

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
Wednesday April 15, 2020

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Nathalie Edmond, called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Marianne Alt; Treasurer, Jim Sanders; Secretary, John Ueng-McHale; Scribe, Nina Todor; Trustees: Patrick Kahney, Jeffrey Lang, Dianne Ross, Sue Saddlemire; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; DLRE, Robin Pugh. Sabbatical: Senior Minister, Rev. Kim Wildszewski.

First Session

Consent Agenda - see appendix for complete reports.

- Discussed Rev. Kim's return.
- Staff will continue to be paid through the end of the church year.
- Discussed tech team, specifically the need to have consistent team support and who should take a role in supporting the team (e.g., ministry or committee). Sunday Service and other church meetings need the team's assistance.
 - Decision: Rev. Kim will spearhead this conversation when she returns. Board will provide support as needed!
 - In light of COVID-19 needs, a virtual tech team will be needed. Zoom support and building tech support may need to be different sets of people.

Motion to accept the consent agenda moved by Nathalie; motion passed unanimously.

Ministerial-evaluation task force: Marianne and Patrick presented.

- Reviewed evaluation form and fine-tuned wording.
- Discussed who will receive the questionnaire. Decision: board and staff this year.
- Time frame to be addressed when answering the questionnaire: this church year, including sabbatical (e.g., efficacy of coverage).
- Patrick and Marianne to send new form by April 22. **ACTION (staff and board):** complete before the next board meeting.
- Suggestion/discussion: start process at the beginning of the church year with eye towards end of year. Do every 3 years, when the minister sets goals.

Annual meeting: we discussed the date (first Sunday in June) and how to hold the meeting (virtual).

- We discussed a number of technical details that will need resolution; e.g., voting, registering, and Zoom vs. another platform.
- **Motion:** the Board supports UUCWC holding a virtual annual meeting on the first Sunday in June; the meeting will be supported by a special team to provide logistical support to ensure success. Raised by Nathalie; passed unanimously.

The board entered **executive session** for approximately five minutes.

Second Session

Budget: Mary Baltycki and Jim Sanders presented a preliminary line-item budget based upon the Finance Committee's final recommendations. This budget:

- Attempts to take the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 crisis into account wherever possible, including realistic assessments of pledge and plate income as well as looking to maintain or even reduce staffing and program costs, where practicable.
- Incorporates many inputs from committees and ministries, and reflects long-term commitments to denominational support and building-systems' infrastructure, among others.
- Has a projected deficit of approx. \$35k that could be funded by unallocated cash reserves.

The board, led by Nathalie, discussed what a **program** budget (rather than a line-item budget) would look like and how it might inform the conversation about next year's budget, especially given the uncertainties we face in the COVID-19 crisis.

What are our "fixed" costs vs. "long-term commitments" vs. more "fluid" costs?

Action: Finance Committee to **revise the budget** to show several options for board's consideration. Board will reconvene in late April to assess.

Other topics:

- **Policies & procedures** - aiming for some **updates** in April!
- Discussed candidates for **leadership positions** and next actions. Will include Nominating in follow-up conversations.

The board entered **executive session** for approximately fifteen minutes.

Cross Currents: Nathalie will write an article regarding using Zoom for church activities during the COVID-19 crisis.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nina Todor

Scribe, Board of Trustees

John Ueng-McHale

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: staff, executive-team, and treasurer reports

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: April 9, 2020

Re: Monthly DRE Report

Create Community:

- Sunday Worship has taken more than the usual amount of time. Every Sunday there is something new to learn for the service. We are learning as we are creating. The lack of a tech team has been frustrating. This is a void in leadership in Kim's absence. Who has the authority to establish a new team? Worship Associates has filled in as tech team in the meantime. But this has been stressful.
- Staff is checking in frequently with each other to make sure we know about or have seen all members of UUCWC. I am reaching out to all RE families that I have not seen in RE spaces.
- Everything staff does is taking longer than usual. All contacts with congregants are pastoral even if discussing business.
- During the pandemic, some ARE classes continue, some have been postponed and others have been cancelled. The ARE classes that are small group based are continuing to be offered via Zoom. These classes have been a source of comfort and connection for participants. People continue to join these classes now.

Three ARE classes that were in the middle of their scheduled course ended abruptly when the church closed.

