

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
September 9, 2020

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Nathalie Edmond called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Sue Saddlemire; Treasurer, Jim Sanders; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Scribe, Michael Howe-Smith; Trustees: Michael Waas, Jamie Evanini, Patrick Kahney; Jeffrey Lang; Senior Minister, Rev. Kim Wildszewski; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; and DLFE, Robin Pugh. Also present for part of the meeting were Clare Doyle and Loren McAlister, representing the Right Relations Committee, and Mary Baltycki, Finance Committee Chair.

First Hour

Consent Agenda - **see appendix for complete reports.**

Discussion Related to Consent Agenda

- Reverend Kim and the Board discussed the general history and current status of the Nominating/Leadership Development Task Force to understand the group's purpose and how it fits into the Board's and church's larger mission and goals for the year. Key points included:
 - Growth Through Service (GTS) remains on hold. The Task Force, started this summer by the Board, includes the Nominating Committee and other leaders in the congregation – some of whom considered the GTS program. GTS is not omitted as an option; it is one of the programs being looked at while considering best practices in leadership development and our culture of leadership at UUCWC.
- There was also a high-level discussion around the book "Simple Church," in the context of thinking about the church's focus, process and priorities.
- More in-depth discussions of these themes and topics will take place during the Board retreat on 9/26/2020.

Treasurer's Report and Related Discussion

- Board Treasurer Jim Sanders reported that UUCWC continues to be in good financial shape overall despite some items of note including:
 - Pledge income was slower last month compared to August trends in previous years.
 - Members of the Finance Committee and church staff are continuing to research unexpected discrepancies in energy bills that occurred during the summer.

- Jim has not yet met with the Nominating/Leadership Development Task Force to discuss succession plans for the end of his term as treasurer.
- Board Trustee Jamie Evanini has been in contact with the Stewardship Committee to establish a relationship with them, as their Board Liaison.
- Board Trustee Michael Howe-Smith, as a Board Liaison to the Capital Campaign Committee, provided an update on the architect's search for a new mechanical engineer.
- Additional details can be referenced in the appendix.

Right Relations Committee: Discussion Around Police Language in UUCWC Policies

- As a follow-up to discussion at the August Board meeting related to two church policy documents that reference calling the police (Disruptive Behavior Policy and Removal of a Board Member Policy), the Board invited the Right Relations Committee (RRC), as owners of both policies, for consultation in light of the current national dialogue on policing. Clare Doyle and Loren McAlister attended on behalf of RRC. There was a detailed discussion of the topic; key points included:
 - The Board conveyed its intention to seek RRC's input without dictating policy changes.
 - Clare and Loren confirmed that RRC has already been in discussion and research around this issue.
 - Jamie Evanini shared resources and insights based on her research in this area, as well as how it reflects recent goals and actions outlined by the UUA.
 - Board Trustees including Michael Howe-Smith and Patrick Kahney, and Board Vice President Sue Saddlemire, raised questions and insights around potential ways to reframe the emergency escalation process without defaulting to calling the police as a first resort.
- The overall consensus was that this is a complex topic which goes beyond revising the policies in question; and that it deserves a deeper and broader conversation throughout the congregation to potentially explore and support a culture shift within the church.
- **There was a motion** to request that RRC change the policy language to de-emphasize calling the police, with a longer-term effort to hold listening circles throughout the congregation this year around calling the police. **The motion passed unanimously via zoom poll.**
- **ACTIONS:** RRC will begin drafting policy revisions, and Reverend Kim will talk to the Racial Justice Ministry team about next steps.
- Reverend Kim and the Board thanked Clare and Loren, who then left the meeting.

