

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - FINAL
January 11, 2023
Zoom Meeting

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 and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards; Trustees: Wendy Stasolla, Jim Sanders, Michael Waas, Gina Turner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

General discussion including:

Treasurer Report: Treasurer Joe Schenk provided updates regarding:

- Reserve Fund - reviewed rationale, update/review process and communication with relevant parties
- General update on budget including: temporary reduction in utility bills; reduction in pledge gap (still lagging but shortfalls from Nov. have been reduced; **ACTION:** Joe will review to see if this is an annual trend); ahead of budget on year-end campaign
- The Board informally reaffirmed approval to use \$5,000 memorial gift to construct a path to the memorial garden (pending confirmation of whether the project is permissible under township rules and in conjunction with the Capital Campaign footprint). **ACTION:** Joe will reach out to George Faulkner for details; the Board will formally affirm use of the funds when we have more information on feasibility.
- Rev. Kim shared that the newly grown Stewardship Committee has a lot of great energy and ideas.

Financial Sustainability Task Force

Ron Ianacone, John Unger and Marianne Alt arrived at 7:30 to report on the task force's findings and recommendations. Board President Maria Baratta thanked the team for their report and asked if they could provide some detail. Each member of the task force reviewed sections of the report in detail, in addition to a video report submitted by Mike Hanson, who could not attend. Highlights included general overall high-level findings with relevant insights across a variety of surveyed areas, a breakdown of response levels and findings by various demographics and key subsets, and overall recommendations

regarding opportunities and forums for education, communication, fundraising, messaging, etc. The task force provided recommendations around increasing the congregation's understanding of endowment, personalized pledge recommendations, multi-format communications including large and small group discussions and videos, an annual financial theme, and more.

Rev. Kim offered thanks again for this task force offering such in-depth information and indicated that the Stewardship Committee members have already expressed their willingness to continue some of these ideas forward. The Board will also continue to discern ways to act on the findings, recognizing the importance of thanking the congregation for participating and maybe sharing the task force's detailed information/video content with a wider audience. Maria thanked the task force and they left the meeting. **ACTION -** Trustee Michael Waas will send thank you notes to the task force members on behalf of the Board.

2nd Hour

General Finance Update

Joe indicated that the Finance team will continue to watch finances over the next few months through the stewardship campaign getting underway.

Capital Campaign Update

Maria and Trustee Wendy Stasolla provided an update including:

- The Capital Campaign team hopes to get on the February planning board meeting agenda for Hopewell Township but the process is slow-moving.
- Maria has been in contact with Steve Saddlemire about timing of finances and when/how they will be used. Per Farzad Shadzik, the contractor's estimate has increased by \$50,000.
- We will have an official groundbreaking once the project is ready to get underway, including tying in potential fundraising and/or press opportunities.

New Children's DFE Search/Hiring Discussion

Rev. Kim and Maria reported that the discussion to end Sarah A's employment relationship as UUCWC's Director of Family Ministry was handled amicably and professionally by all parties. Rev. Kim has communicated the change with the congregation, and is actively starting the search for a new candidate. In the meantime, Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang and Director of Faith Engagement Robin Pugh have been instrumental in working to fill the current gaps and make plans to sustain and grow the RE program through this next phase, but that this can only be a temporary solution since their other portfolio work is also vital and they cannot sustain additional work indefinitely. The hope is to launch a lay support team/network over the next 3 to 4 weeks, and to actively communicate the need throughout the congregation.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- Michael is going to be submitting the Jan/ Feb CrossCurrents article by 1/20.
- Maria will put our current Board goals into a Google document for the Board to update collaboratively.
- We will look to schedule a Board chat in the near future, as well as possibly a Board Faith Forward session. We should also consider providing a Financial Sustainability report at the next council meeting to share the task force's findings.
- During the meeting check-out, Board members again lifted up the work of the Task Force as well as Erin Busch's music ministry.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer Reports

Executive Team Report - January 2023

The Board held a retreat on January 7th and spent a fair amount of time looking at our congregation's future, both as we envision it and in more concrete terms of financial health and well being.