Two ARE classes that we offered during the first month of the pandemic were cancelled or postponed due to lack of interest. It is not the time to be offering new programs full of information. ARE will continue to offer small groups but is not planning to offer additional content-based classes until life feels more stable.

Celebrate Life:

- I am offering 2 children's chapels per week for pk-2nd grade and 4th- 7th grade via Zoom. The chapels are not as well attended as our RE classes, but the kids (and parents) who I reach are thankful.
- I am offering a parent check in on Monday nights via Zoom. Parents are very appreciative for the time to talk and connect. This is a very difficult time for parents. Many of them are busy and exhausted.
- The 8th-9th grade OWL teachers are having weekly check-ins with the class.
- The Gaga pit was funded by the Endowment committee. Woo hoo!

Change the World

- I am reading in my DRE and professional UU Facebook groups and listening to webinars about what church and RE may look like going forward. There is no

one answer, but it is likely to not be the same as what it was. Probably a combination of virtual and live programming.

- I am looking forward to the tech team figuring out a way to safely invite visitors to our services. I think we have an opportunity to offer a healing message to the world right now,

4/1/20

Exec team meeting (Nathalie Edmond, Marianna Alt, John Ueng-Mchale, and Jim Sanders)

Personnel discussion with Sue Saddlemire, Mary Baltycki, Nina Todor, and Joe Schenk

- Recommendation from personnel to keep all staff on payroll through June 30th
- Reviewed personnel projections for next budget year.

Following information was discussed only by Executive team:

- Policies and procedures- John has put existing approved policies and procedures on wiki page. Currently only a few people can see it as it is not live. Consult with Communications about wiki link and how it is connected to UUCWC website. Share preview at Board chat. Received Endowment grant of \$750 to help fund policies and procedures placed on wiki site
- Next board meeting is 6 to 9 pm on 4/15 via zoom. Regular board meeting with staff for first hour and then finance at 7 pm
- Moving towards program based budget rather than line item budget as doesn't seem we are ready for mission based budget as we don't have a written strategic plan. Program based budget is in line with materials that stewardship shared for pledge drive
- Nick Mellis asked to meet with the board to discuss his idea for an ongoing fundraising event involving having concerts at the church
- What committee takes the lead around grant/loan application for COVID-19 disaster relief. Nathalie to look into EIDL for non profits which has a \$10,000 forgivable grant
- Joe Schenk inquired about confidentiality related to google drive. Currently executive session notes are viewed by a small section of the board, primarily executive team. Reinforce the idea of people having their access to google drive removed as they move out of roles. Be mindful about if we are putting financial information on google drive that we wouldn't want published on a website. There may be old financial information from previous boards that has more detailed in it that needs to be encrypted and password protected
- Nathalie will send a reminder about service awards to congregation
- Marianne will work with Patrick around minister evaluation

Board Report: April 14, 2020
Rev. Sue Goodwin

Worship: I think our Worship Team has done a great job jumping into the thick of it all after social isolation began. We never missed a service and I think we grasped quickly what we heard from the UUA. The most important thing for congregants now is connection. People love seeing each other before and after service. They also need to be nurtured. I have tried to keep services simple (recommended), accessible and as free from tech glitches as possible. We've had tech challenges at times, and we also have moved through them. Nathalie ran our Easter Zoom service (very smoothly!) and was able to offer Break-Out Sessions after worship. I've gotten great feedback about them.

I am very proud of the fact that we began to use Zoom on March 15th and that we never put lives at risk.

Our Virtual Church: Programming continues with Virtual Church. Our many offerings are posted. I lead a Connection Circle at 2pm on Tuesday and Thursdays. That has gone well.

We are adding a new offering that Bob Alt has been kind enough to spearhead. This involves a Zoom circle for those who have been laid off and/or are seeking employment. Over time, I recommend adding a Zoom workshop for people who would qualify for government funds but may have difficulty applying. The economic health of our congregation is important to keep an eye on.

Caring Team/Lots of Helping Hands/Pastoral Care: By now, everyone is tired of all the restrictions. That said, many in our congregation are thriving. Folks are walking, cooking, singing, gardening and staying healthy. Those who are alone have it the hardest, I think. There is a "Call Team" in place that I am part of. We are calling each member of the congregation.

Transition: At this point, I am organizing my files to hand off and creating a detailed report to Rev. Kim that updates her on anything I need to share. I have a Zoom meeting with her on April 22nd.

