

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
October 13, 2021

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; Joe Schenk, Treasurer; Scribe and Trustee Heather Edwards, Trustees: Michael Waas, Wendy Stasolla; Jim Sanders; Michael Howe-Smith, Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang, and DLFE, Robin Pugh.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote)

Board Roles, Functions and Processes

- Board President Maria Baratta led a discussion on tasks and roles that need to be filled, including filling Board liaison roles, writing CrossCurrents articles, etc.
 - Board members were encouraged to follow their interests and passions.
 - The board reviewed specific liaison roles and outlined open positions. For Finance, Trustees Wendy Stasolla and Michael Howe-Smith will remain as liaisons/members at large.
 - We reviewed how the liaison process ties into accountability for “championing” the overarching Board goals throughout the year.
- Maria introduced a discernment circle process that allows all members to contribute input to key discussions.
- The Board discussed the need to support the Stewardship Committee and be aligned on messaging throughout key periods of the fiscal year. **ACTION:** Reverend Kim and Joe will discuss further and welcome ongoing insights from the Board.
- Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang proposed a calendaring process that will help with planning purposes throughout the year.

Budget Discussion

Treasurer Joe Schenk led discussion of the budget; key points included:

- Our surplus is reduced; while there have been ups and downs, overall we are tracking to budget.

- Joe presented a “straw man” budget which shows a modest increase in pledging and fundraising income, but still shows greater deficit than in previous years
 - Bookkeeper salary is probably too low and needs to be upped by \$10,000.
 - Budget should continue to reflect a line item for staffing a Faith Engagement children’s coordinator role.
- The Board engaged in overall discussion; key points included:
 - History of budget deficits and how we’ve addressed them in the past
 - Impacts of upcoming staffing costs across multiple positions
 - Historically shortages have not been effectively resolved through pledges and staffing dollars were cut; since that approach is counter to the church’s current priorities and goals, we need to find a way to resolve the recent reduction in large donor pledges, increase mid-level pledges, etc.
 - There are enough reserves to cover this year, but we need to understand how the budget looks over the next few years; we have usually had a surplus, but it’s dwindling.
 - Discussed how Finance requests are evaluated and approved throughout the year, accounting for short-term and longer-term needs
 - Susan requested to be included in discussions about bookkeeping tasks as she may be able to take hours back into her portfolio as appropriate as other tasks are offset.

Board Covenant and Goals

- We re-reviewed the Board covenant that was developed at the Board retreat in September and made some small wording changes. **There was a pulse check vote via Zoom** to approve the covenant, which passed with unanimous consent
- We re-reviewed the Board goals that were developed at the Board retreat in September and invited any additional comments for consideration. **ACTION:** Board Secretary Colleen McCourt and Trustees Heather Edwards and Wendy Stasolla will wordsmith/refine the draft goals and submit them to the Board for approval.

Second Hour

Capital Campaign Team Update

- Trustee and Capital Campaign Committee liaison Michael Howe-Smith welcomed Farzad Shadzik, George Faulkner, Jayme Trott and Susan Vigilante to the meeting and asked them to present a project update.
- Jayme led a presentation, with input from the rest of the committee, outlining the project's course against the original scope and targets (e.g. financial, logistical, scheduling, design, etc.)
 - The committee summarized all aspects of the project since its inception in 2017, including timelines, finances, scope changes, challenges and responses, tasks completed, current status and next steps.
 - The team discussed key considerations including the elevator, Crossings Room wall, etc., and reviewed major structural changes between the original and new plans. Farzad responded to a question from Susan regarding office doors, indicating that such details will be corrected in the plans.
 - George reviewed the budget summary to date, outlining the overall expected outlook considering pledges, unknown factors, etc. The approach includes trying to anticipate and account for potential overruns. Due to potential overcosts and credits, the Committee can't predict costs exactly but can get a general estimate. In the final phase, costs will determine finishing options.
 - Farzad is working closely with contractors to ensure that we receive accurate, inclusive bids that reflect our stated budget, and avoid high bids with hidden fees and assumptions that entail further cycling. This should help move things forward past the proposal stage and provide confidence in the bids, ensuring that we can get what we need within budget.
 - All relevant permits are good for a few years except for one that expires at the end of this year (Mercer Council Soil Commission). Farzad will facilitate an extension.
 - The Committee and Board reviewed considerations regarding the project loan including the bridge loan for uncollected pledges, and discussed the need for planning ahead for unforeseen costs.
 - Robin acknowledged the ongoing hard work of the Committee. Rev. Kim indicated that new members have been engaged in congregational life and should be looped into the project updates so that they can be informed about this key church initiative.
- Jayme reviewed next steps and process for ongoing communication/reporting to the Board as the project begins to regain momentum in the coming months. There have been relatively long periods of inactivity due to ongoing pandemic challenges, so there are times where no substantial updates have been warranted. As things progress, the Committee expects to provide regular metrics reporting on timeline and costs. The Committee responded to a question from Vice President Jamie Evanini on the concept of providing a visual progress map.

