

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED

April 21, 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 Marianne Alt and Sandy Muccioli representing the Leadership Development/Nominating Task Force and Jayme Trott representing the Capital Campaign Committee.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

Brief discussion related to monthly reports, including:

- **Minister's Report** (see appendix for details):
 - There was discussion to clarify authority regarding the contract minister in Rev. Kim Wildszewski's absence; there was a proposal to follow precedent, with support and authority shared by staff and Board as needed. **There was a pulse check** which passed unanimously. As a member of the search committee who hired Rev. yadenee hailu, Board Vice President Sue Saddlmire also agreed to remain on the Board through July to provide consistency during the transition.
 - Similar discussion took place regarding the potential hiring of a worship technician, and how that role would be supported/supervised in Rev. Kim's absence. Board President Nathalie Edmond recommended that the person report to church staff (more specifically Robin Pugh) with escalation to the Board for support or assistance as needed. This recommendation received consensus agreement.
- **Congregational Administrator's report**
 - Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang noted that during Mary Baltycki's transitioning into the bookkeeper role, there is still overlap on requests coming to Susan. In the short term, Susan will redirect people on an ad hoc basis, and there will be a wider announcement of Mary's role as the interim bookkeeper at the Annual Meeting.

- **Treasurer's Report:**
 - Board Treasurer Jim Sanders brought the Board's attention to updated budget materials; there was brief high-level discussion of revenues, expenses, reopening and staffing factors.

Update on Reopening Survey to Congregation

The Board discussed the draft survey created by Trustee Michael Waas, Board liaison to the Reopening Task Force.

- There was general agreement that the draft is a great start, with minor wording changes suggested.
- Rev. Kim and the Board affirmed that we should include a pastoral message conveying the intention of making people feel heard and honoring their feedback while balancing safety and inclusivity considerations.
- **ACTIONS:** Michael will distribute revised draft and will send it to the Reopening Task Force as a test audience. Rev. Kim and Susan indicated that there are also UUA resources we can leverage, and Rev. Kim will obtain spots for Board members to accompany staff to a UUA training in August so that as a group we can be informed and prepared.

Har Sinai Temple Rental

Susan provided an overview of a proposal from a local temple to rent space from UUCWC. Upon meeting with their team, it was apparent that they are looking to rent worship, office and storage space. Key discussion points included:

- The general impression is that a limited rental arrangement is worth pursuing but a situation where both parties share all-inclusive building space may not be feasible or sustainable.
- Rental rates should be reviewed to ensure they reflect current expenses. Expenses arising from a long-term rental arrangement would need to be explored and planned for.
- **There was a pulse check** to gauge whether Susan should continue pursuing discussions, and it passed unanimously. **ACTION:** Susan will have further talks with Har Sinai's team and provide an update at the next Board meeting.

Second Hour

Nominating/Leadership Development Task Force Update

Marianne Alt and Sandy Muccioli arrived to discuss the upcoming slate and provide a general status update and recommendations based on the task force's work over the past year. Key points included:

- The task force recommends changing the name of the Nominating Committee to Congregational Engagement Committee, which is aligned more with purpose and Simple Church mission-based framework. They also recommend structuring the committee as a core group with shared leadership, training and support. Related recommendations include:

- Cross-committee training and communication
- Training interviewers
- Creating and maintaining a searchable database of potential candidates - discussed how it is similar and different to Growth through Service database, and how it would integrate with current church systems
- A retreat for people cycling out of leadership roles and back into small groups
- The task force reviewed their goals and progress, and their alignment with the church bylaws and Simple Church philosophy and goals.
- The task force reviewed the slate for the upcoming annual meeting, which is mostly full, and identified open areas, and nuances of potentially conflicting roles (e.g. executive board members serving in financial endowment roles, etc.).
- There was general discussion regarding the challenges in filling specific roles (specifically finance-related roles), but overall recognition that the team has made excellent progress in delivering a near-completed slate ahead of schedule, and notwithstanding the challenges of the pandemic.
- Discussion included the fact that certain types of groups/functions would benefit from a broader range of perspectives, going beyond a financial or business-type focus to reflect a spiritual focus and growth mindset as well; the general concept is to empower groups to consider the needs of the congregation in a holistic, mission-based way, not a corporate one.

Nathalie thanked the task force members for their thoughtful work and they left the meeting.

