

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
March 10, 2021

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Nathalie Edmond called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Sue Saddlemire; Treasurer, Jim Sanders; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Scribe, Michael Howe-Smith; Trustees: Jeffrey Lang, Michael Waas, Jamie Evanini, Patrick Kahney; Senior Minister, Rev. Kim Wildszewski; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; and DLFE, Robin Pugh. Also present were Regina Podhorin-Zilinski on behalf of the Racial Justice Ministry, and Marty Friedman to discuss the Facilities Reserve Spreadsheet.

First Hour

Consent Agenda - see appendix for complete reports.

Rev. Kim Wildszewski discussed the new path to membership classes and impressions from participants.

- As part of an ongoing generational trend, some individuals demonstrate more hesitancy about signing the book or becoming a full member.
- This reflects a larger ongoing discussion that has come up as UUism and UUCWC have evolved. It's anticipated to be a subject of further conversation as ideas of membership, leadership and participation become more fluid.

Treasurer's Report and Related Discussion

- Treasurer Jim Sanders provided a summary of current finances; finances continue to be strong, with a healthy surplus.
- Jim provided Finance Committee updates on the progress of the bookkeeper transition, upcoming preparations for the next fiscal year budget preparation (including potential reopening timeline, construction considerations, allocation requests from ministries and committees, etc.)
- Board and staff discussed interplaying unknowns due to pandemic, Capital Campaign, construction timing, etc.

Facilities Update on Maintenance and Repair Timeline

- Marty Friedman arrived at 7:30 p.m., representing a team of church volunteers with prior Facilities experience who consult on the Facilities Reserve Spreadsheet. He presented a detailed outline that has been prepared and maintained by the team, which outlines recommended maintenance and repair items and provides related timing and cost estimates.

- Marty provided some history of how this process has evolved over the past several years, as a result of a shift toward being proactive (vs. being caught unprepared to deal with costly repairs).
- This involved a change from restricted funds to unrestricted funds with a goal of building up a reserve. The understanding is that the money can only be used for the identified items. Responding to a question from Board Trustee Patrick Kahney, Marty said the practical effect of this approach is to ensure money is always available for maintenance of our property and is protected from spending on other items.
- Marty outlined how the information is owned and maintained, emphasizing the idea that recent efforts have focused on making clear plans for ensuring that the information can be transferred easily when committee leadership changes (this relates to the Board practice of preserving institutional wisdom).
- The Board and Marty discussed the timing of upcoming expenses and whether they will impact the upcoming fiscal year; there is some flexibility in the process from year to year, since the projections are designed with a “cushion” built in, with funds carrying forward.
- Reverend Kim and Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang emphasized their appreciation for the thoughtful, intentional and impassioned work put forth by the team, which reflects not only stewardship of the church’s present but also its future.
- Members expressed their approval of the system presented by Marty. The budget should continue to include this Facilities data.
- The Board thanked Marty and he left the meeting.

Second Hour

Racial Justice Ministry (RJM) Update

Regina Podhorin-Zilinski arrived at 8 p.m. to provide an update on RJM’s projected work plan for the coming year. Key points included:

- The role of RJM as an accountability body aligned with Simple Church principles, focused not so much on implementing new programs as much as ensuring that racial justice work is integrated into the work and culture of the congregation
- The goal of moving congregants from awareness to activism, and how RJM can support groups and individuals to do so (e.g. through restorative work, adult education and collaboration with other congregations)
- RJM’s plans to strengthen the 8th Principle as part of the inherent fabric of our congregation, including:
 - Reviewing policies (e.g. including but not limited to policies around calling the police) and their impact, including using listening circles
 - Supporting church leaders in setting standards for accountability
 - Collaborating with UU Princeton
 - Centering the voices of people of color in our church spaces by budgeting for and hiring guest speakers (e.g. transitioning from working with FEET on an ad hoc basis to making this a formal budget line item, reflecting its status as part of UUCWC’s mission)
 - Discussing the 8th Principle “early and often” during the path to membership process

- Establishing a standing Council Meeting agenda item
- Serving as resource for other congregations seeking to adopt the 8th Principle
- Board and staff were very appreciative of Regina and RJM's goals, and how they're related to Board practices on decentering whiteness. It was agreed that both groups should ensure we're aligned and taking full advantage of the ongoing conversations in both spaces. Regina indicated that RJM would continue to seek Board input on policy and procedure recommendations.
- Regina closed by saying there are seven people in her group and we should make room for more.
- The Board thanked Regina and she left the meeting.

