

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



**Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - APPROVED**  
**December 8, 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 Director of Lifespan Faith Engagement (DLFE), Robin Pugh.*

# First Hour

## **Consent agenda (no vote)**

Board President Maria Baratta provided a brief update on the Capital Campaign. Elements of the building plan have been decided, and there was a 2-year extension on a permit that was previously thought to require a renewal, so UUCWC is still in compliance. Treasurer Joe Schenk had a question on whether the October milestone was met for accepting bids. **ACTION:** Maria will share a more detailed report following the Board meeting.

## **Personnel Update**

Scott Drew and Mary Baltycki arrived to speak on behalf of the Personnel Committee, with Joan McCloughan observing on behalf of the Stewardship Committee. Discussion centered around hiring needs for the near and longer-term future. Key points included:

- Based on previous discussions with the Board and Personnel, Board Treasurer Joe Schenk recommended hiring a controller with a target of Feb. 2022, which would hit the current fiscal year budget, with a potential impact of \$10,000. While this would be a new addition to the current year budget, Joe projects that we will still likely end positively for the year. Considerations include labor market challenges which might necessitate the use of a service, which would be more costly.
- Personnel is working on a job description to be posted. The candidate needs to have a strong financial background, beyond bookkeeping.
- **ACTION:** Determine direct reporting arrangement within the current staffing structure with an understanding that input from the Treasurer and Finance Committee will be required at times.
- There was also discussion around hiring for other positions including a Children's Faith Engagement Coordinator (against next year's budget), with the context that DLFE Robin Pugh's

portfolio and role have greatly evolved and expanded during the pandemic. **ACTION:** Robin and Rev. Kim will work on a job description pending more context on what the role will look like in person.

- Joe reviewed potential budget shortfalls and challenges related to hiring for both the controller and Children's FEC positions, and modeled an estimated 15k deficit for personnel needs in 2021-2022 and 75k for 2022-2023 including a 10k gift carried forward; this means the Board would essentially need to approve moving forward with a 75 to 85k variance against budget when hiring for these 2 roles. Joe cautioned against presenting a deficit budget, and noted that if we do it's with the understanding that it's against our savings.
- Discussion included the number of hours for each position and the flexibility involved, including UUA thresholds for providing benefits based on 750 hours worked (15 hours per week).
- The Board discussion following was centered on concerns about how long we can carry that deficit; the concern is not about the short-term but about sustainability over the longer term (beyond the 2022/2023 fiscal year).
- The Board discussed the need to educate the congregation about what our needs are and how pledges can support them. Enhanced fundraising efforts will be needed, especially after losing several large donors in recent years.
- More detailed discussion took place around the hours needed to fill the controller tasks, including accounting for a steep learning curve and training hours until the person is established. The Board reviewed potential areas of wiggle room, while acknowledging that it is very limited.
- Ultimately, it was proposed that the controller position be advertised as a 14-hour per week role for the first year, with additional flex hours for training and onboarding to come out of discretionary staff flex funds. Per Joe, he would support this and it would save about \$7k in annual costs but will not solve the longer-term budget challenges. **There was a vote via Zoom poll to approve this plan;** it passed with unanimous consent.
- **There was a vote to authorize** an expenditure of 10k in the first quarter after January for the controller position for this fiscal year. it passed with unanimous consent.
- Rev. Kim provided a Stewardship Committee update. The team is still small but Rev. Kim is encouraging them to grow by delegating roles; they are primarily looking for hosts of pledge parties that they are hoping to launch in February. The pledge theme will be "Reconnect - Recommit."
- Susan reported that the end-of-year-appeal was currently at 35% of goal not counting PayPal donations which are tallied at the end of the month.
- Maria thanked the guests and they left the meeting.

# Second Hour

## Reopening/Regathering Discussion

- The Board discussed Rev. Kim's ministerial report and the considerations for moving ahead with an in-person service on Dec. 19 despite the very high community risk level reports. Conversation centered on the idea that mentality has shifted from the broad safety of all to a more targeted focus on risk management and transparency. This is in part due to congregational feedback regarding weighing physical risks against the emotional risks of continued isolation.
- The Board and staff need to revisit messaging and guidelines in this context, and communicate transparently.
- Key points included discussion of potential staff risks, logistics, specific messaging regarding booster status, and the potential for revising spacing and maximum occupancy guidelines.
- **There was a vote via Zoom poll** to approve moving forward with the slow re-opening plan even if the numbers reflect very high risk; there was unanimous consent.
- **ACTION:** Maria and staff will work on revising and sending updated guidelines to the congregation.