- Maria and members of the Board acknowledged the Committee's work, including aspects of fatigue and frustration inherent in the challenges of dealing with many changes and unknown scenarios. Maria thanked the Committee and they left the meeting.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- Fill open liaison positions
- CrossCurrents volunteers
- Council Meeting: tentatively Nov. 16th
- Board Chat: tentatively Nov. 14

Meeting adjourned at 9:08 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer's Report

The Executive Team met on Thursday, October 7th 7:30 ~ 8:45.

In attendance: Colleen McCourt, Jamie Evanini, Joe Schenk, Maria Baratta.

A draft covenant was developed at the Board retreat on Sept 25th. Board members will be asked to review it prior to the October 13th meeting. At the meeting they will be asked to read aloud the statements, which will be followed by time for feedback and discernment. The intention is to follow this discernment time with a poll regarding adoption of the covenant.

The Board also developed draft goals at the September retreat. Colleen, Heather and Wendy agreed to polish the goals and share them with the Board when they've finished.

Also, at the retreat the Board agreed to align the goals with the committees or teams that will be responsible for them. Board committee liaisons will help advocate those goals during the coming year. The current list of committee liaisons needs to be updated. **Action Item** - All Board members should review the spreadsheet tab labeled 'Roles' within [Meeting Roles & Board Action Items 2021-2022](#) and consider which liaison role they wish to commit to or be dropped from. Also, if there are liaison roles that need to be created to best meet the needs of a goal, they should be prepared to make a recommendation at the October meeting. For ready reference, the current list of liaisons includes:

Personnel liaison	Joe Schenk
Capital Campaign liaison	Michael Howe-Smith
Congregational Engagement Ministry (formerly Nominating) liaison	TBD
Caring liaison	
Finance liaison	Wendy Stasolla
Safe Congregation team	
Stewardship liaison	Jamie
Sabbatical team liaison (can this be deleted this year)	N/A
Reopening team liaison (do we still need a liaison for this)	Michael Waas
Policies and Procedures taskforce liaison	N/A
Ministerial evaluation task force	Jim Sanders

The Capital Campaign Team has accepted an invitation to join the Board for the 2nd hour of the October meeting. We are hoping to see a status update on any estimates for the project. Going forward, the Board would like to receive some type of monthly update of project timelines/metrics in addition to the CCT budget.

Joe advised that the projected first draft of the 2022 budget reflects anticipated deficits. He will share this draft budget as a pre-read for Wednesday's meeting.

The first Council meeting of the new year was proposed for Wednesday Nov. 3rd. Jamie will lead the meeting and other Board members are encouraged to attend. Maria offered to share with Jamie some of the old Council materials she had from previous years that contain basics on leading a committee or team.

There will be a Board Chat scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 14th following the Sunday service. This will give members and friends an opportunity to ask questions as well as get updates on Board activity.

Volunteers are needed to write monthly CrossCurrents articles on behalf of the Board
Action Item - Board members should sign up to cover one of the monthly slots for submitting a CrossCurrents article. They can write on anything that reflects their time with the Board or as a leader in the congregation.

**October 2021
Minister Board Report
Rev. Kim Wildszewski**

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rites of Passage)

Since we last met, the worship team and I have offered two tandem worship services: one pre-recorded online zoom service, and another live in-person out-door service at the same time. These were held on Sept 12, Water Communion, and Oct 3, on Mission. On September 12th we welcomed around 95+ people on zoom and approximately 65 people in person. On October 3rd we welcomed 45 in person and 89 on Zoom.

These services have required an incredible amount of collaboration, creativity, and acceptance of imperfection (our systems and schedules aren't currently set up to produce a full service by Thursday morning, when the recording needs to take place). The services have also been received in very different ways by different people – gratuities and frustrations by those on zoom and in person.

Our next tandem services are scheduled for October 31st.

In this last month we have also welcomed two guest preachers whose identities reflect our commitment to our 8th Principle: the Rev. Mariela Perez-Simons at the end of September, and Fr. Shannon Kearns who co-led with me this past Sunday. I am in conversation with Finance, as well as the Council for Faith in Action, about how to financially support this value statement in our overall budget, rather than simply paying for guest preachers out of the worship budget, which is stretched thin due to a rise in fair share rates.

This Sunday I will be preaching the first of four Auction-won sermons. In two weeks, Caryl Tipton will lead the whole service in an attempt to begin our good goodbye to and with her.

Later in October I will be leading a Worship Tech retreat with the addition of new members as well as new roles for some of these members. I am hoping to officially move Ariel into a lead position for that team during this time.

