

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



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)

March 9, 2022

Zoom Meeting due to Covid-19 Virus Social Isolation

President Maria Baratta called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini; Secretary, Colleen McCourt; 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. Absent was Joe Schenk, Treasurer

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote)

The Board discussed items including:

- A pending \$15,000 expense related to fees/interest on Capital Campaign construction loans. Discussion focused on the potential timing, nature and impact of the expense, and the fact that further details are needed for transparency, clarification and guidance on how to proceed. Discussion included possibly contesting the interest due to COVID. It was decided that we need to review the loan agreements for clarification and consult with the Capital Campaign Committee for alignment.
- General Capital Campaign updates on timing and progress of the contractor selection process; it's anticipated that the Board will approve the contractor at the next meeting.
- High-level plans for Caryl Tipton's retirement celebration on June 12

Budget Check-in

Finance Chair Steve Saddlemire arrived at 7:30 to provide a high-level budget overview. While we do not have a formal treasurer's report this month, key points includes:

- Income and expenses are still tracking to budget and in the positive, though net income has been decreasing. Surplus has been tracking down for each of the last 3 months - directly attributable to pledge lags.
 - There has been some lag in pledges which is not atypical this time of year and tends to self-correct; Ron Iannacone may reach out to individuals as needed to bring pledges in line by May.

- Big-ticket item for the next fiscal year budget is personnel investments which are largely accounted for. Expenses have been below budget for the past few years due to not investing in personnel; that will change as we go forward and we will need to plan for the downward trend in surplus.
- Steve discussed the \$15,000 Capital Campaign loan expense in further detail, including the potential timing, which depends on when construction starts. Mary Baltycki is looking into this; loan approval is imminent but still in process. Based on the current projected timelines, it's anticipated that this will be a line item in next year's budget - split into interest and mortgage payments.
- Per Ron Iannacone, one third of the congregation has pledged to date, at 50% of the budget. Stewardship continues to follow up with the congregation. The Finance team makes educated guesses to plan the budget while pledges are still pending.
- The Finance team is still waiting for budget numbers from the various congregational committees and ministries.
- Board President Maria Baratta thanked Steve and he left the meeting.
- The Board and staff commented what a great job Steve and the Finance team are doing.

Second Hour

Re-gathering Update

- Recognizing that UUCWC staff owns the reopening protocols, they are seeking Board affirmation/input around several key questions related to COVID risk levels being lowered to Medium, and their relevant impact on facility use, including:
 - Outside groups using church building and grounds
 - Small groups using church building and grounds
- Discussion focused on several key points including but not limited to: what constitutes a small group size, whether we should mandate COVID guidelines for outside groups and how this would be enforced, whether food sharing should be permitted in various circumstances, and how guidelines would impact upcoming events at UUCWC including the Auction Committee's preview party event.
- There was in-depth discussion including consensus polls for each question; ultimately, the Board's conclusions were as follows:
 - Outside groups are permitted to use the church; COVID protections including masks and vaccinations will be suggested but not mandated. In the rare situations where outside groups would be in the building at the same time as church members, masks would be required in all common areas. Signage will reflect this, and church members will be informed so that there are no surprises.
 - Food sharing is allowed for small groups (size of small groups still being defined by staff but likely up to 30 - 50 people).

- For large groups, overall indoor mask protocols will be re-evaluated in the future, likely when we enter the Low risk level category. Per the Executive Board team, we have agreed not to address overall masking until the April Board meeting. We continue to follow and message a slow, incremental reopening approach based on the most current available information. This is reflected by the changes we have already made (removing capacity limits and permitting masked singing), and further changes will be addressed as we go forward.
- Fellowship Hour will continue to be evaluated based on risk levels; they could be outside, or inside with the expectation of being masked when not eating or drinking.
- Regarding the Auction Committee preview event on 4/24, the Board's recommendation is that the team can go ahead and plan for an outdoor event where everyone can be unmasked. In the event of inclement weather, the event can take place in the Crossings Room, and would follow whatever masking protocols are being observed in the sanctuary at that time.