Capital Campaign Update

Jayne Trott attended the meeting to provide an update on Capital Campaign plans, specifically related to ongoing bid adjustments designed to reduce higher-than-expected costs from the initial round of proposals. Key points included:

- Volunteers including Farzad Shadzik , Bob Busch, Mary Baltycki and Steve Saddlemire have all worked to provide input and develop revised bid sheets, re-engage contractors as well as engaging new contractors and subcontractors, etc. - all designed to investigate all possible options for reducing costs. New bids will be ready for review soon and will hopefully be within the proposed budget.
- Farzad has done great work interfacing with contractors and has worked to bring down proposed HVAC costs.
- Other small incremental revisions (such as removing stonework, consolidating storage space, using an enclosed lift as an elevator alternative) are designed to provide a smaller footprint and decrease construction costs.
- The Committee is starting to review options for a third round of fundraising. The Board discussed potential implications and messaging to the congregation.
- **ACTION:** Jayme will provide the Board with a concrete summary of relevant figures to enable a more specific and informed discussion of budgeted costs in relation to fundraising targets, mortgage and loan costs, shortfalls, etc.

- Rev. Kim and Nathalie thanked Jayme for the Committee's ongoing hard work and she left the meeting.

Housekeeping and Other Items:

Susan is tracking and identifying what is needed for the annual meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:13 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff and Treasurer Reports

Minister's Board Report
April 2021
Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

This past month's worship services were rich in topic and voices. In March we discussed the new language for our Candle of Fellowship candle on disability and accessibility, naming that accomodation does not lead to transformation. This service only happened because of the good shared ministry of Lauren Shallish, Natalie Rahn and Keri Hanson who infused my own process with their education and experience.

For the Easter service I pre-recorded each of my sections, allowing me to offer a theologically grounded sermon on grief and resurrection while also taking time to be at home for Malcolm's first birthday since his death. This felt like a creative way to serve all parts of me responsibly and hope, as my supervisors, you agree.

Last Sunday we hosted Alex Kapitan, one of our UUA leaders in queer and non-binary education and activism. I've heard from a handful of congregants that Alex's service allowed for important conversions with both parents and young children; others found it helpful for their own learning.

Alex also offered the Worship Associates and me some helpful feedback on our Candle of Fellowship that pertains to Welcoming LGBTQ people and families. Notably: naming LGBTQ people leaves out numerous other identities; that saying Q as *Questioning* messages a discomfort with saying the word *Queer*; and the last line that says we welcome your authenticity, messages that the reader is straight and cis gender. We made immediate, though not yet permanent, changes so that last Sunday the candle read:

We affirm the sacredness of sexuality and gender diversity. We honor all sexual orientations and gender identities, as well as people who have none, and deeply value each other's authenticity.

All in all, this spring the Worship Associates have taken on important conversations that reflect a commitment to the goals of our congregation and the 8th Principle. I've been very proud of how they've each entered these conversations humbly and curiously.

This upcoming Sunday I am preaching last year's Auction sermon, won by Greg Pontier. It is also Earth Day. For this upcoming Auction, I will be offering folks to purchase one sermon a quarter.

This past month I trained the new and existing Pastoral Care Ministry team. They were able to replenish the team almost entirely through the conversations Nominating / Congregational Engagement folks held after services.

I have been requested to officiate memorial services both now and when I return from parental leave. With Tara and I now both fully vaccinated, I have said yes to those happening in late July or after.

Create Community (Small Groups)

Pathways (previously the Path to Membership) has started again with 10 participants and will conclude on April 29th. I hope to be able to celebrate about half of those participants as new members at the May 2nd service. Many folks are moving through the process now but waiting for in person services to begin again before signing; others are waiting to see what long term virtual congregation life might offer.

In April, Robin and I ran a Parent meeting for those with children in 5th grade or under. The time invited reflection on what they and their children would need in order for them to *feel safe, free and loved*. We learned a great deal from this conversation and much is reflected in Robin's report. To note, because of this conversation there are changes in our staffing plans that have already been communicated to the Personnel Committee.

Change the World (Serve)

As you know, a significant amount of time this month was given to interviewing our four candidates for the Parental Leave Minister position. The Search Committee and Staff completed those interviews with a unanimous decision, and I am simply thrilled that the Rev. yadenee hailu accepted our offer!

I am now spending time with her to set up the worship calendar, fill Sundays with preachers for her Sundays off, schedule time to connect with Worship Associates, Pastoral Care team, Worship Tech team, and prepare documents that will hopefully support her during her time with UUCWC.

I've created a support document for the Worship Associates and offer this reminder and invitation to you all as well:

If you get feedback about or for Rev. yadenee, some reminders:

1. *I do not accept anonymous feedback. “People are saying” is an unfair statement. You should not receive or pass anonymous feedback along; it is triangulating.*
2. *If you are hearing feedback that seems to be systemic or a reflection of the system -- and not yadenee -- you should go first to the Support Committee (who was the Search Committee that was part of the hire).*

Because Rev. yadenee is our first Minister of Color, I am asking those who haven't yet read “Centering: Navigating Race, Authenticity, and Power in Ministry,” to do so, and I invite others to review it if you haven't picked it up in some time. If you need a copy, I can leave one for you at the church, or reimburse you if you send in a receipt to Susan at payables@uucwc.org.