I have received lovely emails and cards from congregants and I deeply appreciate all the kind words and sentiments. It has been a pleasure working at UUCWC.

Susan Irgang
Administrator BOT Report for April 2020
To Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World

Create Community

- At the last Board meeting on March 11, we discussed having an in-person service on 3/15 with no receiving line or fellowship hour. A “rapid response team” of staff, Worship Associate chairs, John Harvi (sound) and Marianne Alt decided on Thursday 3/12 to move forward with Zoom based services, in lieu of Facebook or YouTube live, as no one had technical experience with the latter options. Within 48 hours, we rapidly educated ourselves, and I set up web-based resources with the help of Lynne Quinto, sent notices to the congregation and Rev Sue, Caryl, Robin and Greg (with a n assist from Scott Cullen) presented the first UUCWC live-streamed service. Over the next few weeks, I researched and created Zoom resources, virtual plate procedures, re-scheduled most calendar entries to Zoom meetings, and tried to continue most church business.
- As we moved into “shelter in place”, I dealt with facilities issues to shut down the church building (reduced cleaning service to once a week, lowered thermostats, suspended garbage pick-up, replaced the outdoor signage). Having set up safe practices for handling of mail and sanitized use of the building, I continue to go to the church once a week to collect mail and drop checks at the Assistant Treasurer’s house so much needed deposits can continue as usual; I check the building and grounds, water the plants and monitor phone messages. All other work continues remotely.
- That work in the past month included continuance of bookkeeping, working on the office budgets as well as reviewing other areas with Mary Baltycki. I connected often with Mary who, through a herculean effort, simultaneously helped close the books for March, created budget numbers for the upcoming fiscal year as well as forecasting for the rest of the current fiscal year, and researched covid-19 financial relief programs; I served as a source of information and funneled resources to her but she did all the “lifting”. I also worked with Stewardship on completion of the pledge drive, reviewing outstanding pledges and expectations for next year, as well as provided continued training on the ICON system for the input of pledge information and issuance of statements. I worked with George Faulkner (Building) and Andrew Kidd (as a tech consultant) for a needed update of the Building Reserve Fund planning worksheets, which will impact budget considerations.
- I continue to work with the Sabbatical Team on pulpit supply, particularly when a scheduled substitute was no longer available; we tapped Minister Emeritus Charles Stephens to take that 4/19 Earth Day service. Additionally, the team discussed how to welcome back Rev. Kim back virtually, as well as how to support her in a healthy re-entry to a church system that is substantially different from the one she left just 4 short months ago.

Celebrate Life

- We currently have 290 members, 30 friends, 46 Participants and 21 Attendees. I have monitored our virtual services on Sundays as staff and in as a non-participatory presence to see what needs addressing and to take attendance. Rather than just counting the number of participants in the Zoom app, I scan the screens to count where there is more than one attendee in front of the camera. I am happy to share that our rough attendance has been between 174-183 adults, and we have seen people zooming in who have been unable to attend church otherwise. We have also heard from Betsy Young that visitors from the Dorothea Dix congregation have been attending as well. By comparison, these numbers are on average about 30% higher than adult attendance for a similar period in the prior year.
- Also, Robin reports 18 or so total children on average for her weekly children's chapels, which does not include the adults in the background. I do not know how many have been attending Nathalie Edmond's weekly meditation but it should be included in our totals of who we are reaching through weekly worships and meditations.

Change the (UUCWC) World

- Staff continues to meet weekly via Zoom to review past services, plan upcoming ones and discuss emerging issues both pastoral and systems related. We have had to be responsive to last minute changes in best practices in technology, security concerns, communications with the congregation, and other aspects of planning virtual worship for the foreseeable future. We will soon begin meeting virtually with Rev. Kim to help her reintegrate smoothly into church life after sabbatical. And there has been inevitably some amount of pastoral care in **all** our dealings with the congregation and each other. I share as information only that it has been a long stretch (since March 9th) since having a day that did not require my working or checking emails and responding to church related issues (ex., the last minute change to require Zoom meeting passwords that happened on Saturday, 4/4); other staff have been working without a break as well, and I am thankful for this supportive but small team. I am also grateful for all the extra time that has been needed from the Board and key committees (Worship Associates, Finance and Personnel in particular); we are making it through together.