

12Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
Board of Trustees
268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
May 12, 2021

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Nathalie Edmond called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:01 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; Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang; and DLFE, Robin Pugh. Also present were Maria Baratta, Joe Schenck, MJ Hansen and Michael Hodgin, and Jayme Trott representing the Capital Campaign Committee.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

Treasurer's Report:

Board Treasurer Jim Sanders reported on Monday's Finance Committee meeting: key points:

- As of April 30, the state of accounts is good with no areas of concern. Both plate and pledge were below budget for the month, but last month they were over. Expenses continue at the expected rate except for snow removal which was approximately 6K\$ under budget.
- The budget presented to the congregation will include figures for projected reopening in September vs. January, and will include a general discussion of future considerations (e.g. projected staffing costs, etc.) beyond next year.
- Finance will continue reviewing the budget on a quarterly basis.
- Finance wants to talk to the Board to discuss anticipated expenses for the foreseeable future including the impact of added staffing costs and a potential deficit.
- **There was a consensus vote** during the second hour to approve the proposed budget in advance of the annual meeting. It passed unanimously.
- **ACTION:** Jim will close the loop with Finance to let them know the budget passed and can be presented to the congregation during an open forum on 5/23/2021.
- **ACTION:** We received a \$10,000 unrestricted gift earlier this year and were instructed to use it as needed; Finance is asking for the Board's input. It is now clear that it is not required to fund Rev. Kim's parental leave. Jim recommends revisiting after the Capital Campaign's report at the annual meeting.

Update on Technical Support Proposal

Joe Schenck arrived at 7:30 along with MJ Hansen and Michael Hodgkin (technical consultant) to discuss a formal proposal for upgrading technical and security functionality at UUCWC. Joe, MJ and Michael reviewed the proposal in detail covering what is included, what will be phased over time, etc.

- Proposal covers connectivity, enhanced business continuity via emergency wi-fi coverage, new router, new wiring, increasing wireless access and bandwidth, etc.
- The team reviewed projected costs and discussed potential unknowns and time-dependent factors related to reopening.
- There was also discussion related to the need to strengthen policies and procedures as another key aspect of security beyond just the technical solution.
- Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang noted the need for a “break/fix” support system for various technical issues; we could budget for a set number of hours as needed.
- Jim affirmed the proposal as reasonable and excellent and confirmed that we can comfortably cover what is needed in the current fiscal year after the endowment fund allocation for the sanctuary upgrades is applied. The Board in general agreed that the proposal is solid and would deliver value to the church. Nathalie thanked the guests and they left the meeting.
- **There was a consensus vote** during the second hour to approve moving forward with the proposal. It passed unanimously.
- **ACTION:** Susan and Joe will review the proposal against the current tech budget and endowment funds to ensure alignment of how the money is being allocated. Jim will reconcile the details of how it hits the budget.

Second Hour

Capital Campaign update

Jayne Trott arrived at 8 p.m. to provide an update on the Capital Campaign construction proposals.

- Revised construction bids were due back today and included revisions around HVAC and other revisions designed to cut costs.
- Farzad Shadzik and the project architect were surprised to see that some of the bids came back even higher this time despite cost-cutting provisions.
 - Due to pandemic-related influence on the construction market, contractor costs have risen to account for increased supply costs, higher demand, longer timelines and staffing challenges.
- Bids that we could consider would be within the range of approximately 1.3 million excluding HVAC. Some contractors questioned the feasibility of the revised HVAC plans.
- We have about a shortfall of about \$200,000 to \$300,000 based on the original project scope. At least \$100,000 more would be needed to cover additional expenses; fundraising additional amounts could be challenging.

- Key considerations include paying the existing loans as well as timeline-sensitivity; we don't want current permits to expire and then need to be redone. There may be relevant impacts due to the creek and changing footprint expansion allowances, as future permits anticipate that Delaware River Authority will make requirements for the area around the creek.
- The lift is still a key factor due to our commitment to accessibility.
- We could focus on a scaled-down approach that focuses on repairs, upgrades and "lift" of the space, without expanding the footprint at this time. Future expansion could focus on expanding up (e.g. an additional floor), not out.
- This would be far short of the original plan but it's an opportunity to re-evaluate what's fiscally reasonable currently. We need to be prepared to deal with the fact that construction costs are not expected to stabilize within the next 3 years.
- Farzad and the Capital Campaign team are still preparing summary information.
- Robin held up the hard work of the Capital Campaign team and thanked Jayme for her hard work. Robin also asked about potential changes from the congregational parents' perspective.
- There was general discussion regarding the idea that while the project has met unexpected challenges, positive results can still come out of it. Energy can be shifted into a smaller scope which can deliver value without putting undue stress on church finances.
- Zoom and hybrid church models may mean a need for less physical space.
- **ACTION:** Per Nathalie's request, a Capital Campaign representative will provide an update at the annual meeting though final numbers won't be ready in time. They can present a general overview of possibilities to the congregation.
- Nathalie and Jim indicated that this should continue to be an ongoing and open conversation where we solicit strategic feedback from an invested team; Nathalie suggested that Board Trustee Jamie Evanini would be a good resource here.
- Nathalie thanked Jayme and she left the meeting.