Board Check-in Related to Policies and Procedures

Board President Nathalie Edmond led a discussion on the overall scope of Board goals related to policy and procedure updates. Key items included:

- Last year Nathalie submitted an endowment grant to create a pilot Wiki page to house policies and procedures based on a project initiated by John Ueng-McHale during his tenure as secretary. The money was never used since the Wiki page became a "parking lot item." The Board agreed that the money should be released back to Endowment at this time. **ACTION:** Nathalie will facilitate this process.
- A policy around "the journey of a gift" needs to be created. **ACTION:** Jim will bring this to request to Finance.
- There was general discussion of budget planning and using a "one church, one budget" strategy with less line items and restricted funds. Finance is trying to shift in that direction but it's still an ongoing process; in the short term they are seeking ways to make the budget more flexible. **ACTION:** The Board will need to close discussion on some ongoing financial items next month, with input/recommendations from staff.

Review/Vote on 2 Revised Policies

Board Secretary Colleen McCourt presented 2 policies that were recently revised by relevant owners:

- Council for Faith in Action (CFA) Faith Expression Funding Team (FEFT) Public Expression Policy: recently revised by CFA FEFT to be aligned with Communications Committee policy
- Congregant Privacy Policy: recently revised by Finance Committee in response to administrative changes and recommendations made by the Board earlier this year
- **There was a motion to approve** the revised policies; it passed unanimously via Zoom poll.

Discussion of Board Process Questions

- Nathalie, Reverend Kim, Board and staff discussed questions around decision-making and the roles of various stakeholders, including concepts of authority, oversight responsibility and ownership in a covenanting organization, and how they are reflected in our congregational culture through communication and give and take. Rev. Kim described how authority, responsibility and accountability are distributed and hierarchical control is minimized.
- The discussion included conversation about bylaws and financial considerations, the role of Board/Committee liaisons, and Vice President Sue Saddle mire's ongoing efforts to compile and centralize comprehensive onboarding resources and FAQs for new Board members. **ACTION:** Sue has requested that members submit questions or recommendations on topics that should be included in the onboarding guide.

Housekeeping and Other Action Items

- Sue and Rev. Kim will write the CrossCurrents article for April. Nathalie will write the article for May.
- Michael Waas, Jamie and Nathalie will represent the Board on 3/21 for the Leadership/Nominating Committee's "Expected the Unexpected" session.
- In April, there will be 2 Board meetings; the second will be on 4/21.
- Rev. Kim confirmed her parental leave will begin May 3. She will return July 19.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff, Executive Board and Treasurer Reports

Minister's Board Report

March 2021

Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

This past week we benefited again from the UUA's leadership and resources with the gift of a third full service to use for my Sunday off. I have not yet looked into it but there may also be a fourth service from the Trauma Response Ministry at the UUA, marking the year of closures. I hope - and believe - that UUCWC has felt the tangible impact of our denominational support this year; it is so easy to forget what it means to be a member congregation.

This upcoming Sunday we mark the one year anniversary of not being able to be together in person due to Covid. The last Sunday in March (with the theme of Commitment) I am preaching on our candle of Fellowship that addresses accessibility, and speaking about why and how we've changed the language.

In anticipation of Malcolm's birthday (4/2), I will be pre-recording my Easter sermon but not present on that Sunday. This gives me the mental health space and also allows us to try our hand at pre-recorded services from / with our own people.

Pastoral Care has recently highlighted job loss; tense relationships between adults and young adult children; and continues to shine a light on the mental health challenges among our adults and children alike.

Create Community (Small Groups)

This month the first pilot path to membership concluded with 8 new members to the UUCWC community. 4 others completed the path to membership but due to different life circumstances and discernment, were not able to, or chose not to, sign at this time.

The second offering of the Path to Membership begins on the 22nd (originally scheduled for March 1st but moved for participant availability). There are 8 people signed up at this time.

