

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
September 14, 2022

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Treasurer, Joe Schenk; Secretary Colleen McCourt; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Wendy Stasolla, Jim Sanders, Gina Turner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh. Absent was Trustee Michael Waas.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

Discussion centered on a congregant's proposal to invite NJ Representative Shirley Turner to UUCWC in October to discuss ranked choice voting initiative. Attendance would be open to non-church participants as well. We would be inviting Ms. Turner in conjunction with another organization, and being mindful of our non-partisan status, would provide a general forum while avoiding endorsing specific candidates.

There was a vote to approve, with unanimous consent.

Board Prep for Capital Campaign Discussion

General prioritization of high-level questions and goals in order to optimize the discussion time spent with the Capital Campaign Committee prior to their arrival in the meeting. The overarching goal was to mutually prepare for presenting the most current information to the congregation, in order to hold a vote on whether to incur debt to cover costs that go beyond pledged funds to date.

Capital Campaign Discussion

George Faulkner, Jayme Trott, Susan Vigilante and Farzad Shadzik arrived at 7:30. The CC team presented an updated slide deck outlining the most current project details and financials. Board and the CC team engaged in a discussion of the project bid to date, encompassing the following:

Scope:

- lift/elevator: platform lift, not a traditional elevator - fits 2 people but not a gurney; goes up to sanctuary or down to CC
- remove front of church; ground-level entrance into small lobby; storefront will be replaced
- small amount of extra office spaces
- kitchen - floor, ceiling, lighting, cabinets
- upgrades to Crossings Room - flooring and storefront
- new finishings throughout
- small storage room or office in basement

- can address any potential structural issues in Crossings Room wall during construction - expected to be fairly minor cost wise - not an issue as yet

The CC team responded to the Board's clarifying questions regarding HVAC, flooring, kitchen details, accessibility, automatic doors, etc.

Finances

George reviewed pledge vs. expenses to date, including projected potential shortfalls, contingency, interest rates, possible loan and payment scenarios and historical pledge trends/demographics. General discussion/questions from the Board included:

- We need to get a feel for who is coming to church and general congregational awareness of the project currently.
- Potential fundraising efforts/plans
- The need for clear communication to the congregation emphasizing the value of the project
- The need to be mindful and solve for the prospect of debt on top of the known deficit projected in the church budget

The CC team and Board discussed any remaining questions or concerns, including:

- Contractor timing
- Township approvals
- Potentially getting Chalice Lighter Grant to cover cost of lift; Trustee Jim Sanders provided details on process and timing. **ACTION:** Jayme will manage the letter of intent by October deadline. Further detail will be needed from Farzad to complete the detailed application by December deadline.

Board president Maria Baratta thanked the CC team and they left the meeting.

ACTION: Trustee Wendy Stasolla will work with volunteers to draft communications to the congregation in preparation for 2 talkback sessions to be held prior to a congregational meeting/vote.

Second Hour

Brief second hour discussion as the majority of the meeting time centered on the Capital Campaign discussion. Topics included:

- Somerset Hills Congregation status update: Per Rev. Kim, discussions are progressing with enthusiasm; we will be going back to them with a fee-for-service model, with a proposal to pilot for 2 years. There were questions about how the proposal will be structured, and how we will handle critical cultural alignment regarding the 8th Principle. **ACTION:** Rev. Kim and Jim will revise proposed numbers; Board members should provide any further questions/comments/input via email in the next week.
- Financial Sustainability Taskforce update: Jim provided an update on the formation of this group; we have 4 members with room for a 5th; in the meantime the group has authority and momentum to begin their work as charged, and bring in additional people as needed for specific tasks. We can also communicate information/invitation to the congregation via email and/or during worship services.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- Rev. Kim and Maria are looking into scheduling a Board retreat for fall.
- Vice President Jamie Evanini will do the article for the combined October/ November Cross Currents issue.
- Upcoming Capital Campaign talkback sessions and vote are scheduled.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer Reports

September 2022 Executive Team Report

During August and September, Board members had a chance to review the Capital Campaign (CC) budget update and the bid proposal from the contractor. There remain many questions regarding the scope of work for the project and questions were gathered and submitted to the CC Team for consideration and response. Initially, a joint meeting between Board members and the CCT was scheduled to be held prior to the September Board meeting, but scheduling conflicts led to the decision to meet during the September monthly Board meeting. Following the September Board meeting, the plan is to hold two talk back sessions for members, friends and visitors to learn more about the CC project, the budget, and building plans. A congregational vote could then take place on October 16th. Wendy Stasolla has agreed to serve on a team of volunteers to help work on some form of written communication to go out in advance of a Congregational vote.

