many thoughtful and helpful questions asked that required the CCT to review their plans and budget in order to answer them in the information packet.
- In other capital project news, the CCT with support from Board members and administrative staff submitted a letter of intent to apply for a Chalice Lighters Grant to help offset the cost of the lift. A formal application is due later this year.
- The Board's fall retreat, which was originally scheduled to take place over 2 evenings in September had to be postponed. New dates will be proposed soon.
- There will be a fall Council meeting with a date TBD. Proposed topics for this meeting include:
 - Presentation of the final version of the congregational Racial Justice Ministry Covenant
 - A follow up from Congregational Engagement on their discoveries following an open session to interested members in late September
 - Susan Urgang plans to present information on scheduling multiplatform meetings in which attendees are both onsite and remote
 - Update from the Financial Sustainability Task Force
 - Also, current plans are to have a Board member speak to Council regarding bringing people on to help with the annual Stewardship Campaign.
- Financial Sustainability Task Force - A question for the group - With their planned survey of members regarding their thoughts and practices of giving, will they include all members to be surveyed on only selected groups of people based on certain characteristics?
- Somerset Hills update - Discussions continue on what an agreement with this congregation might look like, including financial expectations.
- COVID protocols - is it time to discuss dropping vaccine requirement?

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for October 2022

Create Community

The recent High Holy Days rental (9/25, 9/26, 10/4, 10/5) for Har Sinai Temple was an excellent income opportunity for UUCWC, offering a good learning experience about rentals to another religious community and ones that are not single events. Working closely with their rabbi over the course of the last six months to meet their needs required complex logistical planning and nuanced assistance. Har Sinai members shared that UUCWC was the nicest space they've used in the past five years for their High Holy Days; they were delighted with the space and hospitality. This may lead to future rentals from Har Sinai and perhaps a longer-term rental commitment.

The Mercer County Department of Public Health and the Hopewell Township Health Department asked UUCWC to host a Monkeypox Vaccine Clinic, which was held in our Crossings Room on 10/4 (same day as the rental above, though not at overlapping times). The quick turnaround from the ask for space to the clinic required complicated logistics and negotiation of spaces and times. The by-appointment-only clinic went well and they will return on 11/1 offering the 2nd dose of the Monkeypox vaccine protocol as well as the latest bivalent COVID booster. These opportunities bring people to our space and allow us to actively participate in and live our values in our local community.

These and other special events held in-person at church require additional time-sensitive set ups and greater cleaning needs for our sexton Roberto Santiago. Roberto always makes himself available when we have a need; we are grateful and must also be mindful about requests for his time and budgeted hours. Roberto took over sexton duties in addition to Sunday Steward work during the pandemic and expanded slightly as we opened slowly. We will need to monitor church needs and Roberto's time as in-person church use expands.

I have been working with the Memorial Garden team on their leadership transitions, the consolidation and reconciliation of records and payments, and the streamlining of procedures post pandemic. Inquiries about the use of the Memorial Garden have risen recently, lifting up the importance of this ministry.

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 273 Church Members, 22 Friends, 27 Participants and 22 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 273, we are actively serving a system of 344, not counting children or visitors.

Change the (UUCWC) World Preparations have begun for the Congregational Meeting on October 16th to vote on the completion of the Capital Campaign project. I fact-checked the a [special communication](#) created by Anne Godlasky, Jessica Mark and Wendy Stasolla which was sent to members 10 days in advance of the meeting per bylaws. As this is not an Annual Meeting, quorum is 15% of the membership or 41 church members.

We enhanced our generic Order of Service (OOS) by offering a [detailed version on our website](#) with a QR code on the paper generic copies for those at church to link and view on Sunday. Erin Busch has added a “Musical Notes” section at the end with information about the music offered in the service. Using a webpage for the OOS rather than weekly printing continues our goal to reduce use of paper/waste while offering fuller information to worship attendees.

Jayme Trott submitted an Intent to Apply form for a Chalice Lighter Grant to improve accessibility through the Capital Campaign project; our current wheelchair lift, automatic door openers and updated fire alarms were previously funded by a 2003 Chalice Lighter grant. A full application is due by December 1, with a decision determined in January 2023. Note that grant consideration is only open to current Honor Congregations in the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). (see below)

UUCWC has once again been recognized by the as a UUA Honor Congregation, a recognition we have achieved for over 25 years. An Honor Congregation is one that gives the full “ask” (a percentage of our expenditures, adjusted for Geographic region) requested for the Annual Program Fund; this UUA fund provides the largest source of income to serve the 1,006 member congregations.