Second Hour

Refinancing Discussion

- Finance Committee Chair Mary Baltycki joined the meeting to discuss potential refinancing options based on current market conditions and Capital Campaign expenses.
- After researching options at multiple banks, Mary presented a proposal from Northfield Bank which she described as “clean and clear.” We have the option to refund our mortgage now (at current low rates) and take a 12-month interest-only construction loan. The construction loan will have a 6-month “no questions asked’ extension should construction suffer unforeseen delays. Upon completion of construction this loan may be wrapped into our mortgage at prevailing rates or converted to a separate loan on the building with terms matching those of the mortgage. We have the option of paying the loan down with monies raised from the Capital Campaign.
- Jim described an added benefit of moving to Northfield. Our existing bank offers no interest on our deposits. Moving to Northfield will reduce our current monthly mortgage payments and add a small income from interest received when our deposits are moved there.
- Mary and Jim affirmed that while Northfield Bank outlined various options with relative pros and cons, generally pursuing a refinancing plan with them presents benefits to UUCWC without substantial risks.
- **ACTION:** The bank requires a letter of intent from UUCWC for refinancing of the mortgage and construction loan and payment of a "good faith deposit" in the amount of \$3,500. **There was a motion to approve** authorizing Mary, along with Capital Campaign Chair George Faulkner, to proceed. **The motion passed unanimously via Zoom poll.**
- Future **actions** include passing a congregational resolution/affirmation to authorize the mortgage refinancing plan, and Nathalie signing the required bank documents.
- Reverend Kim and the Board thanked Mary, who then left the meeting.

Additional Discussion

- The Board resumed discussion of earlier topics and themes around essential ministry for this year, the nominating/leadership process, and the need to center community and connection, with continued discussion to take place at the Board retreat.
- The Board may consider a standing agenda item to check in on leadership development within the church.
- Reverend Kim thanked Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang and Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement, Robin Pugh for their ongoing efforts on behalf of the congregation, especially considering unprecedented challenges and evolving roles and duties.
- Nathalie thanked Board Trustee Jeffrey Lang for his work as a member of the Safe Congregation team.

Housekeeping and Other Action Items

- The Board deferred discussion of a proposal regarding technical support to next month's meeting.
- Nathalie, Jamie and Jim agreed to attend the Board chat on 9/13.
- There is a Council meeting on 10/20.

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff, Executive Team, and Treasurer Reports

Minister's Board Report
September 2020
Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Create Community

The newest Worship Associates have completed two virtual retreats this past month; the first focused on the why of worship, the second focused on the technical aspects. We've met one additional time for a regular meeting and also clarified our responsibilities if or when there is a disruption to the service due to inappropriate behavior.

By way of Nancy Neff, the Worship Tech Team also has protocol for how to interrupt and respond to disruption on the technical side of things. The Worship Associates and Worship Tech Team are now part of a larger Worship Leader Ministry.

Working with the tech leaders and tech side of things has been a significant portion of my work this last month.

This past month I had the opportunity to "guest preach" (record all elements for editing and distribution) for the Lincroft UU congregation. They use YouTube to hold their services, making them live on Saturday evening and then hold a live Zoom coffee hour on Sunday at 10:30. Very different from UUCWC! (Very unfulfilling for me!)

Robin, Caryl and I are working on our annual Water Ingathering service (this Sunday), and working to make a service based on coming and mingling together meaningful, ritualized, and purposeful even in this time.

I'm working with Robin on reimaging the membership process for virtual time and after.

FYI: I will only be preaching twice in October rather than three; respectfully, I cannot lead for our All Soul's Sunday (the 24th) this year. On October 4th we will join UUs from around the country to celebrate Universalism's Sestercentennial by way of the First Universalist Church in Minneapolis. Rev. Justin Schroeder will preach. It will be at 11am Eastern time.

In November, I will be leading four Sundays consecutively in a five Sunday Presidential election month.

Celebrate Life

In these last four weeks, Pastoral Care has included companioning people in times of death, divorce, anxiety, disconnection, reconnection, substance abuse and financial distress.

I led my first wedding via zoom and am preparing for an in-person distanced wedding in early October.

Change the World

I have meetings scheduled with both my coach and a UUA affiliate to discuss personnel changes, specifically around the Congregational Administrative role and Robin's current hybrid focus on religious education and congregational life.

I met with Andrew Kidd to catch up on Stewardship outcomes and needed follow ups. Letters from me will be sent out in the coming weeks to close the gap on payment from last year and for pledges for this current year.

I met again with the Leadership Development Task Force where purposeful, thoughtful, visionary – and hard -- conversations are being had about church, UUism, and UUCWC. I joined in the recent Racial Justice Ministry meeting and helped imagine their ministry for the upcoming season. We (UUCWC) will be reaching out to the Scotch Plains UU congregation for mentoring on the adoption of the 8th Principle.

