

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)
August 9, 2023
Zoom Meeting

President Wendy Stasolla called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:05 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini, Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Trustees: Maria Baratta, Karen Kent, Gina Turner, Michael Waas, Michelle Zechner; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

- Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang requested Board feedback related to a survey that will go out to the congregation regarding preferences for the timing of church services. Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski provided context that in response to some member inquiries, we are seeking survey responses from the congregation for informational purposes. Discussion included considerations of survey wording and mechanics (including a question about whether the time would affect people's decision to attend online, in-person or hybrid) and how timing would potentially impact staff and volunteers, etc.
- President Wendy Stasolla discussed updating structuring Board meetings to alternate being in person vs. multi-platform. **ACTION:** We will try this next month and will establish a practice of having 2 process observers - one online and one in-person.

Eagle Scout Project

Wendy introduced discussion on a youth congregant's wish to do an Eagle Scout service project at and for UUCWC. Discussion focused on the potential nature of the project including timing and logistics, etc., as well as the overall context and history within UUCWC related to similar proposals and how that may impact congregants. In-depth dialogue took place via discernment circle practice, encompassing the following key points:

- There are several projects that the Eagle Scout can undertake; the one he would like to pursue involves creating land acknowledgement signage on church grounds. As a first step, Rev. Kim would consult with representatives from local Lenape organizations for guidance. In keeping with policy, the project would need sponsorship and support from a committee or small group from UUCWC, to provide guidance in accordance with church policies and practices and logistical considerations. The physical nature of the project should be considered, including how it will be

maintained in the future and how such maintenance will be funded. The Eagle Scout's project needs would also need to be considered, including the ability to complete it in a timely manner to allow for his college application planning.

- 13 years ago, another Eagle Scout church member sought approval for a service project at the Annual Meeting, and there was a long, emotional and fraught discussion, centered around the Boy Scouts of America's (BSA) exclusionary and discriminatory policies at the time regarding LGBTQ+ participation in the organization. While the project narrowly passed, as a result of the debate, the Eagle Scout declined to execute it, and left the congregation along with his family and a small number of other church members.
- There was in-depth conversation on the need to recognize, acknowledge and deeply consider the trauma and deep emotional response that this event caused in our congregation, and how the current project proposal might be received and experienced as a result. In particular, there was recognition of the need to consider the impact of historical and potential harm to the church's LGBTQ+ community, as well as long-term members impacted by the experience and other people who may have otherwise been harmed by the BSA as an organization.
- There was also acknowledgement of how the BSA has reformed and updated its policies, the desire to support the Eagle Scout as a valued member of the congregation, and the potential value of embracing a dialogue about change, healing and evolution and what that looks like within UU theology and the larger culture.
- The result of the discussion were:
 - The Board collectively and individually supports and affirms the Eagle Scout's project and believes that it presents an opportunity for congregational discernment, community and connection, however;
 - We need to carefully consider the process of intentional engagement with the congregation including those who may be most harmed.
 - Rev. Kim could potentially dedicate a service to preaching on this, and we could hold targeted listening circles or Board chats, possibly involving Right Relations. We also recognize the need to be internal process observers, checking in to ensure that we are handling all interactions in the spirit and practice of right relations and considering multiple perspectives.
- **ACTION:** The Board agreed to pursue further discussion regarding specific next steps and methods of transparent communication with the congregation. Treasurer Denny Rodgers (in his capacity with the Grounds Committee) has been in touch with the scout and will continue to communicate with him on timing and other relevant considerations.

2nd Hour

Update on Stipend for Ministerial Intern

Rev. Kim reported that after meeting with members of the Board and the Personnel committee, we will be providing the ministerial intern with a stipend on which she will pay applicable taxes. It will be funded from a combination of funds from the Richard Knight memorial fund as well as the minister's budgeted discretionary resources. Total compensation breaks down as a stipend of \$8080 compensation, plus an additional \$808 in professional expenses. The intern is happy with the result and all involved parties (staff, Board and Personnel) are satisfied that the process was responsible and thorough.

Capital Campaign Update - Timing and Rollout of Phase 3 Fundraising

Wendy provided an update including:

- The Capital Campaign committee has reached out to push back the Phase 3 Fundraising Kickoff from September to October 15th in the hope that we will have broken ground by then, particularly within the context that the currently negotiated interest rate on the construction loan from the bank is time-sensitive; if we don't start using bank loan money by Oct. 1, we need to reapply and probably for a higher interest rate. Wendy reached out to the team for further information and they provided the following updates:
 - Farzad Shadzick is working with our contractor to finalize HVAC plans so that we can get the permits. They have kept the bank in the loop and are trying to push things along as fast as possible. Jayme Trott shared that BuildPro has requested permit approval for demolition and other work that can begin even before HVAC is finalized.
 - Susan Irgang reported that Farzad has his meeting with 3 contractors for HVAC solutions and is optimistic for a positive outcome.

Board Liaisons/Committee Structure

The Board discussed aligning liaisons with standing committees and what is involved in being a liaison (creating open lines of communication - not necessarily attending all committee meetings and not serving as additional committee member). Currently the following have been identified:

- Finance - As Treasurer, Denny Rodgers is liaison - and possibly another person could serve as well
- Personnel - Trustee Maria Baratta will serve as liaison.
- Congregational Engagement - Denny will serve as liaison - and possibly another person could serve as well
- Endowment - needs a liaison
- Capital Campaign - needs a liaison
- Vice President Jamie Evanini will serve as Board Scribe and possibly another person could serve as well as a backup

General discussion included thinking about what the Board requires and how we can share these needs and responsibilities effectively.

ACTION: Wendy will give people time to think about open roles but will follow up with individuals via email and can help with any questions.

