

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)
June 14, 2023
Zoom Meeting

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:12 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini, Treasurer Joe Schenk and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Trustees: Wendy Stasolla, Heather Edwards, Jim Sanders; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh. Also present was Denny Rodgers. Absent were Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski and Trustees Gina Turner and Michael Waas.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

There were no staff or executive reports this month since a consolidated report was shared at the Annual Meeting. There was general discussion, key points included:

- Constituency plans for Rev. Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski's absence; for issues Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang is the point of contact.
- 148 people attended the Flower Communion in person; the highest total since reopening.
- Positive reactions to Erin Busch's report on the past year in her role as Director of Music Ministry

Stipend for Ministerial Intern

While not budgeted for, in recent conversations the Board had identified that it might be possible to find money to fund a stipend. There was general discussion of how this might work regarding amount, source, logistics, etc.; key points were as follows:

- Range of potential amounts for benchmarking, from travel expenses to a full stipend according to UUA guidelines; there are \$5,000 in unused funds from the Richard Knight memorial gift which could be put toward a stipend, which would be somewhere in the middle of the range.
- This would likely be added as a line item under Staff budget.
- **There was a vote** to dedicate the Richard Knight fund money for the purpose of a ministerial stipend, which is permissible under UUCWC bylaws. It passed unanimously.

Construction Project - Capital Campaign

Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang met with the BuildPro project manager, who picked up the check on Monday and took a packet of permits to the township to officially file them. They estimate 20 days for permit approvals assuming there are no questions, but questions are typical. Once construction actually starts, BuildPro will need to get contractors lined up; the estimate for this next preliminary phase is about 6-8 weeks, so it will likely be late July/early August before anything gets started.

- They are expected to start with exterior excavation before moving to interior work.
- Staff is still packing throughout the summer as much as possible; at some point movers will likely be hired to handle larger items, for liability reasons
- A groundbreaking ceremony will likely take place in September to align with the launch of Phase 3 fundraising; maybe we could create a small video in the summer to memorialize the beginning of the work.
- Per Treasurer Joe Schenk, we will need to renegotiate with the bank because their initial estimate had construction ending in October. We will need to keep an eye on this as things move forward.

Policy Clarification for Events/Projects

In response to a recent member request regarding a potential fundraising event that would be held at and benefit UUCWC, the Board discussed relevant considerations including permits, corporate sponsorship, and alignment with current church policies and procedures (e.g. working with outside groups, being sponsored by a committee or ministry, how the money raised will be applied to the budget, etc.). We are not seeking to change the overall process but address some unique elements of the proposed project. Discussion included the fact that we should support and encourage members with creative fundraising ideas as much as possible while providing guidance as needed. Susan provided the member with some initial event planning information. **ACTION:** Wendy Stasolla (*incoming Board President for two years beginning July 1, 2023, as elected at the Annual Meeting on June 4, 2023*) will consult with the member and ensure that Finance is engaged in ongoing discussions.

2nd Hour

Discussion re: Possible Board Priorities for New Church Year

The Board discussed potential areas of focus/energy/priority for the upcoming church year, including:

- Need for specific roles to be filled including Board scribe and liaisons to Finance and Capital Campaign teams
- Reviewing the status of parking lot items, one church one budget discussions
- Focusing on strong support for programs, people and efforts including Stewardship, RE and Raise Right fundraising
- Looking for opportunities for connection to the larger community and UUA efforts
- Addressing the volunteer deficit

- Keeping the Financial Sustainability Task Force findings and recommendations top of mind
- Mini-audit of bylaws to review anything out of compliance and take another look at proxy voting.
ACTION: Outgoing President Maria Baratta and Secretary Colleen McCourt to review bylaws in the coming year.
- Finance - As incoming Finance Chair, Jim Sanders will be holding a retreat for the team. Endowment will be an active voice on Finance this year.

Lessons Learned from Annual Meeting

There was discussion of the multi-platform annual meeting, including:

- Minor technical issues that were overcome quickly
- Slightly long - the budget presentation can potentially be abbreviated further in the future
- Logistics of presenting awards, taking photos, etc. It was suggested that it's fun to read through the write-up about each awardee before revealing who they are, as well as having a system for taking pictures either of each person individually or all together at the end.

Evaluation of Board Performance and Suggestions for Improvement

ACTION: As this Board term ends, Maria asked that if anyone has observations or suggestions for improvement, to please send them to herself and Wendy. Wendy noted that she may bring back discernment circle format for warranted decisions. Jim indicated that he favors face-to-face meetings but appreciates the flexibilities of the hybrid format.

Summer (or Fall) retreat

ACTION: Maria and Wendy will send out a Doodle poll to select a date for the next Board retreat.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- Maria will write the next CrossCurrents article for July/August.

Checkout

The Board thanked outgoing members Heather Edwards, Joe and Jim for their service as well as thanking Maria for her work as president. Maria gave Jim a perfect attendance award.

The meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Heather Edwards

Scribe and Trustee

BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Looking back on this church year that is closing, we might call this the “RE” year:

- We fully REsumed in-person services (along with REtaining our solid commitment to being a multi-platform congregation).
- RE classes REturned.
- We REcommitted to our Capital Campaign project.
- The work of our Financial Sustainability Task Force is helping us to REfocus how to improve and maintain our financial well-being.
- Food Ministry services REstarted.
- We are REimagining what our future might look like as we engage in church REbuilding.
- Sadly, we are also facing RETirement for key staff members.