We held an exercise in which we reviewed a "rollercoaster of change curve" and described where we saw ourselves (in relation to UUCWC) on the rollercoaster throughout the pandemic. We also recognize that as church leaders we have the advantage of being closer to the front of the rollercoaster and better able to see where we think we are headed.

Robin, Susan and Kim spoke with us about our membership numbers. Each year we must report our membership numbers to the UUA. Prior to the pandemic in 2020 (and before culling out inactive members) our membership stood at 296 members. Closing out 2022 (after culling out inactive members) our membership stands at 272. The UUA suggests that congregations should expect about a 10% loss in membership. We are at about an 8% loss, even when comparing the 2020 numbers prior to a cull and the 2022 numbers after a cull. We are currently serving about 350 adults between members, friends and participants.

Prior to December's Board meeting, Heather Edwards shared the draft report of the Financial Sustainability's Task Force. The report was very informative and the task force group members are invited to come to the January meeting to review the results they were able to discern from the congregational survey results. At the January retreat, we addressed how important it is to provide more educational opportunities for our congregation related to budgeting and stewardship.

It is exciting to know that there is a new Stewardship team being developed with many newer/newish members joining some longer term members and Rev. Kim in helping to shape and envision a stewardship campaign based on informed storytelling. We look forward to following this team's progress this spring.

At the close of this church year, there are 3 Board members whose terms will end and who will not be returning in the 2023-2024 year: Jim Sanders, Heather Edwards and Joe Schenk. As a Board, we plan to make an offer to any one in the congregation who has been a member for 2+ years to attend a Board meeting or meet with a member to learn about the Board's work and ask questions to help them determine if they may have an interest in joining us next year.

Wendy Stasolla reports from the Capital Campaign team that the amended site plan application got filed by the land use attorney, Ryan Kennedy, the week of 12/12. Now that it has been filed, they technically have 45 days for completeness review. Assuming it is deemed complete, the Cap Campaign team will need to provide additional sets of plans for the township Planning

Board and staff professionals to review. Hopefully, we can get scheduled for the township's February Planning Board meeting.

Staff Team Report January 2023

This month we are testing a combined Exec Team Report as requested at a prior Board meeting. Given this week's unexpected staff developments, the Exec Team is offering a review of the Board retreat's presentation and welcomes the opportunity to give a verbal report if needed at Wednesday's meeting.

The Board and Exec Team participated in a Board Retreat on 1.7.23. Below are the highlights of what staff shared:

Membership Cull (annual for UUA) **(Robin)**

Review Membership numbers, attendance, participants & visitors

	2022	2021
Members	272	282
Friends	14	18
Participants	43*	43
Attendees	20	30
Kids	50	

*14 participants have been invited to Membership Pathways class on 1/23.

The UUA said to expect a 10% drop in membership; our drop is 4%.

2023 SYSTEM OF 399 (members, friends, participants, attendees and kids)

Stewardship (Kim)

- **New Team:** Ron Iannacone, David Schumann, Denny Rogers, Jane Root, Klaus Zechner, Sierra Krohneman, Scott Blaydon, Leon Brooks, Ann Godlasky, Susan Irgang, Kim Wildszewski
- **New Vision** (100% informed, joyful, participation) + **New Communication** (story telling, multiple avenues, information & education focussed) + **New Intent** (Demographic focus (30-55 yr olds), connecting the community through the artwork and impact of Stewardship)
- **Why did we bring in so much from the End of Year??**
 - 2022: \$24,250*
 - 2021: \$18,840
 - 2020: \$30,280 (Pandemic year anomaly)
 - 2019: \$19,276
- **What is our goal this year? Simply to not be in a deficit?**

Staffing (Kim)

The budget can't support so many people at the high end of the pay grade: we will begin to shift responsibilities to the appropriate levels of expertise and the pay that reflects this. The tentative plan, not yet been discussed with Personnel, includes:

July 1:

1. Reduce Cong Administrator hours to 30 hours/week, with negotiation of keeping benefits, and understanding that the number of hours may be revisited (reduced) Nov. '23.
2. Shift level appropriate responsibilities to Office Assistant; this will require Increasing Office Assistant hours to 14 hrs/ week
3. Shifting responsibilities that came to staff back to volunteers (IT, purchasing, editing)
4. As the Controller is not using the hours in her contract (contract is 60 hours a month; 9 month average is 50 per month as onsite work is covered by Asst Treas); shift from Cong Admin responsibilities for payroll, timesheets, tax forms/set up new hires, credit card statement review; these responsibilities are in line with the duties of the Controller. Continue Assistant Treasurer volunteer position (replace Mary B. as Asst Treas rather than consider Cong Admin absorbing on site work).
5. Shift supplies management to Sexton without adding hours; to counter less time for cleaning, add 1/month (approx \$200/) for a Deep Clean by outside company (impact is not on staff expenses but on operating expenses)

Preliminary estimates suggest the net result of this shift could roughly decrease staff costs by at least \$10,000 for 23/24; operating costs may increase by about \$2000.

Erin Busch will continue as Director of Music Ministry for another year; will renew year by year.

UUCSH update: this congregation is once again interested in discussing (see previous Board notes for details). Dir of Cong Life (Robin)'s position is imperative for this to work!

Slate / Congregational Engagement

Other than the Board openings (Treasurer, 2 trustees)

Finance Chair

Assistant Treasurer

Stewardship

Fundraising

Ministry Teams where folks are completing 2 year terms:

Grounds

Worship Associates

Congregational Engagement

Possibly co chair for Pastoral Care

Presented to Rev. Kim by:
Erin Busch
Transitional Director of Music Ministry
Jan. 2023

Since taking the helm as your Transitional Director of Music Ministry back in the summer, there is quite a lot to report! Overall, I'm feeling quite positively about my time in this position, and have plenty of ideas for 2023.

Choir

The choir has been able to sing much more difficult music than they have done previously, and their confidence and excitement is coming across in performances and in rehearsals. Several choir members have come up to me to thank me for pushing them and supporting them in performing more expansive repertoire, and I am particularly proud of our Christmas Eve performance, which featured one of our most difficult pieces we've ever performed ("The Heaven's Flock", by Erik Esenvalds). They have also adjusted quite well to not relying as heavily on a conductor, and their musicianship skills have clearly improved: they are now able to count rests between entrances with confidence while I am at the piano, and we have also begun to include additional instrumentalists in choir performances.

One reason for this increased confidence is that the choir members are practicing at home, which is not something they have done with any reliability in the past. I have spent a good amount of time creating audio practice tracks for every single piece that we perform, allowing the choir members to practice along with their part and a metronome at home. Going forward, I plan to continue to program diverse repertoire, bring more musicians in to perform with the choir (we have a string quartet planned for March!), and work on building lasting musicianship skills amongst the choir. I'm also interested in continuing the Wildflower Composers commission project that was begun in honor Caryl's retirement, when we commissioned early-career composer Lux Onigman to compose a new piece that the choir premiered during a service. The funds for this commission (\$400) were raised entirely by the choir, and I would be interested in seeing if there was any way to reduce the financial burden on the choir through any designated church funds, perhaps a 50/50 match. I would be interested in speaking further about this if anyone has any ideas!

Guest Musician Series

I would also say that the guest musician series has been a success, and is something I hope to continue in future years. I have received particularly positive feedback about Fareed (trumpet) and Megnot (soprano), both of whom I would love to bring back to the sanctuary in 2023. I have now used \$600 of the \$1,000 endowment grant funds allotted for this series, and will be able to bring two more guests in for the spring: the Trenton Children's Chorus, with whom Caryl was in touch back when she received the grant, who will join us in May; and Carlos Santiago, a violinist who was originally scheduled for the fall but was moved to the spring. I would love to bring in one or two more guests this season and to continue this effort in 23/24, so if anyone has ideas for creative ways that we might find more funding for this project, please be in touch.

Concert Series

We also hosted two concerts this year: the Cuban band, Raul y su ClaveAché in November, and the South Philly Big Band holiday concert in December. More info below:

- Raul y su ClaveAché: 29 attendees, \$511 raised (avg. donation of \$17.62) - no non-church members as far as I could tell. We promised the band \$1,000 for the concert, so we paid the remaining \$489 out of the music budget.
- South Philly Big Band: 104 attendees, \$1,336 raised (avg. donation of \$12.84) - many non-church members, some who found us on Facebook and had no relation to the church! We promised the band \$1,275, so we made a \$61 profit.