Following the announcement of UUCWC going mask optional as of September 4th, some members of the choir asked whether they could sing sans masks. Exec Team members agreed that it would be ok for choir members to remove masks when they sing, while encouraging them to stand a few feet apart. Choir members who wish to remain masked are encouraged to do so.

The Financial Sustainability Taskforce is beginning to take shape. Jim Sanders prepared a packet for the Taskforce members to help them become oriented to the scope and purpose of their work. More on this Taskforce and their charge to come next month.

Jim Sanders has also recommended that UUCWC apply for a Chalice Lighter grant through the UUA's Central East Region to pay for the purchase of a lift as part of the Capital project. He suggested that Faithify is another option. The deadline to complete the required Intent to Apply form for the next round of consideration is October 1st, with an application package deadline of December 1st. More about the Chalice Lighter Grant program is found [here](#). The Board needs to determine who will prepare the grant and who would be the grant manager at UUCWC.

Many Board members attended a meeting hosted by CFA and Congregational Engagement on August 13th. Overall attendance at the event was really good and there was a lot of energy within the group conversations held. Three main topical themes emerged from the meeting including racial justice, education, and climate action with many, many intersecting sub-themes. A follow up multi-platform retreat is planned for September 24th.

New Jersey State Sen. Shirley Turner's office asked if UUCWC would consider hosting a community listening session on the topic of rank choice voting. This will be an informative session and not a partisan pitch for any candidates. Board members will discuss this either in person at the September meeting or via email.

While two evening dates were initially selected for the Board's fall retreat, conflicts for some members and staff now make those dates no longer viable. A new round of dates and times will be suggested soon.

September 2022
Minister Board Report
Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

Since the last Board report, in worship we:

- Welcomed Rev. Shawn Torres-Anderson from Bethany Baptist Church in Newark, NJ, whose presence excited and inspired some, and made others uncomfortable and disconnect.
- We explored Parker Palmer's Undivided Life, who invites us to think about our backstage and front stage lives and how we might incorporate the two.
- I reintroduced Joys & Sorrows for the first time since we became multiplatform in February. This service created the most feedback I've gotten in years and, from our elders especially, was said to foster connection and reconnection that was missing. I've shared in the upcoming Cross Currents that folks can expect a similar service every three weeks beginning September 25th.
- We welcomed Rev. Benjamin Van Dyne, a minister raised UU but who has left the tradition. He, like all other guest preachers this summer, reported that our tech and worship teams were a dream to work with; our congregation open and receptive to new and challenging ideas; and that he'd welcome coming back again.
- We brought in the new year with our first ever Water In-gathering Service. This was a HUGE endeavor. As I reflected on FaceBook: *I couldn't have asked for a more thoughtful, creative and flexible team to make it happen (13 people + the choir + the many last minute hands too)! We had weeping wells, floating candles, dissolving paper. We had the choir accompanied by tuned wine glasses, water in Pyrex drums, rain sticks and water in mason jars. We blessed ourselves with water. We created the water that will bless babies, unions and mark memorial sites. We made the sound of a rain storm. Listened to actual rain falling on our skylights. We did the wave.*

- o In addition: Erin's leadership and skill as our Music Director could not be ignored or doubted. She rewrote hymns, introduced new musicality, invited in the congregation and was a partner for me throughout the creation of the service. I am deeply grateful for her presence.
- o Similarly, if it wasn't for Robin's skill, spirituality and leadership, *and* the Tech Team's calm and creativity, we wouldn't have been able to care for the remote participants in the ways we did. Twice during that service we had parallel services happening! It really felt like we showed each other how to do this multiplatform experience well.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

- I am continuing to work with the new staff on culture, expectations, time management and timing. I am working with Robin as she navigates and hones her new portfolio. I am working with the staff team to become more bonded and interdependent though we are only in the office together once every two weeks.
- Pastoral Care has been increasing, likely because:
 - o the start of the school year

- o recent joys and sorrows service reminded all of us that we are here for one another *and*
- o with the mask mandate lifting, folks are requesting in person care.