One reflection shared by a young (20-something) participant is that the language of membership and signing the book is a block to participating in the classes or considering long term commitment namely to an organized religion. This is not surprising and though we've tried to be proactive about addressing this, this is a good reminder of the urgency for communication

changes. I invite you to recall our conversations in the fall about dreaming how we might be rid of membership altogether.

Please see Robin's report that speaks of how we are surveying the families on what religious education and faith engagement might look like next year.

Change the World (Serve)

Last week I led the Worship Tech Team in a 2 hour covenanting and visioning meeting and did the same for our Worship Associates. I have included both of their draft covenants at the end of this document. Working with groups in this way has deeply clarified how I can best minister to our leaders.

Next week I lead a training for the new Pastoral Care Ministry team. The team has recently gained new members to the ministry team after holding a zoom meeting after church; nominating is looking to replicate this inquiry and recruitment structure.

I helped Sue Saddlemire prepare for and run the Council meeting which was packed with information and overall reflected the health of the congregation. I hope it also celebrated our leaders and how we've navigated this year.

I led the Council for Faith in Action quarterly meeting wherein we discussed the overwhelming nature of all we do and how to better communicate and invite in new and long term members. To note, there is burn out in some of these groups and I am trying to remind everyone that rest honors the work that they've accomplished.

I participated in the re-opening team meeting and, as you know, we moved to allow Food Ministry to gather in the Crossings Room to do their work with very strict guidelines and because of the very particular nature of their work --- in service to vulnerable populations, not able to be done by zoom, etc.

The Search / Support Committee for the Leave Minister has interviewed two candidates. We hope to hire in the next few weeks and the position will begin April 26th for onboarding and introduction to the congregation with me on May 2nd.

I'm working with the staff to think about how this leave will be different based on lessons learned and also expectations of the minister and time away. I will be emphasizing the use of our ministry and committee teams (rather than the search / support committee) to help fill any areas the minister is not responsible for.

I am writing the Auction letter now and will also prepare an Executive Report for the Annual Meeting before my leave begins.

Draft Ministry Covenants

Worship Tech Ministry Team:

We covenant, we promise:

To recognize ourselves as a ministry,

By beginning our work in recognition of others and their personhood not just their task;
By offering words of intention, lighting a chalice, or taking a deep breath together

To be generous with one another and ourselves

By leaving space for different kinds of processing and participating
By valuing different skill levels and offering help, guidance or resources to others in need
By knowing our limitations as markers of being human
By supporting each other's efficacy and autonomy through mentoring and teaching rather than always doing.

To respect each other's time and needs

By striving to be on time to meetings and showing up prepared,
By communicating tasks, expectations, and information to set each up for comfort,
Confidence and success
By being present and invested in the time we share
By naming time and energy boundaries and honoring those of others'

To communicate in ways that promote trust, relationship and respect

By valuing the other and their experiences, as much as our own
By being mindful of our tone in written and verbal communication, while inquiring about the tone of others' when necessary

To take our work seriously and ourselves gently

By reminding ourselves and one another that we are all (congregation and ministry team) in this together.
By reminding ourselves and one another that connection, not perfection, is the goal.
By allowing space for, and encouraging, joy, silliness and fun

Worship Associate Ministry

We covenant - we promise -

To respect one another's time and energy

By being engaged in our meetings and minimizing distraction
By clearly communicating expectations and honoring our responsibilities
By allowing conversations to end after a decision has been made
By giving each other space to express ourselves, and grow by the diversity of expression.
By engaging our work as a ministry rather than a list of tasks

To invite and receive authentic relationship

By exploring and articulating what we need in order to feel valued and

by receiving the truth of what another needs, though it may be different than our own.

By inviting uncomfortable conversations when a relationship needs attention or repair

By being honest and forthright about our feelings and receiving with curiosity and affirmation the honesty of others

By recognizing interlocking systems of power; we cannot fully speak to someone else's experience.

By participating in tough questions and acknowledging that we may not have the right or only answer

To take our work seriously and ourselves gently

By being generous in supporting one another with resources, information and support so that we all feel comfortable, confident, and prepared.

By reminding ourselves and one another that we are all (congregation and ministry team) in this together.

By reminding ourselves and one another that connection, not perfection, is the goal.