Reopening Survey Update

- Michael Waas, Board Trustee and liaison to the Reopening Task Force, outlined current status.
- After reviewing the draft survey with the reopening team and relevant survey expertise, the team recommended a shift to a more structured survey as a more effective way to assess a range of behaviors. The survey was released to the congregation and Michael presented preliminary results to the Board, showing a range of opinions.
- **ACTION:** Michael will work with the task force to draft a plan for the Board around summer events (e.g. small group and outdoor gatherings) with a potential plan for September reopening, and to discuss what information will be presented at the annual meeting.

Housekeeping and Other Items:

- **There was a consensus vote** on whether the Board should permit virtual voting at the annual meeting, as allowed for in the bylaws. It passed unanimously.
- **There was a consensus vote** to approve the slate ahead of the annual meeting. It passed unanimously.
- Susan is tracking and identifying what is needed for the annual meeting.

- July board meeting; a VP should emerge and the Board will vote on executive roles. Existing Board members will stay for transition. New liaisons will need to be identified.
- Board Vice President Sue Saddlemire updated the Board on extended duties/hours for Rev. yadenee hailu, and shared that Rev. Kim wants to consider shorter sabbatical chunks in the future.
- Jamie will submit the Board article for the June CrossCurrents article.

Executive session

Maria left the meeting and the Board entered executive session briefly to discuss and vote on service award submissions, with **unanimous consensus** achieved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Howe-Smith

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Staff, Executive Team and Treasurer Reports

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for May 2021

Create Community

The Communications Team continues to meet with the website consultant for WordPress training and web designer input regarding our site's updates and maintenance. Priorities have been training Rachel Hansen as the primary web editor, learning options within the UUA template and collaboration. The update team will be creating a new layout for the main page, reorganizing navigation, and, in time updating content on all pages. We have an aspirational goal to have the new "look" of the first page ready for viewing by the Annual Meeting.

I also worked with the Communications Team, Personnel and others to onboard and publicize the arrival of Rev. yadenee hailu. Our emails, website and Facebook pages shared the news, and NJ.com, Bucks Herald and The Trenton Times carried our press releases. We also now have our virtual services listed on [CommunityNow](#), an online bulletin board hosted by the Church of the Larger Fellowship. We continue to seek avenues to make UUCWC's presence, and our leave minister, known in the community.

The Reopening Team met to review the survey discussed at the last Board meeting. Michael Waas led the discussion and there were suggestions for improvements; a subgroup will be finalizing it for release. The team continues to watch the metrics (14-day average infection rates per 100,000 and vaccination rates), which are improving.

Celebrate Life

With the recent signing of 4 people, our membership is now 285 Church Members, 19 Friends, 38 Participants and 27 Attendees. This total includes seven out of state members, of which five are active virtually. Since July 2020, and while the church has been physically closed, 14 new members have signed the book using a [virtual membership book page](#) on the website.

Change the (UUCWC) World

As the Board knows, on April 29th, Roberto Santiago discovered a note tucked by the church front doors with a strongly worded unfavorable reaction to our values banner. He alerted me and assured me that he was safe and the building unharmed. I recovered Ring Video footage as well as an almost identical note left in our mailbox. Following

notification to Kim and the Board, I took the notes and video footage to the Hopewell Township Police Department. As there was no direct threat to a person, our building or organization, they were not able to act; however, they will keep the notes and footage on file and advised us to alert them if there are any additional incidents, calling 911 if there was an immediate need. I have begun a daily review of the video to assure that we will be aware if the person returns again.

Annual Meeting preparations have begun with the drafting of the Executive Report, done in advance of Rev. Kim's departure, coordination with Nominating/Congregational Engagement Task Force on the slate, leadership acknowledgments, and requests for Annual Report submissions. I will be coordinating all the pieces with the Board team on May 19th, and the Annual Meeting package will be sent on May 27th.

Following our discussion last month about the potential rental by a local synagogue, I reached out with our offer to continue discussions only about use of the Sanctuary on Friday evenings and some Saturdays, rather than a full building share. They are still interested in renting and storage for ritual materials; I will work with the Finance team to determine rental rates which have not been adjusted since 2014. I hope to be able to offer a competitive long-term rental/storage rate, as the steady income is needed; this potential will be weighed against the impact for us, such as needing cleaning done after their Friday use and before our needs on a Sunday morning.

I coordinated the writing, printing, and mailing of 193 Stewardship thank you letters; we hope to shift this task from the office back to Stewardship in future. The team is still awaiting several key pledges from a few who usually do not respond to the drive or resulting reach-outs, but do generously pledge in the end.

I completed the UUA's Benefits Tune-Up, a workbook to review benefits offered and assure their proper administration. There were some minor procedural tweaks needed, and the package has been sent to Personnel for review/retention.