Change the World

- Three cheers! My contract has been completed and signed – my first since my first year!
- I am working with the Personnel Committee on rewriting / revamping / severely editing down and updating the personnel handbook.
- I am working with RRC on how to work with particular committees and ministries going forward.
- In August I led an all-church justice retreat, inviting folks to learn about and participate in our current work through the Council for Faith in Action, and also organize around shared interest and energy. We had guest speakers from a local school union and the ED of UU Faith Action NJ. Three themes arose from the 40 or so people who attended: Racial Justice (which included immigration and reparation), Climate Justice (an expansion and/or clearer path for our Earth Ministry folks), and Community Response (a group who is looking to organize progressive voices within the congregation at our local school districts. This group will deal with themes from book banning to lgbtq+ rights to gun violence to sex ed to Critical Race Theory). There is a follow up meeting on 9/13 that I am leading as well.
- The Board sub group and I have met with the leadership at Somerset Hills a few times now, as well as among ourselves, and we are looking forward to presenting to you our idea for moving forward (a pay for service agreement) which I will then take to the Somerset Hills congregation for consideration.
- My theme for us this year (with thanks to Robin for finding it elsewhere) is Within, Among and Beyond. It is clear that we are thriving in that first camp of Within. Working to bring build the community among us all of us, as well as the outreach and service to the community outside of us, is the needed additional and intentional work I have for the staff, myself and I hope also the leadership.

Lastly, I share this with you after sharing it with the staff and Maria. I found this article incredibly helpful and hopeful:

<https://www.congregationalconsulting.org/hoping-for-a-robust-return/>

Looking forward to our time together and with the Capital Campaign team that will certainly move us forward.

Kim

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for September 2022

I am thankful that I was able to take a two-week vacation in August; it was restful and restorative (a feeling that lasted even after dealing with the backlog of emails!).

Create Community

I am working with Har Sinai's rabbi to make final arrangements for the rental of UUCWC for their High Holy Days (9/25-26; 10/4-5). Connecting with another local religious congregation in this way is a new step forward for us as renters and as a community. I look forward to welcoming them and making this a positive experience for all.

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 274, we are actively serving a system of 344, not counting children or visitors.

Change the (UUCWC) World

- I am working with MJ Hansen on getting the Meeting Owl into broader use once we create instructions for use for multiplatform meetings. There is a dedicated laptop that has been configured to work with the Meeting Owl as well as use of a larger screen using Chromecast. We are looking into wall mounting of the related screen for use in the Room 202.
- We took receipt on some new (used) furniture courtesy of a donation from Andrew Kidd's former employer (at no cost to UUCWC) that replaces older pieces, including new cabinets, files, task seating (even a water cooler!) for use now, as well as a conference room table and chairs that can be installed in the new space on the lower level post construction. These donations enhanced space usage as well as improved security of locked files.
- Lynne Quinto and I are finalizing submissions for the Finance Committee's audit response/compilation of Financial Policy/Procedures
- In August we settled with PicRights on the unauthorized use of an image of Kermit the Frog, done in 2015 in a Crossings Magazine; we removed the image and paid a fee of \$262. All those who work on the website and issue communications (newsletters, etc.) have been reminded not to use any licensed images, and have been directed to sites offering copyright free images.
- I participated in a staff planning retreat in August. I also am working with Sarah Ahrens on facilities/classroom needs and changes for the upcoming return to the in-person Faith Engagement classes starting 9/18/22.