## Revisions to Communications Policies

- Susan presented the Board with revised drafts of current communications policies designed to bring them current and to decouple policy content from procedural content (as part of a larger ongoing Board goal). The discussion was positive, recognizing the benefits of the changes in making the documents more user-friendly. Maria suggested adding firmer language stating that people should be covenantal in their interactions on church social media channels. Board Secretary Colleen McCourt suggested modifying gender-inclusive language to match the style used in the Bylaws. Board Trustee Wendy Stasolla suggested adding information about logo size.
- **There was a vote via Zoom poll** to approve the drafts with the proposed revisions: it passed with unanimous consent.

## Housekeeping Items:

- At the beginning of the second hour, Michael Howe-Smith, as the meeting's designated process observer, observed that the recently adopted practice of using discernment circles to gather feedback from all members has been working well, and that Joe, along with Board Trustee and previous Treasurer Jim Sanders, has done a good job of helping the Board to consider the long-term effects of our decisions against budgetary considerations.
- Per Joe, with the passing of one of our members, the church is likely to receive donor gifts which are anticipated to be unrestricted funds, pending confirmation. Joe is checking with Endowment to confirm. We may need to review the gift policy again to ensure that it reflects/guides current church practices.
- Wendy will be starting a pilot scripp gift card subscription program as a way to earn funds for UUCWC.

- Jim will be writing the next CrossCurrents article.

Meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

***Heather Edwards***

Scribe, Board of Trustees

***Colleen McCourt***

Secretary, Board of Trustees

## **Appendix: Executive Team, Staff and Treasurer's Report**

December Exec Team Meeting - 12/2/2021

In attendance - Maria Baratta, Jamie Evanini, Joe Schenk, Colleen McCourt

- At the December meeting, the Personnel Committee will be providing an update regarding a proposal to establish a Controller position to handle UUCWC's accounting and bookkeeping needs. If approved, a job posting will be issued soon (ideally) with an intent to fill the role in February. Currently, Mary Baltycki has been volunteering her services as bookkeeper for the past year and will not continue to function in this capacity in the new church year. Because the stewardship message for the coming campaign of 2022 is expected to focus on staffing needs (controller, new music director), a member of the Stewardship Team will be joining the December meeting to hear the input from the Personnel Committee.
- Beverly Railsback's passing is a significant loss for our congregation. As a vibrant and active member for many decades, she provided both an unwavering faith in our church community and deep institutional memory of UUCWC's church history. She will be greatly missed.
- Following her passing, Joe learned from Beverly's sister that UUCWC is the intended recipient of a large gift from her estate. He is meeting with a representative at Beverly's bank to follow up on this.
- With the recent spikes in COVID cases in Mercer and Bucks, both counties are currently in the Very High Risk category. If we were to follow the current plan approved at the November Board meeting, we would commit to all virtual services until rates fall to the High Risk level. Since it was announced just last month that we would hold our first in-person service on Dec. 19th, we have to decide if we are sticking with the re-opening plan in place (go virtual) or continue with the plan for an in-person service for the 19th.
- In November, there was both a church-wide Council meeting (Nov. 16th) and a Board chat following the Nov 21st Sunday service. During the Council meeting, attendees heard from representatives from the Congregational Engagement team as well as the Capital Campaign team. Jamie provided a summary of the re-opening plan that had been recently approved. Colleen reviewed the Board goals that were approved in November as well. There were some thoughtful questions and interest in all the information offered at the Council meeting. The Board chat on Nov 21st focused primarily on the Board's goals for the coming year.
- At November's meeting there was some unfinished business regarding Communications Policies that Susan asked members to review in the hope that the policy revisions would be approved. Members will be asked to review this content before the December meeting in order to address any questions or concerns prior to a poll for approval.
- In an attempt to encourage congregational engagement with the work of the Board, Maria will provide Susan a brief line or two for the weekly church email inviting members to contact the Board via email to request the meeting's Zoom link. Anyone wishing to attend will need to include their first and last in their Zoom ID so that we can identify them when joining the meeting.

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

**Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)**

In worship in November I invited us first to think about letting go of congregational life and church as we had known it be released, then asked us to consequently hold onto one another, especially as we navigate reopening. We were sent into Thanksgiving with blessings for a different holiday than last year, and tools for when it might feel overwhelming or different than expected. We ended the month with a pre-recorded service provided by the Church of the Larger Fellowship's Prison Ministry. Finally, allowing me some study leave and vacation time, we started December by welcoming the Rev. Dara Olandt to lead a service on Hanukkah.