I'd love to continue offering high-quality concerts every few months in the sanctuary. Given my insane schedule this spring (which includes finishing PhD work and graduating, fingers crossed!), I think I will only plan a single concert for sometime in the spring, details to come.

Treasurer's Report

As of December 31, 2022

- Year to Date, Net Cash Flow shows a surplus of \$36k (up from \$7k in November and compared to \$50k at the end of August) with highlights:
 - o Year to Date Income is \$5k below budget (compared to \$25k below budget at November's close)
 - o Pledge income recorded is \$16k below budget, year to date (compared to \$30k below budget at November's close)
 - o Gift income at \$61k in gifts includes the budgeted \$25k memorial gift and \$24k in Year End gifts
 - o Year to Date expenses are \$26k below budget (compared with \$21k in November) with savings largely in Operations which will not be sustained
- The positive cash flow is very encouraging but is still expected to dwindle, to yield a deficit, by year end
- **Bank Account Balances total \$1.49 million:**
 - o \$524k Operating combined balances
 - o \$708k Capital Campaign
 - o \$262k Endowment
 - o -\$5k Exchange (funds awaiting decision)

Year to Date Finances as of 12/31/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	15,900	Staff	185,795
Pledge	220,236	Operations	41,079
Year End, Other Gifts	60,579	Program	15,256
Fund Raising	1,786	Denomination	12,644
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	5,283	Debt Service	12,733
			267,507
	303,784		
Net Income (Loss)		36,277	

Final Thoughts:

- **The Balance Sheet includes a \$5k "Exchange" line** – these are funds being held pending Board action on allocation of the remaining \$5k of the Richard Knight estate. During the past budget cycle, the Board elected to hold \$5k for use in memorializing Richard and needs to discern a proper use of the funds.
- **This report shows a \$36k surplus year to date.** We continue to expect an end of year budget gap of \$38k with expenses and pledge income expected to moderate during the course of the year.

- **We invested \$240k in idle bank assets** an interest bearing money market fund which yielded \$545 income for the second half of December (invested December 12th.) The fund invests in government securities with a variable return which is presently 3.99% and expected to increase with Federal Reserve interest actions.
- The Facility Reserve Fund “Master Document” is included in the Board January pre-read materials. The document lays out the Fund Objectives and Operating Guidelines. It is serving as a guiding document for management, allocation of and spending of Capital funds.

Treasurer's Report

As of November 30, 2022

- Year to Date, Net Cash Flow shows a surplus of \$7k (down from \$50k at the end of August) due to the following:
 - **Year to Date Income is \$25k below budget**
 - **Pledge income recorded is \$30k below budget, year to date**
 - Gift income at \$41k in gifts includes the budgeted \$25k memorial gift)
 - Year to Date expenses are \$21k below budget with savings largely in Operations & Programming which will not be sustained
 - We have recorded a total of \$35k in gifts (includes \$5k in End of Year gifts and the budgeted \$25k memorial gift)
- The positive cash flow (surplus) is expected to continue to dwindle and yield the budgeted deficit (\$38k)
- **Bank Account Balances total \$1.45 million:**
 - \$498k Operating combined balances
 - \$698k Capital Campaign
 - \$262k Endowment
 - -\$9k Exchange (funds awaiting decision)

Year to Date Finances as of 11/30/2022

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	13,564	Staff	156,554
Pledge	170,074	Operations	36,101
Year End, Other Gifts	40,900	Program	11,629
Fund Raising	298	Denomination	6,322
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	3,140	Debt Service	10,610
			221,216
	227,976		
Net Income (Loss)			6,760

Final Thoughts:

- ***The Balances (above) includes a \$5k "Exchange" – these are funds being held pending Board action on allocation of the remaining \$5k of the Richard Knight estate. During the past budget cycle, the Board elected to hold \$5k for use in memorializing Richard and needs to discern a proper use of the funds.***
- This report shows a \$7k surplus year to date which is dwindling from the \$50k at the start of the year and \$21k at the end of October. 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. The dwindling surplus to date confirms this trajectory.