- I will be joining a monthly chalice circle with fellow UU administrators starting 9/19.
- For those who missed Sunday's Water Ceremony, I offer these moments which capture some of the spirit of the service.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BLxp2r6aPTmRDQ_uXtVdITTSjDN8a54r/view?usp=sharing

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PdUHoHhB5jPioOPSWDotlvfzuLiErvG6/view?usp=sharing>

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Sept. 14, 2022

Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I worked with Kim, Erin and Sarah on the ingathering Water Ceremony. We are a gifted staff team and when we can all use our talents together it shows. I led our online folks in a ritual blessing (beautiful. Written by Kim) while the in-person congregation engaged in the water ritual. This was our first try into simultaneously offer separate tailored experiences to our multiplatform congregation. It was a success. Thank you, tech folks!
- I am keeping an eye on coffee hour this month to see who and how many people return to this UU ritual. Some visitors are attending. We began offering food this month. I am not assigning people to bring food, rather we are in a pilot period to see if people will sign up themselves when prompted. This is an effort to include everyone (not just those on committees) to bring food.
- I continue to train our Sunday hosts and remind them that they are “working” when their friends arrive at church.
- I continue to connect with virtual and in person visitors via email.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- We started an in-person LGBTQ chalice circle (with a potluck afterwards) on Saturday afternoon. I invited 22 people personally to this group. Personal invitations are time consuming, and they work. Eleven people immediately signed up (identifying a need). I am gauging interest in a 2nd LGBTQ circle in the evening on zoom.
- Our 11 regular chalice circles restart this month. I reached out personally to 20 people who are not coming regularly to church inviting them to try a chalice circle. Five said yes. This is a win.
- I am leading 5 chalice circles which is too many. In two of them, I am training facilitators to lead by November. Kim is helping me make a plan to exit 2 more.
- We have 5 ARE classes scheduled this fall. One is our Pathways to membership class. I will send personal invites to all our visitors. I’d like to offer a few more classes and am recruiting facilitators.
- I continue to work with Kim and Sarah to onboard Sarah.

Save The World

Susan reported our membership numbers. I am working to determine how accurate they are. Questions I am asking: Who is involved at UUCWC (in any way,) who attends

worship (in person, online), who pledges, who have we not seen at all. One reason I spend time on targeted invitations is to bring people back into connection with UUCWC.

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.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski
From: Sarah Ahrens
Date: September 12, 2022
Re: Monthly Director of Family Ministry Report

CELEBRATE LIFE (Worship and Rites of Passage):

- We have secured a solid group of volunteers to provide the worship story component when I am not available on a Sunday for this task. Rev. Kim will be working with them to prepare for their offerings.
- COA:
 - This program will begin in later October, once all students and advisors/mentors have been determined at both UUCWC and FUUFHC, as this is a joint program. All program applications have been advertised.
 - I am currently working on the schedule and curriculum for this year. We had to determine Youth Group dates first, so this would not conflict.
 - A UUA youth training will be held on 9/25 for the volunteers of this program.
- OWL:
 - The 7-8th grade will begin on 9/18. We are accepting applications from UUCWC and Princeton youth. We have one Princeton advisor who will be working with this group, and two more who will be helping with the other classes in the spring.
 - I am querying the 7-8th advisors and families for the best date for the 7-8th gr. Orientation. Normally, this would happen prior to the start of the program, but given the many factors (delayed start to recruitment & registration, collaboration with Princeton, etc.), we will have to do it after the first or possibly second session. This should not be too much of an issue, and parents will be instructed to contact me with any questions in advance, should they arise.
 - I am in the process of scheduling volunteer training for the 7-8th gr. group.
 - Recruitment for all levels is active, and volunteers have been given the sign-up information and relevant/updated volunteer paperwork (application, code of ethics, volunteer responsibilities forms).