I also met with the Right Relations Committee who are working on covenanting work with other committees and ministries, but also internal work on their purpose and modeling of right relations within their own ministry team.

This month I begin a twice monthly book read and reflection with white female colleagues on the text *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem. We will be working on this text through March 2021.

I am signed up to participate in the Collective Trauma Summit from September 22 - October 1, 2020. Though I purchased the ability to watch recordings of the presentations at any point, I will be taking some of the latter week as study leave to give attention to this work.

Wishing you all health in body and spirit. Blessings especially to our parents, teachers and all others who are making this upcoming school year what it will be.

Susan Irgang
Administrator BOT Report for September 2020

To Create Community, Celebrate Life, and Change the World

Create Community

I continue to meet virtually with the workgroup of fellow UU Administrators to create a template of a Communications Strategy Plan, to be shared by other congregations as well as be customized to our specific needs. I will bring this plan to our Communications Team for review, adapting and implementation.

Lynne Quinto and I have begun a project to update the church website with newer images, potential changes to layout, and finding pages that need updates. This is a large undertaking and hasn't been done since the "new website" went live several years ago. We are using a UUA template in WordPress so are also limited in what can be changed. We anticipate that this will be more of a "chipping away at it" process than a "once and done" overhaul due to time and people-power constraints. Our goal is to create a more inviting and fresher look for the existing website, especially during COVID closure, for visitors as well as members.

Susan Vigilante and I met with Shila Griffith of 23 Design, the interior design firm owned by a person of color, that has been contracted for interior design work on the Capital Project; we gave her a tour and discussed needs. Shila will be giving a design presentation on Sept. 8th. I look forward to seeing her ideas for our new spaces. In other Capital Campaign news, it appears we may not have to upgrade our electrical service, based on an on-site visit by PSE&G engineers who met with George Faulkner and Steve Saddlemire. This will help the overall costs and scheduling, though a needed change in the MEP (Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing) engineer will impact timelines.

I worked with the Worship Tech team to create a dedicated Zoom account for Sunday services; this will help maintain the account settings for security that might conflict with the broader usage that the main church account needs for multiple users. September 6th will be the beginning of the transition to the new account. We will continue to work together to create processes for handling of recordings that are edited by Ed Dobrowolski and then uploaded to the website as podcasts.

Celebrate Life

Our numbers are 288 members, 28 friends, 45 Participants and 20 Attendees.

Attendance continued to be strong in August, up over 25% compared to the same 4-week period last year, with significantly higher attendance on Sundays with Rev. Kim. In July, I added a link to Sunday worship direct from our website (no church email

needed) using a URL shortening code to prevent zoom-bombing. To date we have had 66 clicks total, and an average of 8 clicks each Sunday in August.

Change the (UUCWC) World

The Reopening Task Force will be meeting again soon to discuss what requirements might be needed for indoor use when the decision is made to reopen. There are a number of factors to consider from requirements to signage, sanitization, air ventilation/exhaust, bathroom use, etc. It should be noted that this is not a recommendation on reopening, but rather identifying what would need to be in place for when we reopen at some future date, and is in part a response to recent requests for use. Currently the building remains closed to all except staff, for maintenance work or for Sunday worship related activities.

Bookkeeping work continues, with some deep research projects reconciling various databases related to the Capital Campaign. I also continue to make needed arrangements and be at the church at least once a week for mail processing, oversight of repairs or maintenance by outside vendors, and checking the security of the building.

I was on vacation for the last two weeks in August, and greatly enjoyed the respite, despite COVID restrictions. Thanks to Connie Schofer and Lynne Quinto for coverage of mail handling and release/updates of regular weekly emails that were set up in advance.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski
From: Robin Pugh
Date: Sept. 8, 2020
Re: Monthly DRE Report _____

Create Community:

- I am taking visitor attendance at Sunday Worship. We have 11 visitors, that are regularly attending. Kim created a new path to membership that includes Roots and Wings and adds time with the minister to compensate for our virtual world. These programs begin in late September.
- Susan and I are working together to create a system for administration of visitor data.
- I've been working with Marcia Wittman to create virtual Faith Forward. It will start this week.
- I'm monitoring UUCWC participation with families and will report on it next month. Faith Engagement Registration started a few days ago. As I've mentioned in earlier reports, engagement by families during the pandemic has not been what it was when we were meeting physically. I believe this is because the expectations and pressure on parents during COVID are overwhelming.