The Meeting Owl is ready for flight and available for use for any group wishing to hold a multiplatform meeting.

I have joined a monthly chalice circle with fellow UU administrators.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Oct. 12, 2022

Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- More people are attending coffee hour and more people are bringing food. Coffee hour connects people to each other and to UUCWC. Guess what? I discovered it is motivating to have a chance to have lunch with Kim. Thank you, Erin, for the idea of having a raffle for people who sign up to bring food.
- I'm updating our safety procedures for hosts this month. We will be locking the door during the service soon. I will spoke with the Hopewell Police for their suggestions on safety. Nothing specifically happened at UUCWC, we want to be safe. I will bring these suggestions to the board. .
- I continue to connect with virtual and in person visitors via email. We have about 7 visitors online and 7 in person per week (some are returning visitors).

Create Community (Small Groups)

- Two LGBTQ chalice circles started, one in person and one online. Nineteen people signed up. Sixteen of those people had never been in a chalice circle before. This is a wonderful vehicle for connection and spiritual deepening. Thank you, Michele Ruopp and Phyllis Warren, for bringing the specific needs of our LGBTQ+ community to my attention.
- I led 2 chalice circle orientations for 22 people this month. I also trained 4 new facilitators. I am leading 4 chalice circles which is too many. I will leave 2 of them as soon as the facilitators are ready, probably December. .
- We have 5 ARE classes scheduled this fall. One is our Pathways to membership class. There are 10 people in this class, most of them were raised UU, which has not been the norm.

Save The World

- I attended congregational engagements day long social justice retreat. It was inspiring.
- I am missing the BOT meeting tonight because I am at the LREDA conference in Birmingham, AL. The Topic is "Living the 8th principle."

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

I attend the UUAMP, (the Association of Membership Professionals) weekly meetings when time permits. I'm taking Wellspring Sources this year. I am in my second year of a 2-year spiritual direction course. I will complete the training in March 2023. I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

Director of Music Ministry Report

Prepared by Erin Busch

To: Rev. Kim Wildszewsk

Between the choir and the new guest musician series, almost every Sunday service will have special music! The guest musician series is once a month and the choir will sing every three weeks. It's worth noting that the guest musician series is being funded by an Endowment Grant (Caryl received it back in 2020 and it was rolled over to me), not by the music budget. Each musician is being compensated \$200 for their time.

- Two concerts are booked for the fall: 11/6 with Raúl y su ClaveAché (Cuban band) at 1pm, and 12/11 with the South Philly Big Band at 12pm. We'll provide light bites on 12/11 in the crossings room so folks & their families can stay for the concert right after the pageant. I'm asking for a \$15 suggested donation per person for the performances, and will draw into the music budget if I feel we haven't raised enough to pay our musicians properly.

- Some of the members in the choir don't read music, and others wish to practice the music during the week. I've been spending time each week creating practice parts for the pieces we're singing, which involves inputting the entire score into my notation software, adding a click track, exporting each part, and uploading to our shared Google Drive. This takes a good bit of time, but I am happy to continue doing so if it seems worthwhile to the choir members. I'm treating the fall season as a kind of test run of this service, and I'll check back in the new year to see if folks are actually taking advantage / benefiting from it or not.

- All of the above work has maxed out my hours, so I am at capacity for the fall. I would still love to explore options to engage our youth in music down the line, and am hoping to connect with Sarah sometime in October / November if time allows.

Treasurer's Report

September 30, 2022

- Surplus year to date is \$35k (down from \$50k at the end of August) largely due to a recorded \$35k income line reflecting the approved memorial gift and lower Operations expenses year to date.
- Recorded Pledge Income is slightly behind the year to date forecast
- Year to Date expenses are \$14k below budget with savings largely in Operations & Programming which can be expected to catch up over the next months
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.47 million:
 - o \$510k Operating combined balances
 - o \$697k Capital Campaign
 - o \$275k Endowment
 - o -\$5k Exchange

Year to Date Finances as of 9/30/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	7,757	Staff	95,640
Pledge	130,011	Operations	24,326
Year End, Other Gifts	35,000	Program	6,542
Fund Raising (Auction)	173	Denomination	6,322
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	1,206	Debt Service	6,366
	174,147		139,196
Net Income (Loss)	34,951		

Final Thoughts:

- This report shows a nearly \$35k surplus year to date, but we still are expecting an end of year, budget gap of \$38k with expenses and pledge income expected to moderate during the course of the year.