I've continued to work with the Personnel, Nominating, Right Relations and Audit teams in various ways throughout the month. I continue to be amazed by the amount of work that has gotten done this congregational year and more so, the spirit of commitment, curiosity, and generosity that has driven each effort.

I am working with the staff on the Executive Staff Report for the Annual Meeting which I will deliver with them in June. This will be the only time I come out of my Parental Leave in service to the congregation and I'm looking forward to doing so.

I am reading Susan Beaumont's blogs and articles on how to do staff evaluations during this covid time and will, as is expected, offer some appropriate evaluation based on our circumstances. One resource to give you a sense of what will be influencing this process for me:

<https://susanbeaumont.com/2020/11/20/accountability-in-the-age-of-covid/>

Lastly, I've been in conversation with my colleague group about how to think about what I'm calling “Developing Eldership” in partnership with how we are thinking about “Developing Leadership”. There are certain pastoral conversations with our older population that inevitably lead to “I don't know where I fit in or if I fit in.” I'm wondering how we can intentionally create a culture in which our elders are 1. not afraid of getting shut out for differing opinions and 2. knowing they will not get shut out, what will they do with that power? Will they agree to participate, learn, acknowledge wisdom from younger sources, etc?

Answers and discernment around this will have to be continued into the summer and fall.

I will not get to be a part of any formal goodbye or gratitudes that you might share as the Board transitions from this group to the next. Let me say here, that I cannot say strongly enough, that I will always hold a place of deep gratitude and awe for each of you. The ministry that you've done is beyond what anyone would have expected and you've navigated it with grace from start to finish. I will miss working with you and I am so sincerely grateful that you were in these positions during this time.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski
From: Robin Pugh
Date: April 12, 2021
Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- Kim and I had a meeting for all parents with children under 11. We learned a lot about the mental health of our parents and children. Based on that meeting, we are revising our request for Faith Engagement staffing. For 2021-22: We are no longer requesting funding for a 1/2-time Children's Faith Engagement Coordinator. Our most important request is for 4 paid teachers per Sunday. Additionally, we are increasing that request so that one of the paid teachers can be paid for prep time.
- Our parents are not coming back to church the same people that they were before the pandemic. This has been a very difficult year for them and it will continue to be so in 2021-22. Many have been parenting 24/7 for almost 14 months. Their children are stressed and acting out in different ways. Whatever schooling they are participating in; it is different than what it used to be and will continue to be different in 2021-22. A parent's mental health is affected by their children's mental health which in turn affects their children's mental health. It is circular. The parents are exhausted and continue to tend to the immediate needs of their family day by day. They have nothing left for themselves. One thing Kim and I knew and confirmed this year is that parents are the primary religious educators of their children. It is clear that UUCWC's Family Ministry program that has been focusing on children and curriculum in the past needs to focus on the parents and healing in 2021-22.
- What our parents need is to attend church. This wish was universal. When polled, only 2 parents of 13 said they would teach RE next year (all are former RE teachers). Rather than driving them away from church because of the volunteer commitment, it is time for us to minister to them. This is what builds lifelong members.
- I'm looking forward to working with rev. yadenee hailu while Kim is on parental leave. I participated in the staff interviews of 3 of the candidates for the position. I am glad our first choice accepted the position.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- As for the congregational Life responsibilities that I am currently doing, I will continue to do them. Kim and I are brainstorming a way for me to be free on Sundays to focus on visitors/ new members and have volunteers check in on the children's program. I can't expand what I do for visitors but I can keep doing what I am doing. We can look at a 1/2 time Children's Faith Engagement Coordinator in 2022-23.

- The path to membership class now called “pathways” started on March 22nd. Seven people attended and 3 more are expected to join for the final 2 sessions this month.
- Our 8th chalice circle started last month and I am currently forming a 9th one. This small group experience IS ministry. The chalice circle process with no cross talk and deep listening is a “container” that enables participants to share vulnerably while being seen and heard by others in the group. People minister to each other. I’ve noticed an increased attendance at worship among chalice circle participants.
- Six of the 7 new chalice circle co-facilitators are now in their circles. They 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 most of the groups by August.

Change the World

- The minister from UU Manhattan, Kansas reached out to Kim to find out about our anti-racism anti-oppression audit. I met with a team from the fellowship and explained the process we used in the Dismantling White Supremacy Accountability Assessment pilot in 2019. The pilot assessment cannot be shared. The UUA has contracted with Paula Cole Jones to finalize the assessment.
- The minister of UU Somerset Hills shared my February crosscurrents article “What Do Visitors Need” (<https://www.uucwc.org/what-do-visitors-need/>) with their Board of Trustees. A member of the board contacted me to learn more about UUCWC’s approach to visitors. I shared some resources and members of UUCSH attended our services to see how we welcome visitors.