By allowing space for, and encouraging, joy, silliness and fun

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for March 2021

Create Community

The Communications Team will use budgeted funds to bring in a website consultant to review our site, suggest plugins that may help maintain the site, and provide training on website updates and maintenance. A work group within the committee is drafting updates to the main page, following the Simple Church concept, simpler navigation, etc.; staff has been instrumental in making the website pages match other's messaging. We hope to move on engagement of the consultant and begin updates in March/April.

In the past month I worked with various groups such as Stewardship, Endowment, Auction and Congregational Engagement to get their projects launched, publicized and prominent in the congregation's attention. There is an inherent challenge in this as many initiatives' timelines overlap; at the same time people are suffering from information fatigue.

Celebrate Life

With the signing of eight new members, our membership is now at 281 Church Members, 26 Friends, 43 Participants and 27 Attendees.

Change the (UUCWC) World

I participated in two follow-up discussions of financial roles and next steps for a Fiduciary team. Mary Baltycki and I worked out a plan for transition of various bookkeeping and assistant treasurer duties now and in upcoming months; this training and review will allow for a staged but full transfer of responsibilities by July 1; below* is an abbreviated summary. Additionally, another at-large member has been recruited for the Finance Team, and on 3/14 Finance will present in the "after services" meeting to further engage interest. The group also discussed future projects that will improve systems, such as documenting procedures, security, signatories for accounts, etc. Additional information can be provided on request.

I met with George Faulkner, Marty Friedman, Andrew Kidd and Steve Saddlemire for a review of the Facilities Reserve Fund spreadsheet. The updated document will now be maintained by me as Facilities Management Team coordinator/staff for consistency and continuity. This group and other stakeholders (future Building and Grounds chairs) will meet twice a year to review and update this living document/

planning tool. Marty Friedman will represent the group at this upcoming Board meeting to review the spreadsheet which is available in the pre-reads.

I met with the MJ Hansen, John Harvi, Andrew Kidd, Joe Schenk and others about new equipment for the Sanctuary, assigning/reviewing existing computer equipment, consideration of hired consulting and support help, etc. The Sanctuary A/V equipment upgrade began as part of the Capital Campaign project, but is now in Operations, as part of a newly forming Information Technology (IT) team (replacing a Tech Team which has been vacant of leadership or members since 2018). The result will be improved streaming capabilities and an improved network in the future.

I attended a Benefits Tune-Up Workshop offered by the UUA. Each year they offer a worksheet and an accompanying workshop to review best practices and considerations for benefits offered to employees. Following the workshop, I consulted with Scott Drew with questions about documentation, our practices and processes to ensure compliance with benefits agreements and will create a written process for use by Personnel as well as current and future staff.

I met with the Reopening Team; details of the results are in Rev. Kim's report.

Summary of transition of duties

Moving before 7/1: Reconciliation of accounts, Payment of vendors and expense reimburs.; recording of payroll, request from committees (After April 1)	Moving after 7/1: SRECS, PayPal, prepping/recording deposits in ICON
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To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: March 8, 2021

Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- We continue to have visitors come every week to services. We've had 31 visitors in the last 3 months. Of those visitors, 10 have come to services at least 4 times. I've had email discussions with most of them. The next "Path to Membership" class starts on March 22nd. So far 8 have signed up. I am still in discussion with several people about the class. The reflection shared by a young adult visitor about membership in Kim's report was told to me when I followed up with her about taking the Path To Membership class.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- Kim and I are beginning to plan for the children's program next year. It is challenging to do when reopening plans are not certain. I am soliciting feedback from our current Family offerings to find out what was valuable this year (What to keep). I will also be polling all our adult members with children to find out what they hope to see in our children's program when their kids returning to Church this month. Kim and I are also holding a parent meeting to discuss next year on April 8th. I am open to redesigning our program for kids under 11 based on what Kim and I learned this year and I will listen to parents if they prefer to return to the way the children's program has been (individual classes every week with volunteer teachers).
- I am starting our 8th chalice circle this month. This continues to be a ministry that our members are seeking during the pandemic. Last year we had 3 circles with 22 people. This year we are starting our 8th circle with 62 people (more than 20% of the congregation). And numerical growth is good but what we're really aiming for is measurement of a different kind. With the growth of chalice circles, we have more people forming deep connections with one another. And more people understanding and experiencing what it means to be a covenantal community. An important part of being a Unitarian Universalist.
- I recruited 7 new facilitators for chalice circles. They will be oriented in the chalice circles method this month. Each facilitator will watch me lead 2 sessions and I will observe them lead 2 before I leave the group. My plan is to transition out of co-facilitating by Summer.