All attention is now on completing the remaining five December services (including this week's auction sermon and two services – one outdoor caroling event - on Christmas Eve), and two distinct regathering rituals *before* we regather as a multi-platform congregation for the first time on the 19<sup>th</sup>. It is all hands on deck and special praise should be given to the tech team as well as the choir for the immense amount of work pre-recording requires. The emotional and technical labor of this month is significant.

This month I led a training for the Worship Associates and separately we are reworking the language for our racial justice candle of fellowship. We hope that by our December 19<sup>th</sup> service we and the Racial Justice Ministry folks will be in agreement about new wording. As an aside: only two of our current Worship Associates have ever served in this role before March of 2020; most, including our co-chairs, have never spoken from the pulpit or set up the sanctuary for a Sunday morning.

New Member Sunday will be January 9<sup>th</sup>. Whichever new members wish to attend in person, their seats will be reserved before RSVPs are open to the larger congregation. I've recruited Hosts for our in-person services through January.

On November 29<sup>th</sup>, I officiated a very small (the couple and their witnesses) non-member wedding in the church bringing in a small fee for our rental; and beforehand officiated the memorial service of a member's mother. One on one and/or family pastoral care is always notable this time of year but it seems especially so as we approach regathering and life "opening back up."

**Create Community (Small Groups)**

Most of my small group work this month, aside from supporting Robin, has been in the twice weekly Lectio Divina offerings. These are small but lovely spaces of spiritual practice and midday renewal. I hope you will also decide to drop in!

We plan to have two distinct tours for new and established members before regathering on the 19<sup>th</sup>. Both will have ritual elements to them and invite folks to reacclimate to the building.

**Change the World (Service)**

I am working more closely than in years past with the Right Relations Committee, both on overall structure /goals and on individual concerns.

I am working to recruit for and assist with the Stewardship Committee's current and future work. I trust that Jamie will give a fuller report about their intentions this winter, most notably my encouragement of "Pledge Parties."

I led the quarterly Council for Faith in Action meeting where we welcomed the full Racial Justice Ministry to share their proposed guidelines for members and leaders.

I spent time working with the Personnel Committee on the current and future staffing structure and needs.

The staff team is spending significant time preparing for the details and decisions around regathering.

I have not made any further movement on the Music Director position but will turn my attention to it again in January.

**Professional Development**

I am taking the year-long Wellspring class for religious professionals that meets every other week for 10+ months; meet with a Spiritual Director monthly; and gather with a small group of supportive colleagues for discernment and support once a month.

**Susan Irgang**

Administrator BOT Report for December 2021

## **Create Community**

COVID rate updates: According to the NY Times tracking, as of 12/7/21, both Bucks and Mercer are at the “Very High” risk category, with 7- day average cases per 100,000 at 40 and 36 respectively. (“High/Very High” risk threshold is 25 cases/100,000).

Following last month’s Board meeting, I emailed the congregation and posted the [Regathering Guidelines](#) on the website. Since then, we have welcomed two Chalice Circle groups for in-person meetings; each group meets twice a month. We were able to offer collections for social action: Turkeys for TASK and the Mitten Tree for HomeFront. Currently being planned are an event for families on 12/12 and the first in-person worship on 12/19: this increased activity involves getting the building cleaned and ready for use after 21 months and may require more thorough regular cleaning by our 4 hour a week interim sexton.

Update: the potential renter discussed at a prior Board meeting has declined using UUCWC this year. We hope that we will be able to have them onsite for 2023’s New Year’s Day.

I continue to assist the Stewardship Committee with publicity of the End of Year Holiday Gift campaign. As of this writing, we are at about 25% of the goal of \$18,000. The Stewardship team is also beginning Pledge Drive discussions and would welcome additional members; Board suggestions for members are welcomed.

## **Celebrate Life**

With the signing of two new members, our current membership is 283 Church Members (includes 7 Virtual Members), 18 Friends, 43 Participants and 30 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 283, we are actively serving a system of 374, not counting children or visitors.

## **Change the (UUCWC) World**

I completed a project started by then Fundraising Chair Wendy Stasolla to enroll UUCWC in the AmazonSmile program, which gives 0.5% back on eligible purchases. This required obtaining our own tax-exempt status with the IRS (formerly under the UUA umbrella for exemption), which was done by Mary Baltycki. Once that was received, I subsequently registered UUCWC with GuideStar, a database of tax- exempt organizations, before registering with AmazonSmile. We will get quarterly payments beginning February 2022 for purchases made directly from smile.amazon.com. I rolled out the publicity for this new program before Black Friday/Cyber Monday in hopes of capturing attention before holiday shopping.