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for April 2021

Create Community

The Communications Team met with Naomi Moon, consultant from Wicked Moon Web Solutions, for website training and input regarding our site's updates and maintenance. After two brief meetings, we have already done updates needed for a few years, confirmed daily backups and trained on restoration, and investigated a staging site that may be set up as a "training ground" for newer editors. She is a great contact and I look forward to her help and support as we refresh our web presence.

I was part of a meeting of Capital Campaign leaders and selected others offering fresh perspectives to discuss the Phase 3 of fundraising that will be needed. I shared data that altered the idea that newer members from 2018 to present would be substantial donors; it is not likely major donations will come from just this group based on their pledging. The team will continue to find ways to bridge the financial gap.

The Reopening Team met and has established criteria for evaluating requests to use the church building and grounds on a single use basis. We will continue to monitor infection rates as well as vaccination rates, and evaluate and respond to requests for limited use of the building/grounds as they arise.

I met with Joe Schenk, MJ Hansen and Andrew Kidd and the IT consultant approved by the Board to address security and upgrades to our church IT systems. An Endowment Grant for the purchase of equipment was approved and will cover most of the equipment expenses for the Sanctuary audio/visual upgrade and accompanying system support; labor and equipment for a possible change to VOIP (phone service over the internet rather than landline) is being investigated as well.

Celebrate Life

Our membership is now at 281 Church Members, 20 Friends, 38 Participants and 27 Attendees.

Change the (UUCWC) World

I am happy to share the news of the return of Rachel Hansen to staff in a revised and reduced hour (4-5 hours/week) position of Office Assistant. In this role, Rachel will

resume some of the work I had taken on when Caryl Tipton left that position in June 2020; she will also assume responsibility for social media postings which began last fall, will become the main website editor (picking up work formerly done by Lynne Quinto) and will support the DLFE in visitor information management. We are delighted to have Rachel back!

I worked with Kim and the Worship Tech Team to create a job description that will be used to advertise a new staff position of Worship A/V Tech Coordinator. This position will assume most of the Worship Tech Team responsibilities, which have grown from services early into the pandemic to the professional work seen now on Sunday mornings, as well as assume the additional audio/visual work that hybrid service streaming will create. Following Personnel's review of the position, I hope to finalize the job announcement and hire in coming months.

The bookkeeping work is transitioning to Mary Baltycki; we anticipate that by the end of April, she will have assumed all the Quickbooks work that I have done since September 2019, addressing a concern about file sharing and multiple people using the financial file. I will retain payroll, credit card review and other tasks that do not involve Quickbooks. We will also work on creating processes and accompanying documentation for these tasks, to be used by future bookkeepers; as well we are setting up centralized recordkeeping at the church, rather than in volunteer's homes.

Treasurers Summary to March, 2021 Financial Snapshot – presented April 14, 2021

With our conversation moving this month to our budgeting process for the next fiscal year and beyond, I will provide you with the highlights for the month of March succinctly, with the modest amount of detail to share our financial position without dulling your senses with overly detailed line items, which is always available for review and inquiry.

MONTH OF MARCH:

The income for the month was on budget, highlighting that the plate was 33% above budget for the month and pledges came in at 99% of budget. There was a transfer of Capital funds from operations income, which shows up as a negative income figure.

Bottom line the month came in with expenses over income of \$585.29.

July to March-Year to Date:

Our two largest ongoing funding sources to date for the year are pledges and plate. Pledges are at 98% of budget, plate at 105%.

With all staffing on budget, as well as the addition of the PPP forgiven loan along with the following savings brings us to a \$66,000 net income for the 9 months of our fiscal year. These savings include:

- Reduction in part-time staff furloughed during closure
- Reduced program expenses
- Savings on snow removal

BOTTOM LINE

\$66,058.25 net income on a budgeted net loss of \$15,589.50

Last year at this time, we had a \$7,000 net income on a year that had just seen the impact of closure the last two weeks of the month of March 2020.

CASH

See attached Analysis of Cash on Hand dated March 31, 2021. Cash in bank net reserves and restricted funds (including current surplus) can cover 5.7 months of expenses.

TREASURER TRANSITION: The transition continued smoothly this past month, in that Mary B has continued to prepare and report out the financial reports via QuickBooks. As you will read in Susan's report, Mary has also taken over the QB bookkeeping functions, which in turn, eliminated the need for the QB database to be sent around to three parties at the end of the month.

I look forward to transitioning the Treasurer function to Joe Schenk as we get closer to the end of the fiscal year and continue on the board in an at-large position.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sanders, Treasurer