Celebrate Life:

- After consulting with Kim and other religious educators, our fall virtual children's faith engagement program is reimagined to accommodate zoomed out children and overwhelmed parents. For families with children ages 3-10, there will be family chalice circles with 2 other families to be held at a mutually convenient day and time weekly. The goal is to strengthen connections between UUCWC families and to help parents' model being a UU at home.
- Children ages 11-13 will be in virtual junior youth group. A non-curriculum time for connecting and reflecting on the theme in various modalities.
- I'm getting pressure from parents of 9th-10th graders to complete the remaining 5 sessions of OWL from last spring. The UUA is adamant that we cannot do the OWL curriculum on line. However, they also provide suggestions for drafting an online program in case congregations decide to do OWL anyway. Congregations cannot call it OWL. I am dancing the strange dance required by the UUA. If the OWL facilitators agree, we will rewrite the last 5 sessions of OWL using UUA guidelines. And offer sex ed virtually in October to the 9th and 10th graders. When sex ed is completed, this class will start a reimagined virtual Coming of Age, which I am in the process of rewriting with other DRE's.

Change the World

- Under the philosophy of "Simple Church", Adult Faith Engagement has streamlined and focused their offerings this fall to small group ministry and racial justice.
- Beloved Conversations has been revamped entirely and is a brand-new program, designed and intended for online participation with vastly improved new features. It

is now for individual participation and is run through the Fahs Collaborative (not through UUCWC). It is expensive (\$150 per person). Because we believe this is an excellent program and are committed to bringing people further along their path to beloved community, ARE will offer partial scholarships to members interested in taking the class. (using the money budgeted for Beloved Conversations this year)

- I am working with the other chalice circle facilitators to ready the groups to accommodate new people. I reached out to 50 people who I thought might be interested in a small group, especially during the pandemic.
- I switched chalice circle groups with the facilitators because of unhealthy behavior within one of the groups. I am teaching the group what it means to stay in covenant after trust has been broken. This group was becoming a personal support group and had strayed from doing the work of a chalice circle.

Treasurer NOTES - September, 2010 August Reconciliation

General Notes:

The Treasurer took on more activity at end of month, as I took it upon myself to do the PayPal entry into the ICON database. Besides the sheer volume that is now coming in via PayPal, I have had great difficulty determining whether members and friends are making a plate donation (most often on Sunday - but other days too - or making a pledge payment).

One very glaring issue with PayPal is that unless someone literally fills in the memo field their intention, it is difficult to determine how to allocate a gift. I am sure that I and Stewardship will hear back from people after the fact. LESSON: Find a way to communicate to everyone how to post a gift in PayPal moving forward.

I participated in the phone call with Northfield Bank, that Mary/Finance will review at the meeting, but it is my opinion to move forward with the Re-Fi of our existing mortgage, with an eye on moving our day to day banking to Northfield.

I have not yet spoken to Leadership Development about my replacement.

THE NUMBERS:

August:

We ended August with an \$8,431.49 deficit for the month. Our expenses were at 89% of budget, but our income was at 61.5%, mostly due to pledges coming in at half of budgeted amount for what is historically the slowest collections month. While programs remain at a substantial savings (37% of budget), operations continues to be high, at 83% of budget due to electricity being 40% above historical average. Like last month, this is an item to review with facilities and with Susan I.

Year to date:

The two months Net income is \$1,911.31 on a budgeted net income of \$4,037.

The two big take-aways: pledges are off by 22% for the year to date BUT with savings on the Expense side, we are very close to our budgeted target for the summer.

Bank Account Balances:

\$10,524.23 increase over July, includes \$67,680 in Capital Campaign receipts.

Total cash exclusive of capital covers 8 ½ months at full capacity

Total cash less restricted cash reserves covers 6 ½ months at full capacity.

The financial state of UUCWC is sound.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Sanders
Treasurer, UUCWC