Ministerial Evaluation Process

The Board reviewed the history and progress of this effort, which was initiated by the previous Board.

- Trustee Jim Sanders took over the process last year.
- Currently, there is a questionnaire for Board members to complete, which is based on the UUA ministerial self-evaluation.
- The document has been sent to Board members for the past 2 years but has not had high participation.
- General discussion centered around the fact the current Board lacks clarity on the purpose and scope of the evaluation process, including whether there should be a similar evaluation of the Board itself. Rev. Kim offered to work with a sub-team and potentially address this at the spring Board retreat.
- **ACTION:** Board Secretary Colleen McCourt will follow up with members of the previous Board for more detail on the intended scope and purpose. Trustees Wendy Stasolla and Heather Edwards offered their support to perform further research if needed.

Personnel Update

- Rev. Kim provided an update about the search and timeline for the music director position. We are still seeking applicants and will set up a team to evaluate candidates. Rev. Kim hopes to have an update by the next Board meeting.
- This process has been time-consuming for staff and the Personnel Committee, and in the future, we may need to develop a way to streamline it.

Liaison Updates

Board liaisons to various committees provided updates including:

- Maria attended a meeting of the Congregational Engagement team where they spoke about pending openings in leadership positions and plans for conducting surveys and interviews. Susan

can also put out an email to the congregation informing them of open positions (e.g. one Board position, Finance Chair, Endowment role, etc.)

Housekeeping & action items

- Michael Waas will write the Cross Currents article for the next issue.
- We will schedule a Board Chat after the budget is shared with the congregation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Heather Edwards

Scribe, Board of Trustees

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive Team and Staff Reports

March 2022 Exec Team Report

There was a Council meeting held on March 1st and led by Board VP Jamie Evanini. It was multi-platform with some attendees joining from Zoom and a handful attending together from a meeting room within the church. There was a lot covered including:

- Reflections on the significance of participating in spiritual small group activities.
- Overview of the use of Nourishing Circles by Congregational Engagement and how they are seeking input from members as to their interest in participating in church activities. Open leadership positions were also addressed.
- There was an introduction to the budget preparation process that will soon be in place for the new church year and how leaders were to communicate their budgetary needs.
- The Stewardship Campaign is in full swing and an update on the status of that was shared.
- Activities surrounding the annual auction were addressed. This is the only major fundraiser activity held at UUCWC and a lot of volunteer work goes into the preparation and launching of it each year.
- Right Relations spoke about the significance of having a covenant in place for any committee or Taskforce work done and best practices for covenanting within a group.

With the hiring of Lynne Quinto in the new role of part-time controller to manage the increasingly complex financial portfolio of UUCWC, there will now be a broader group of experts to manage our budget, financial planning and investments. Along with the Treasurer, Finance Committee and staff of UUCWC, Lynne will be an integral part of the church's fiscal team.

The Board is working with Rev. Kim and other staff on updating re-gathering guidelines. With an overall continually improving COVID-19 scenario, there is an expectation that more and more activities will resume on church grounds and communication on the changing guidelines will be forthcoming soon.

While there are 4 Board members whose terms are up this year, three of them are interested in continuing to serve another 2 year term. Those who wish to re-up include Jamie Evanini, Colleen McCourt and Michael Waas. Michael Howe-Smith, who has served as liaison to the Capital Campaign Team, will be leaving the Board after this term. His humor and thoughtful observations will be missed. It has been a real pleasure to work with him this past year.

March 2022

Minister Board Report

Rev. Kim Wildszewski

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

- Multi-platform worship topics and themes:
 - Stewardship Sunday (4 Testimonials have been given; 1 more this Sunday)
 - Spiritual Decluttering (“We are Not Squirrels”)
 - When Your Fire is Burning Low (Duet prayer & sermon with Erin Busch)
- Coming Up:
 - Why We Worship (this Sunday, four Worship Associates reflecting on Rev. Kay Northcutt’s list of Why People Worship)
 - Klaus & Michelle Zechner 2021 auction won sermon
- Additional Notes:
 - Training Worship Associates is now both an in-person and remote task; each WA reports that participating and leading online and in person has different benefits and that neither options feels like the “right way” anymore
 - Budgeting is currently a staff responsibility as only two WAs served in this role before the pandemic; needing to compare 2019-2022 budgets to plan for 2023
 - Ongoing discernment about how to balance sanctuary and remote participation
 - Joys & Sorrows have yet to be reintroduced since February /
Multiplatform worship