Potential Retreat Dates: September 23 or 30 from 9-2

Wendy polled everyone about potential dates. **ACTION:** She will share next steps with the group.

Personnel Update - New DFM

Rev. Kim, Susan and Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh provided an update that Julie Rigano is a strong addition to the staff, and has demonstrated positive energy, good ideas, talent and creativity, flexibility and responsiveness, open and regular communication and a strong collaborative fit. Rev. Kim identified that Julie will need support from the Board and the congregation in getting volunteer assistance.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- Denny will write the CrossCurrents article due Sept. 15. Going forward, Wendy will assign Board members to this task each month, but people can switch months as needed.
- Discussion of the agenda “Update on Concert Fundraiser” was tabled and is a parking lot item for next month’s agenda.
- Denny provided some finance-related updates:
 - Former Treasurer Joe Schenk is preparing a year-end report.
 - Mary Baltycki recovered nearly \$8,000 in tax money from a late member’s estate-related gift.
- Maria provided feedback in her role as the meeting’s process observer that Wendy did a great job leading her inaugural Board meeting, and that we made good use of the discernment circle for discussion.

The meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Jamie Evanini

Vice President and Scribe, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team and Staff Reports

Executive Team Meeting-August 7, 2023

In Attendance: Rev. Kim Wildzewski, Wendy Stasolla, Denny Rodgers, and Colleen McCourt

We talked about our approach to the request from William Kalb to build something for UUCWC as part of his Eagle Scout requirements. A popular suggestion from our members was to make a sign about being on land that was stewarded by the Lenape people. Kim has two people in mind to consult with about wording and Denny will ask William about timing. Wendy will fill the board in on an emotional time in the history of our congregation concerning an Eagle Scout request about 13 years ago. Kim thinks she will preach on this subject at the end of August so as to be intentional about communicating the current thinking to allow a project.

Kim and Wendy talked about the Capital Campaign committee reaching out to push back the Phase 3 Fundraising Kickoff from September to October 15th in the hope that we will have broken ground by then. To understand why that hasn't happened yet, Wendy reached out to the Capital Campaign Committee and got the following replies:

Susan Vigilante said that presently Farzad is working with our contractor to finalize HVAC things so that we can get the permits. They have kept the bank in the loop and are trying to push things along as fast as possible. Jayme Trott shared that BuildPro has requested permit approval for demolition and other work that can begin even before HVAC is finalized.

We have two potential dates for a board retreat, September 23 or 30 and we are awaiting the results of a Doodle poll sent out by Susan Irgang on August 8.

Kim brought up the need to discuss committee structures and how they may need to change and we talked about assigning each board trustee a liaison position to one of the standing committees. (Endowment, Personnel, Finance (Denny), Capital Campaign - and Scribe.

Colleen spoke of liking the multi-platform option for board meetings but we realized that we have to be more aware of the different experience of those on zoom vs in person. We are going to try alternating between all virtual meetings and multi-platform meetings each month.

Wendy attended a Cosmic Crossings concert this past Saturday night and will talk about the type of support and structure needed from UUCWC to help Nick Mellis continue fundraising and also to expand his concert/event offerings.

A new laptop computer was purchased and equipped specifically for the Board Treasurer and this equipment will be passed along to each person who holds this position.

Staff Executive Report to Board July 2023

Create Community

We planned and created a multiplatform multigenerational flower communion, followed by a jazz concert and potluck. It was very well attended (197 people including 21 visitors/participants).

During Kim's study/vacation leave, church life has been mostly quiet, with some committees going through their leadership transitions. The Preliminary Annual Report for 2023 shows the activities of many of our church groups (those who submitted reports); read it [here](#). The Annual Report 2023 will be officially issued once the final financial reports for the fiscal year are available.

Celebrate Life

As is usual, attendance at Sunday services has been lower than what is normally seen from September through June. Kim's coverage has included Pauline Nijander's two services June 18th and 25th, which brought 126 and 95 attendees, respectively; Benjamin VanDyne's July 2nd service (holiday weekend) brought 79 attendees equally split between online and in-person, and 85 on July 9th. We will welcome the return of Erol Delos Santos to the pulpit for the next two Sundays. Kim returns to the office on 7/24 and to the pulpit on 7/30.

Robin is supporting Julie as she learns the history of UUCWC, meets families and plans for the children's program in the fall. Onboarding takes time and is necessary for a smooth transition.

Robin is planning ARE classes for the fall. In particular, 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

Ten people from UUCWC attended GA in Pittsburgh. People returned energized and wanting to do more. We will be hearing from the GA folks later this year.

Capital Campaign construction permitting continues; we received our Zoning Board permit contingent on getting another set of signed drawings to them; other permits are still in process.

Due to the ongoing construction delays, we will be able to host all of the onsite Wacky Wednesdays for HomeFront this summer. If early August brings construction that would impact the Crossings Room/Kitchen use, we will offer Wacky Wednesdays space in the Sanctuary and upper classrooms. This represents a cost savings for HomeFront (CFA/FEFT funded), as when they are using a local community center, they may not bring prepared foods due to a lack of a kitchen, so must purchase meals. We are happy to be able to offer the space, as we will not likely be able to do so once construction begins in earnest.

On the suggestion from a Peter Bowden video about church visibility, UUCWC's presence online was reviewed. Susan discovered that we have a presence on YELP (listed as #10 in a search of churches in Titusville); the Yelp site was updated with pictures, but has few reviews. Check us out and feel free to leave a review!

https://www.yelp.com/search?find_desc=churches&find_loc=Titusville%2C+NJ

Our Annual Fire Inspection passed with two minor violations (use of extension cords and door stops on fire doors), both of which have been abated.