Last Saturday I officiated the wedding of Laura Wall's son, Patrick. This Saturday I officiate the memorial service and committal of Richard Knight. I am still in conversation with Kevyn Malloy about Tony's services.

Pastoral Care continues to be a significant portion of my time alongside worship and administration.

Create Community (Small Groups)

I launched the newest round of Pathways for our visitors, members, and the parent cohort that meets on Monday nights, monthly. Going forward, the class will be split into two groups – allowing the parents to continue meeting as an identity group, and the other members and visitors

to continue on as their own group. I am still learning how to revamp this class but overall I think it's a huge improvement and I'm excited by what it offers.

Additionally, Robin and I held a meet and greet on zoom with visitors. As always, it's lovely and fulfilling to meet with folks who are newly exploring and discovering UUCWC and UUism.

I'll be changing or adding to the FaceBook Lectio Divina practice by offering it as a small drop-in group twice a week starting in November: Mondays 12-12:30 & Thursdays 2:30pm-3pm.

Change the World (Service)

I facilitated a conversation with the Racial Justice as a Spiritual Practice small group, as a way of helping them find direction and articulate the purpose of their gathering.

I am recruiting for the Worship Associate ministry; we welcome Anne Godlasky (fully remote member) to the team, and potentially also Nicole Robinson.

It is time to talk Stewardship!! This team needs energized and creative people. With your help, I need to set out a mission and goal for this group.

The staff and I made updates to the reopening /regathering guidelines with special mention of the choir and their practices. This was sent out with a video message from me.

Separately, I attend the monthly meetings with NJ UU ministers as well as a smaller colleague group, monthly. I've begun a yearlong Wellspring course with other religious professionals and continue to meet with a Spiritual Director.

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for October 2021

Create Community

As discussed previously, the Board will check in monthly on UUCWC guidelines relative to COVID. I will begin including a sentence or two each month with the COVID statistics for Bucks and Mercer, according to the NY Times tracking app. As of 10/8/21, Bucks and Mercer are at the “Very High” risk category, with cases per 100,000 at 28 and 14 respectively (“High” category, for which we have limited reopening guidelines, begins at 11 cases per 100,000). Bucks County’s cases per 100,000 has increased 23% since Oct. 1, while Mercer County’s cases have remained relatively stable for the same period and are currently lower than September rates.

I worked with Kim to update and publish the Regathering Guidelines for “Very High” risk status, including her [video message](#). The revised guidelines are available [here](#).

I worked with Kim and Robin on the promotion of and logistical set up for outdoor services on 10/3; Roberto Santiago and I handled set up for the service attended by about 43 people. More photos are on the [UUCWC Community Building Facebook page](#).



I continue to work with the Communications Team on website content updates; we are 85% done with updating content on all webpages in drop down menus and are reorganizing the structure of drop down items.

Celebrate Life

Our current membership is 282 Church Members (includes 7 Virtual Members), 20 Friends, 45 Participants and 30 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 282, we are actively serving a system of 377, not counting children or visitors.

Change the (UUCWC) World

This month had several building related activities:

- Annual wheelchair lift inspection by the state of NJ (passed); learned from inspector that we will need a permit to remove current lift and shared this info with the Capital Campaign team
- Well water testing performed by Leco Labs (quarterly)
- Transient well inspection scheduled for 10/12 conducted every 4 years; updated well maintenance plan with McGowan LLC prior to inspection
- Pest control treatment by Cooper Pest Control (quarterly)

I met with Steve Saddlemire (Finance Chair), Joe Schenk (Treasurer), Andrew Kidd and George Faulkner, for the fall review of the Facility Reserve fund. This planning tool will be reviewed, updated and used in budget discussions.

With Communications responsibilities now primarily based in the office, I am reviewing the 8 policies created by the Communications Committee from 2011-2017 for updates and separation of procedure from policy, in keeping with the Board goal of capturing institutional wisdom.

Administrator Report October 2021 Addendum

Susan Irgang

Change the (UUCWC) World

[The yearly leadership planning calendar here](#) was shared by a fellow admin; I believe it could be a very useful tool for UUCWC, particularly during leader transitions. It could have sections for key groups like BOT, Finance, Personnel, Stewardship, Operations/Facilities, etc. I would ask the Board if this would be something of interest to adapt to UUCWC: I would be happy to work with the Board and other leaders on creating our own version.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Oct.11, 2021

Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- This month we started Family chapel from 9-9:30 on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month. It is an intimate way to connect with families I haven't seen in person since March 2020. The kids seemed very comfortable with me and happy to be together on zoom. The 30 minutes goes by quickly because of the mix of candle lighting, song, video, story and questions.
- We had an outdoor Sunday service on 10/3. This was not a tremendous amount of additional work for me, but it was for Kim and Susan. I told the story outdoors and when I noticed 7 children in attendance, I took them to the playground after the story so their parents could attend the service. Kim's report will probably reflect the discussions going on about additional outside services.
- I continue to be on zoom in the sanctuary for the time for all ages and the lighting of the candles of fellowship and the lighting of the chalice. We want to bring the UUCWC sanctuary into people's homes. We want congregants to see the staff working together in the sanctuary on Sunday on zoom.
- I continue to track and welcome visitors in our Sunday services both online in the chat and after services and in person.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- Kim led the 1st "Pathways" membership class with 4 visitors, 3 longtime members, and 6 parents. The class will split for the remaining 2 sessions with Kim facilitating the visitor/long time member section and me facilitating the parents' section. Both of us expect additional people to join the 2nd class.
- Chalice circles continue to grow and evolve. We have 9 circles. Six of them are co-facilitated by trained members, 3 of them are co-facilitated by me and a trained member. Joe and Michele Schenk suggested a chalice circle for couples. I am working with them to start our 10th group. Susan Colket is leading a circle that responds to the theme of the month creatively. This group has a different packet with suggested creative responses to the theme. At our last facilitators' meeting, we decided to add a creative suggestion from the creativity packet to the spiritual exercises given to all 70 people in chalice circles. This will add additional richness to chalice circles. Finally, I held several orientations for the 4 people who joined chalice circles this month.
- Parents of 8th-10th graders voted to not have OWL virtually or at Princeton in person. They would rather wait a year and have the class together in person.

Save The World

· We had a firepit for 7th-12th graders on October 1st. I've hired Alex Reisser, a frequent visitor, young adult who works at Bear Tavern to assist me with firepits. We played games (we didn't get to most of them) and had smores. The youth want to extend the time. I forgot how magical sitting around a fire on an autumn night is. This space is particularly important for many of our youth who are experiencing difficulty returning to school. We have youth who are teased because they identify as gay or non-binary. We have youth who recently moved and are attending a new school. We have youth who just started high school. Although these youth attend different schools and have not been together for 18 months, they grew up in church together and they feel they can be themselves when they are together. Given social media pressure and school pressure, there are not that many spaces where youth can be themselves with peers. I'm glad UUCWC can provide it.

Professional Development and Support

This primarily serves as an FYI about my professional development opportunities that benefit my leadership at UUCWC.

I attended a one-day program sponsored by Metro NY LREDA /UUMA on "Pre-emptive radical Inclusion: Holding Space for Trauma Sensitive, Flexible Future with Families."

Once a month I meet with UU religious educators in the metro NY area to share information about programs and offer support.

This fall, I'm taking Beloved Conversations "within" for religious professionals and 2 spiritual direction courses, one for Children and one for adults.

I see a Spiritual Director monthly

Treasurer's Report

October 10, 2021

Statement of Income and Expense as of the close of the September Month were shared with the Board in the pre-reads.

Summary:

- All financial indications are positive with a \$16k positive variance to date.
 - o Note that this is a decrease from September's report at \$25k
 - o First of the year expenses for Denominational Support & Programming expenses
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.29 million:
 - o \$472k Operating combined balances
 - o \$606k Capital Campaign
 - o \$232k Endowment
 - o -\$22k payables

Year to Date Finances as of 9/30/2021

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	5,571	Staff	77,959
Pledge	121,245	Operations	24,354
Paycheck Protection Forgiveness	7,500	Program	4,621
All Other	1,520	Denomination	6,305
	135,836	Debt Service	6,366
			119,605
Net Income (Loss)	16,231		

Financial highlights are as follows through September 30

Overall Budget Tracking: \$16k Positive Variance Year to Date

Income: Positive variance: \$3.5k (\$3,500 more income than budgeted)

1. A \$7,500 reduction from the prior month's \$11k positive variance reflecting early pledge payment normalization
2. "Plate Income" lower by \$3k
3. Pledge Income at budget
4. Solar Panels: No income recorded year to date

Expense: Positive Variance: \$19k (\$19,000 less spend than budget)

Up \$5k from the prior month reflecting continued closure of the building and associated expenses

1. **Staff:** positive variance \$7k reflective of sexton expense savings and delayed Accompanist billing
2. **Operations:** positive variance \$7k reflective of reduced utility and tech expenses
3. **Program:** positive variance \$4.7k reflective of reduced expenses associated with the continued building closure

4. **Debt & Denomination Expenses:** To Budget (no variance)

Reminder Items:

1. A **looming budget deficit** of an estimated \$60k for the next fiscal year – 2022-2023 based on current and increasing staffing plans including the Bookkeeper role
2. Hiring plans for a Professional Bookkeeper/ Comptroller
3. Bookkeeping software upgrade to Quickbooks Online
4. Financial oversight and management for UUCWC Operating Funds, Endowment Fund and Capital Campaign Funds
 - I have met with George Faulkner and have a meeting set with the remaining Capital Campaign Leadership on September 8th.