Executive Team Minutes 3/1/21

Present: Nathalie Edmond, Jim Sanders, Colleen McCourt, Sue Saddlemire, Rev. Kim Wildszewski

- Discussed how to onboard new board members so they have enough knowledge to feel that they understand bylaws, 7 board practices, governance model, how minister and board share power as well as how committees report to board and ministries report to minister. Discussed questions board members have that they may not ask and how to create a culture where someone asks and there is more participation by board members even in their first year. Sue Saddlemire continues to compile orientation materials to help with this process. Also discussed how each board is different than the previous one based on the leadership on the board and what the board is focused on.
- Maria Baratta has been asked to consider being board president and she is strongly considering it. Nathalie, Rev. Kim, and Nominating have spoken to her.
- Discussed the growing pains and accomplishments of Nominating committee and leadership development task force. The new nominating name has not been approved yet though it was announced at Council meeting. Leadership development task force should come to second board meeting in April to share their recommendations. Nathalie to have Patrick Kahney (board liaison) reach out to them.
- There are some policies the Board needs to approve at next meeting. We need to determine if there are other policies we want updated or created this year which is ongoing journey since the new bylaws took effect in 2019.
- Colleen created notes from the Finance next steps meeting. There is a subcommittee meeting to continue the process.
- Jim will check in with Capital team for an update.
- We discussed if we are moving closer to one mission one budget.

Treasurers Summary to February 2021 Financial Snapshot

MONTH OF FEB:

Financially, the church remains in a good fiscal position. While the month of February, budgeted at a slight deficit for the month, income and expenses were tracking very close to our budget. We ended the month with a \$5,781 deficit, but had a budgeted deficit for the month of \$11,121. So we actually came in \$5,340 over our budget.

All expenses and income lines were running at anticipated levels. While we are not in the building, we are not seeing any reductions in our utilities due to a combination of increased electrical rates for the current year and the lower impact of Sunday openings on the actual facility - It is good to note that taking care of any building as if it were being occupied reduces the potential of mold.

Our conversion over to Northfield Bank is complete and I closed our Oceans' First accounts this month.

July to February Year to Date:

Our income lines remain strong for the 8 months, and it seems that pledge collections is running at 98% of budget. Plate is 2% above budget as well.

While we end the eight months with a surplus of revenue \$43,391 ahead of budget, we are reminded that this would be \$30,000 less if the PPP loan that paid for our staffing in 2020 was not converted to a grant. That being said, our income leaves us in a strong position for the year.

On the expense side, once again, we have not been impacted by several normally large expenses: snow removal, copier lease, program costs. Our expenses to date is running at 90% of budget, saving us roughly \$33,000, the equivalent of a month's worth of expenses (for current year only).

BOTTOM LINE

While we budgeted the year to date at a loss of \$10,207, we are ending the 8 months with a surplus of \$66,643 (or \$76,850 ahead of budget - roughly the equivalent of 2 months of operations)

CASH

We have cash, as seen in the summary report attached that can cover 6.5 months of normal operations - this is our cushion. Finance is working to consolidate much of the restricted funds moving forward.

NOTE: While our income has exceeded our expenses for this year to date, Finance will be weighing some known increased costs for 2022, that could be impacted by any cash that is carried over into the new fiscal - these include but not limited to staffing, CDC health needs for

reopening, ongoing technology beyond current work on short term capital improvements, and needs during future construction - i.e. construction dust clean-up etc.

TREASURER TRANSITION:

I have worked with Mary and Susan has worked diligently with Mary to create working transition of duties as we move to the new July 1 Fiscal year.

Several meetings were held this month to clarify and direct us to a smooth transition, one that can handle any new paradigm that we may be able to create. All stakeholders, from Board, Finance, Administration and Personnel were a part of the early talks and the details will be presented to the Board at a future date.

I look forward to transitioning my tasks and files to Joe Schenk, the incoming Treasurer.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sanders, Interim Treasurer
March 9, 2021