Create Community (Small Groups)

- Leading and/or Co-Leading the following Small Groups:
 - Lectio Divina (twice weekly)
 - Tending the Flame (monthly)
 - Pathways (4 sessions, every other week)
 - 16 participants including
 - 2 members
 - 7 non-members who come from previous UU communities
 - 11 of the 16 are female
 - 1 of the 16 is a Person of Color
 - 3 of the 16 are LGBTQ
 - 5 of the 16 are under 40
 - Universal reporting of feeling a depth of connection despite only remote participation
- Pastoral Care to Note:
 - 3 Memorial Services coming up in May & June (Jo Milner, Beverly Railsback, Tony Panzetta)

- Linda Vogt is new co-chair for the Pastoral Care Ministry
- One-on-one pastoral care has not gotten the attention it requires this month due to administrative needs

Change the World

- Met with Pat Infante, our UUA Regional Contact about the health of UUCWC and noted:
 - Generational divide growing wider
 - Financial stability and health
 - Pat reflects that 3-5 year strategic plans are not purposeful right now; 3-6-12 month plans instead
- Personnel has taken a **significant** amount of time:
 - Continued concern about the size, function and role of this committee
 - Updates:
 - Roberto has agreed to hold the Sexton & Sunday Stewardard positions (Susan can speak to the details of this agreement)
 - Lynne Quinto has been hired as Controller; start date was March 1; systems still need to be put in place to cover for in person work
 - Alex Reiser continues as our paid Sunday morning and Friday evening children/youth teacher (Robin can speak more about this agreement and its evolution)
 - Currently working on Director of Religious Education job description
 - Posted Transition Music Director Position
 - To Note: this has been increased to a 12 month position
- Auction support follows Stewardship support; testimonials to begin in 2 Sundays; anxiety in the team
- Council for Faith in Action quarterly meeting continues to show growth, health and possibility among these ministry teams.
 - Food Ministry & FEFT have combined their financial efforts for greater impact. This took “patience, time and trust.”
 - Group is pitching in for Social Action as Ronnie continues to heal.
 - This Council model has been the most successful shared ministry effort of the last 3 years.
- Nominating needs and anxiety is growing: Grounds, Memorial Garden, Building & more
- Worship Tech Team continues to grow and strengthen; continue to work on the interpersonal health of this team
- Noting a growing narrative of “nothing has happened with xyz in a few years” - we are quickly forgetting the truth of the last two years; cultural expectation of continuation during and after disruption

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for March 2022

Create Community

Monthly COVID rate update: According to the COVID Act Now metrics, as of 3/9/22, the 7-day average of cases per 100,000 for Mercer is 13 while Bucks is at 5. Mercer dipped into “Medium Risk” (below 10/100,000) status briefly last week then rose again and is now back at “High Risk”; Bucks continues to hold at Medium Risk.

The need to update requirements is a topic at this month’s Board meeting, and is essential as we adjust to the risk levels shift from High to Medium. Some changes, such as removing restrictions on the number of attendees on Sunday and allowing (masked) singing at worship, have begun; however, Board input is needed specifically on food sharing at events, with 4 Auction 2021 gatherings due to meet in April at church (food related) and an Auction 2022 Preview party with refreshments requested for late April; as well, a decision about whether outside groups sponsored by UUCWC or as renters with no affiliation to us need to require vaccinations/masking for use of the building.

I continue to work with the Stewardship team on the Pledge drive launch and updates. As of Monday, March 7, we have received 77 pledges totaling over \$200,000. This represents pledges from about 33% of our pledging households, with a range of reductions in pledge to increases of over 100%; average increases in pledge amounts is approximately 17%.