Rachel Hansen's return has been welcome, as she takes on Facebook postings and weekly announcement emails and service reminders. She is training on WordPress and will become co-editor of the website with me. Additional tasks may be added as her time (average 4-5 hrs/week) permits.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski
From: Robin Pugh
Date: May 10, 2021
Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- Rev. yadenee and I collaborated together for the story in the Sunday service. Her style is similar to Kim's. We have open brainstorming and non-judgmental feedback as I offer suggestions for the story. We decide together what fits best for the service. Her leadership is kind and thoughtful.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- The path to membership class now called "pathways" was completed by 10 participants on April 29th. Four participants became members. Several people are waiting until our building is open before they become members.
- I am instituting a system to keep regular contact (2x month) with new members for their first year of membership. At the moment, I am sending an informal email about the "inside scoop" on church events such as the auction, annual meeting, flower ceremony etc. Congregational Engagement may decide to revise or add to this plan.
- Our 9th chalice circle is starting this month. Long time members are now joining the circles. Chalice Circles continue to be an important supplement to our worship services. The format of the circles builds relationships, deepens the spiritual life of participants and (as a result) deepens their commitment to UUCWC. I need 3 more facilitators.
- Kim and I had our last parenting class for the year in April. This class has been so important for parents, not only to form relationships, but also to deepen their own UU faith so that they are clear what they want to model for their kids. We plan to offer 2 parenting classes beginning in the fall: a year 2 session for current participants and a year one for new participants.
- Most of the parents who were in the parenting class will take "Owning Your Religious Past" this summer with me. One of the benefits of teaching the parenting class this year, is that Kim and I saw how influential a parent's negative associations with the religion of their upbringing can affect how or if they offer UU practices at home.
- Kim and I created our last Family Chalice Circle packet for the school year. We plan to continue this program for younger families next year.

Change the World

- I am collecting ideas and doing research on what reopening for our children's program may look like. What may be needed in terms of equipment and supplies. How we may be together.
- I attended the Spiritual Directors International Conference virtually for 3 days in April. I completed my 2 year program in spiritual direction last week.

Executive Team Meeting

Present: Sue Saddlemire (VP), Nathalie Edmond (President), Colleen McCourt (Secretary), Jim Sanders (Treasurer)

- No new information about Capital project numbers and expectations for phase 3 ask. Sue will contact Capital team liaisons for update and see if Capital team can come to May board meeting
- Scheduled an annual meeting prep session for Wednesday, May 19th at 12 pm as Sue Irgang needs to send out packet on May 20th as lead up to June 6th annual meeting
- Discussed having racial justice ministry come to July meeting to give an update about listening circles around policing
- Discussed having CFA present at annual meeting, specifically Faith Expression Funding Team (FEFT) and Racial Justice Ministry
- Need update on reopening survey. Nathalie to reach out to Michael Waas and Susan Irgang for an update. Would like to review initial results at May board meeting in preparation for the annual meeting.
- Discussed if the board should be selecting who is on Personnel committee or just affirming the members.
- Talked about corporate culture that is in some of her committees and challenge of balancing business with spirituality

Annual Meeting outline (in no particular order)

- Opening
- Minister/Staff Report (Rev. Kim)
- Board Report (Nathalie)
- Status of reopening (Michael Waas)
- Finance Report (Jim Sanders/Mary Baltycki)
- Plan around bookkeeping role ???
- Capital team update (Jayme Trott/Susan Vigilante) – liaison needs to invite
- Vote on budget
- Nominating/leadership development task force update (Marianne Alt/Sandy Muccioli)- liaison needs to invite
- Voting on slate
- CFA/RJM highlight
- Service Awards (Sue Saddlemire)
- Honoring outgoing board members (Sue Saddlemire)

- Closing

Treasurers Summary to April, 2021 Financial Snapshot – presented May 12, 2021

The Finance committee met this past Monday, and reviewed the April 2021 month and year to date numbers. Nothing of negative significance was seen in the April activity except that Pledge and plate income was down for the month, giving us a negative \$4,296 net income for the month.

MONTH OF APRIL:

The income for the month was 70% of budget, with a plate that was 25 % below budget while March was 33% above budget. Pledges came in at 72 % of budget while March was at 99% of budget.

Bottom line the month came in with expenses over income of \$\$4,296.

July to April -Year to Date:

Our two largest ongoing funding sources to date for the year are pledges and plate. Pledges are at 95% of budget (a drop of 3% from the cumulative last month), and plate is at 102%, also a drop of 3% from the previous cumulative.

Auction income which stands at around \$35,000 (unofficial number on budget of \$31,000) will be reported in the May numbers.

The budget at the 10-month mark, shows a balance of \$61,762 net income over expenses for the period to date. Our increased expense items for the year to date have been:

BOTTOM LINE

\$61,762.55 net income on a budgeted net loss of \$10,349 (a drop of roughly \$5,000 from last month's cumulative).

Last year at this time, we had a **\$12,899 net income** on a year that had just seen the impact of closure for, at that point 6 weeks.

CASH

Analysis of Cash on Hand dated April 30, 2021 to follow.

TREASURER TRANSITION: This will be my last month as treasurer, but I will be sharing the files and all access with the incoming treasurer effective July. (actual timing yet to be determined)

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sanders, Treasurer