I have begun work with MJ Hansen on changes to and administration of upcoming changes to our security of files and emails. This will take restructuring and education of users, and will be done over the course of the next few months.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: Dec. 7, 2021

Re: Monthly DLFE Report

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### **Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)**

- We are busy planning for our first in person service on 12/12. Kim, Susan and I have been in discussion about what faith engagement for children might look like. In order for kids to attend Faith Engagement, parents must either be with their children downstairs or be able to reserve a spot in the sanctuary on the sign-up genius (as of this writing, limited to 100 people including worship personnel and choir). Unfortunately, this will limit the number of kids in Faith Engagement.
- Children will not be in the sanctuary for the time for all ages (we are assuming the 100-person limit will be at capacity). On 12/19 kids will go straight to the crossings room when they enter the building. Later, we are considering broadcasting the time for all ages from a room downstairs with the kids. It will be awhile before children are in the sanctuary.
- I continue to host Family chapel from 9-9:30 on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of the month. This will continue when we are open physically.
- I was on vacation in Arizona for a week in November.

### **Create Community (Small Groups)**

- To welcome our families back to UUCWC and to introduce and reacclimate the children to our building, we are having a Family holiday get together this Sunday. Families are invited to enjoy s'mores and cider around the fire pit and make a few ornaments in the Crossings room. I will also be showing kids around the building. All people will be masked and in family pods at long tables in the crossings room.
- We will invite members, friends and visitors to bless the building and take a tour of UUCWC on Saturday 12/18 in 3 time slots. This will let our members spend reflective time in the building before the in-person service and allow those people who were unable to reserve a spot in the sanctuary for 12/19 to return to the building. We will also have a special time slot for our new members and visitors.
- I continue to consider what our children's program might look like when we reopen weekly in February. What the children will be doing, what safety measures we need to have in place, who will teach, what our children need right now. There are many factors to consider.
- I continue to track and welcome visitors in our Sunday services both online in the chat and after services and in person. I look forward to meeting people in person. I will be a greeter on Sunday morning.

## **Save The World**

- I continue to recruit people to be OWL teachers. OWL trainings are beginning to happen after a 2-year hiatus. UUCWC needs OWL teachers for the 3 classes we offer. (K-1, 5-6 and 8-9). This is a big task. It involves recruiting appropriate people to be OWL teachers and matching them with a training that happens on a specific weekend that fills up quickly. There are very few trainings per year that are within driving distance from UUCWC. The UUA's training is virtual. Some churches are organizing their own trainings and offering them in person.
- I continue to co-lead 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> evening fire pits for our 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> graders. These get-togethers are a fun, safe and supportive space for our teens. We may be heading inside soon because of the cold. The group is evenly split whether to meet outside with food and fire or inside masked and no food.

## **Professional Development and Support**

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

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. It is ending this month. I am in the first semester of my second 2-year spiritual direction course for adults.

I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

## Treasurer's Report

December 5, 2021

**Statement of Income and Expense** as of the close of the November Month were shared in the pre-reads.

### Summary:

- All financial indications are positive with a \$22k positive variance to date
- Bank Account Balances total \$1.29 million:
  - o \$466k Operating combined balances
  - o \$617k Capital Campaign
  - o \$230k Endowment
  - o -\$17k payables

### Year to Date Finances as of 11/30/2021

Income		Expense	
Sunday "Plate"	9,823	Staff	131,168
Pledge	184,521	Operations	35,271
Paycheck Protection Forgiveness	12,500	Program	8,858
All Other	7,733	Denomination	6,305
	<b>214,577</b>	Debt Service	10,610
			<b>192,212</b>
<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>22,365</b>		

**Financial highlights are as follows through September 30**

**Overall Budget Tracking:** \$22k Positive Variance Year to Date

**Income:** Negative variance: \$1.9k (\$1,900 less income than budgeted)

1. "Plate Income" lower by \$4k
2. Pledge Income lower by \$7.5k
3. Year End Gift and Miscellaneous Income positive

**Expense: Positive** Variance: \$32k (\$32,000 less spend than budget)

Increasing - continuing to reflect closure of the building and associated expenses

1. **Staff:** positive variance \$14k reflective of sexton expense savings and other delayed staff expense
2. **Operations:** positive variance \$11k reflective of reduced utility and maintenance expenses
3. **Program:** positive variance \$6.6k reflective of reduced expenses associated programs, most notable Adult & Children's RE
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 8<sup>th</sup>.