As the transition to multiplatform church life continues, including meetings as well as worship, I am working with staff and others to create systems and procure/set up equipment and supplies to accommodate new needs. I will note though that there has been little in-person use to date other than worship; I hope to improve systems for multiplatform committee/ministry meeting.

Celebrate Life

Our current (certified) membership is 274 Church Members (includes 7 Virtual Members), 18 Friends, 42 Participants and 32 Attendees. As the numbers show, while our membership is officially 274, we are actively serving a system of 366, not counting children or visitors.

Change the (UUCWC) World

I am working on budgets that cover my areas (office and office tech) as well as other areas such as Communications and Building which have no official leaders. I am consulting with Tech Team and Grounds on their budgets, gathering information they need sometimes from outside sources.

Following the offer made and accepted for the Controller position in the last days of February, I worked on onboarding Lynne Quinto with a March 1 start date including completing all needed paperwork and expediting an order for a laptop for her use, which was delivered March 3. I will be spending some time with Lynne when she comes to NJ on April 5th to meet with Mary Baltycki. Additionally, I have begun [posting the Transitional Director of Music Ministry position](#) in various outlets; the deadline for applications is April 1.

Additional work this month included contracting with a new well testing lab; renewing our service contract for HVAC services and lawn cutting; preparing for our annual fire inspection; working with a web consultant to address website issues related to the CrossCurrents newsletter; supporting the Auction team and Memorial Garden team; and more. My work often is very diverse and broad in scope, which can sometimes be challenging.

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To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: March 9, 2022

Re: Monthly DLFE Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

- I took on the responsibility for Sunday Hosts (formerly ushers and greeters) because they are vital for the visitor to member trail. Did you know research shows that first-time visitors make up their minds whether consciously or unconsciously if they're coming back or not in the first 10 minutes of their visit? Kim, Susan and I are working together to create a system on Sunday morning that welcomes each person and helps whoever walks through our door feel comfortable and safe. Additionally, At the same time hosts accomplish several important administrative tasks. I've recruited 14 new hosts to add to the 5 people who've been hosting all of February.
- On Sundays, I am downstairs with the kids after the time for all ages until parents pick up their kids. Our kids' program is important AND I cannot spend needed time with visitors and new members who are entering our building for the first time. This is a loss. They need attention. Additionally, I can't reach out to visitors online during the service and afterwards. Previously, I was able to get contact information for visitors during the service. Only about a third of our visitors fill out the visitor form on their first visit if they are online.
- I continue to host a virtual Family chapel and Junior Youth firepit on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

Create Community (Small Groups)

- Our children's program is currently one classroom of children and youth from ages 3-15. Attendance is between 10-15 kids. After chalice lighting and joys and sorrows, they are given 3 options for free play activity. There is a wonderful, calm, supportive feeling in this multi age community as teens help and engage in the same activity as the 5-year old's next to them.
- Using what I learned in the "Spiritual Direction with Children" class I took last semester, Kim and I are meeting with parents and grandparents once a month in a class focusing on children and spirituality.
- I continue to track and follow up on visitors that I can contact. I've encouraged our regular visitors to take the next step in involvement at UUCWC and take Kim's Pathways to Membership class. 14 potential new members registered.
- I continue to meet with our 15 Chalice circle facilitators monthly and lead 3 of the 10 chalice circles myself. Chalice circles are critical to connecting people to each other and to church.

Change the World

- I planned and virtually hosted an, "I am Jazz" event, part of the Human Rights Campaign's Jazz & Friends National Day of School & Community Readings of picture books that support trans and non-binary children and youth.
- I am providing Kim with suggestions for the job description for the ½ time Director of Faith Engagement position.
- I am drafting a paid teacher job description and considering what that position might look like.
- I am facilitating a new 8 session Wellspring class on Article 2 of the UUA By-laws. Every other week, I meet with 7 people to consider what we personally value in our faith. The conversations are rich. Last night, one question we answered was: Given our diversity, can you think of a unifying identity or set of values that go to the heart of what **you** believe Unitarian Universalism is and that should be reflected in Article 2?

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.

I am in the third trimester of my 2-year spiritual direction course for adults.

I see a Spiritual Director monthly.