CREATE COMMUNITY: To create community, I have been focusing on communication and connection:

- Creation of the “Family Ministry Messenger” -
 - I sent out the third edition in Sept, with more detailed information about the [full program year](#), relevant schedules, updated applications.
- Family Ministry Participant Registration - currently, we have general program registrations from 40 individual students; There are separate applications for OWL and COA which are also in process and being received ongoing.
- UU Identity Programming -

- For the first half of the year, the students who are not in the full year OWL program (7-8) will engage in a UU Identity program that covers the 8 Principles and 6 Sources.
 - I am in active recruitment and scheduling with volunteers targeted to these particular topics. (See Sept Board report for more description of program if needed).
 - I am also in process of writing this curriculum with the volunteers for this program (14 sessions)
- Youth Group Coalition -
 - For the 2022-23 program year, I will be collaborating with the religious educators from Princeton and Somerville in a Central Jersey Youth Coalition.
 - I have worked many hours with the other religious educators to formulate a customized youth training which will be held on 9/25. We are utilizing the new UUA Youth Training materials, and customizing them for our coalition needs.
 - Specific program dates will be out this week.
 - I am in active recruitment and scheduling of advisors for this program, which begins in October.
- In preparation for the start of classes:
 - I have reorganized all of the classrooms to suit our new needs (thanks to Nancy Neff and friends).
 - Room 103 was made into the preK-K space for safety with egress.
 - Room 101 will be a dedicated spiritual practice space, and all are welcome to use it when not in class sessions.
 - Each classroom will have its own cache of supplies as needed, including first aid kits.
 - Bulletin boards are all being redone (this may take the remainder of the month)
 - I have also created binders for all programs which include:
 - Attendance & activity logs
 - Class schedules
 - Safe Congregation information & incident reports
 - Classroom management strategies
 - Games & ice-breakers
 - I have recruited members to the Family Ministry team who will act as the Director of Family Ministry when I am not on-site. New volunteer paperwork, sign-ups, and training are all in process of being obtained/organized.
- In later Sept, I will be working with Susan and Rachel on updating the Family Ministry section of the website so that it holds all the updated, accurate information for the programs offered in 2022-23.

CHANGE THE WORLD:

- Super Sundays - (See Sept report for more description) - I am currently in process of recruiting assistants for this program. I will work with Social Action committees to plan the best ways to offer social justice projects to the students during these monthly classes.
- I attended the recent Faith in Action workshop, and will attend Tuesday evening's meeting, as well as the event on 9/24. I am working closely with the "School Board" group and Earth Ministry in particular.
- I will work with the Family Ministry Team to see how we can further support existing Social Action at UUCWC, perhaps with some multigenerational programming.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Participate in monthly Metro NY LREDA meetings with colleagues in order to share and create best practices.
- Participate in monthly OWL webinars offered by UUA/UCC to stay abreast of best practices and program changes.
- Participate in ongoing calls (weekly) and trainings (monthly) with Heartmath.org as a Resilience Advantage Trainer. This is a certification I received in January 2022

Treasurer's Report

August 31, 2022

- Included in the Board "pre-reads" for the September meeting is a document, "Finance Task Assignments" which is culmination of work started 2+ years ago with contributions from then-treasurer, Jim Sanders, Cong. Administrator, Susan Irgang, Lynne Quinto and Mary Baltycki. The document lays out the Financial Tasks and their responsible ownership as of the writing of the document. It will remain a "living document" subject to periodic review and update as the congregation and it's paid and unpaid staff continues to evolve.
- Surplus year to date is \$50k (down from \$56k at the end of July) largely due to a recorded \$35k income line reflecting the approved memorial gift
- Recorded Pledge Income is strong at \$101k
- Year to Date expenses are \$10k 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:
 - \$525k Operating combined balances
 - \$692k Capital Campaign
 - \$275k Endowment
 - -\$5k Exchange

Year to Date Finances as of 8/31/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	4,749	Staff	64,923
Pledge	101,090	Operations	19,411
Year End, Other Gifts	35,000	Program	3,656
Fund Raising (Auction)	125	Denomination	0
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	1,165	Debt Service	4,244
	142,129		92,234
Net Income (Loss)			
	49,895		

Final Thoughts:

- This report shows a nearly \$50k surplus year to date, but we still are expecting an end of year, budget gap of \$38k which will manifest with the expected spend on expenses and challenges with pledge collection seen in the last year.