As the fears of the pandemic ebbed and faded, we developed a new appreciation and understanding of what it means to thrive during uncertain times. Not knowing what things would look like 3 years ago, we can now take a deep breath and say “Well done, friends, well done.”

Not only are we looking at this as a time of church building, we are also expanding our idea of what our church can and should be as we continue to “Celebrate Life. Create Community. Change the World.” There are so many individuals, teams, committees, and ministries to thank for their ongoing commitment to live up to this mission.

One of the most important groups to thank and lift up are all the parents and volunteers who sustained our RE programming this year. They are building and designing the village in which we raise our children to

make them feel safe, loved, and cherished by the whole UUCWC community. Thank you.

So how have we been living up to our mission this year?

How have we Celebrated Life?

- With Sunday services that make us laugh, cry, and think deeply about who we are and our purpose in this world
- With gorgeous music that fills us up, whether in a Sunday service or a church sponsored concert
- With child dedications and farewells
- By sharing our hopes, fears, and milestones through Joys and Sorrows or even through Facebook groups

How are we continuing to Create Community?

- By moving forward with our Capital project to make our building accessible to members, friends, and visitors
- By supporting those who need us during times of hardship and stress
- By sharing in the annual auction both as contributors and buyers, as well as having fun at the preview evening. This year's multiplatform auction was a great success and once again exceeded its goal. To all the people who helped make it a success, especially the Auction Committee members, we thank you.
- By joining in the Friday night singalongs - Can you believe these are still going strong more than 3 years after they started? That's a real community.
- By bringing your children to RE programs where they can meet and bond with other like-minded children who aren't part of their usual school or neighborhood circles

- By participating in adult programs like chalice circles, Lecto Divino sessions, or poetry writing workshops

What are we doing to Change the World?

- Hosting vaccine clinics
- Resuming Homefront meals and tutoring
- Feeding hundreds of people who face food scarcity
- Creating a community response group to address social and cultural concerns arising in our local schools and other public institutions
- Committing to a racial justice covenant
- Hosting learning opportunities on topics like reparations and rank choice voting

These are just some of the many, MANY examples in which our church continues to remain vibrant and responsive to our personal and community needs. For everyone who has participated in church life this year by: attending services; engaging in small group ministries; volunteering their time; offering their talent; following through on their annual pledge; making an end-of-year gift; participating in the annual auction; attending events, programs, and singalongs; or engaging in any of the many vibrant offerings available at UUCWC we thank you for keeping our flame of commitment and community burning bright.

So, what has your Board of Trustees done this year?

The Board worked with our Capital Campaign Team to bring the final plans and budget before the congregation for a vote to move forward with this very important project. We are now looking at a July start to this project.

We took the deficit budget that we passed last year very seriously and enlisted a group of volunteers to research our congregations understanding of budgets and stewardship. This information is being used to guide us in striving to be better communicators regarding our finances and help people get comfortable talking about money as a function of our spiritual life. Using information gleaned from this group's findings helped our Stewardship team in the work they did. Our Stewardship team did an outstanding job of not just hitting their ambitious goal, but exceeding it. This is something to be celebrated and applauded, not just because it helps us in developing a solid budget, but it reaffirms the belief our members and friends have in the value and significance of UUCWC in their life. By fulfilling your pledge, you're investing in our congregation's present, as well as its future.

We recognize the need to support our staff and have laid out the concerns we have that Reverend Kim will be our only full-time staff member in the new church year. This means that more volunteers will have to step up to support our administrative work and religious faith development efforts in the coming year.

We have been in close communication with the work done by Congregational Engagement as they create pathways for people to participate in church life, including developing leadership opportunities for those seeking such options.

We have trusted and supported our church staff so that they can experiment, grow, and develop as the professionals they are. None of the achievements outlined here could ever happen without the dedication and commitment of our staff. We can't thank them enough.

Lastly, we recognize that we are just as much followers of the dreams you, our members and friends, have built for this church, as we are leaders of this congregation. We can't be leaders unless we know how to follow. Thank you to all who have helped us to get here today.

Treasurer's Report

As of May 31, 2023

Summary: UUCWC continues to benefit from under-spending which is more than compensating for a minor income variance and resulting in a net positive:

- Year to Date, Net Cash Flow shows a surplus of \$39k – an increase from the prior month's \$21k largely attributable to proceeds from the Auction.
- Under budget spends continue to contribute to the results with the Staff line \$33k positive and Operations positive \$22k
- **Bank Account Balances total \$1.6 million:**
 - \$557k Operating combined balances
 - \$766k Capital Campaign
 - \$290k Endowment

Year to Date Finances as of 5/31/2023

Income	
Sunday "Plate"	30,444
Pledge	365,871
Year End, Other Gifts	61,229
Fund Raising	41,691
All Other (SRECs, ARE Fees, Misc)	11,995
	511,230

Expense	
Staff	327,164
Operations	74,751
Program	27,839
Denomination	18,966
Debt Service	23,343
	472,063

Net Income (Loss)	39,167
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Final Thoughts:

- The results show strong results which will result in a net surplus when we close the books for the year for the reasons listed above.
- Invested funds (US Treasury Money Market Funds) are now yielding 5.06% yielding income for this month of:
 - Operating Funds: \$1,766
 - Capital Campaign: \$2,443