



First Unitarian Church of Rochester
Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, December 14, 2020
6:30 pm by Zoom

Attendance: Ken Buckle, Jon Horne, Terri Goldstein, Lynn Kinsman, Robert Lyubomirsky, Courtney Miller, Gregory North, Anne Perry, Mara Sanchez, Scott Stamper, Paul Suwijn, Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan.

Guests:

Absent: Kyle Williams (excused for work obligation)

1. Establish a Quorum and Call Meeting to Order at 6:35 pm — Gregory North
2. Chalice lighting – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan
Centering Reading – Jon Horne. Poem “Invictus” by William Ernest Henley.
Jon explained that Nelson Mandela (the anti-apartheid leader who was jailed for his activism and in 1994 became South Africa’s first black President) regularly recited one poem during his more than twenty-five years of imprisonment—the 1875 poem “Invictus” by English poet William Ernest Henley.
3. Consent Agenda [*Note: consent agenda includes items that are distributed before the Board meeting and are voted on without discussion. Any Board member can request that an item be removed so that it can be discussed.*]
 - o November Board minutes
Consent agenda passed.
4. Strategic Focus
 - a. Future Church Vision / Capital Project – Update Paul Suwijn & Gregory North
 - i. Paul and Gregory met with Dave Burnet to look at realistic plan for this giving project (not a capital campaign). As a reminder, we are looking at capital projects, planning the church of the future and bridging to the wider community
 - ii. We are getting a better sense of what’s in those three categories. We have a current plan for urgent capital projects. Second category – planning for our future in terms of needs for the church – what would we need to change to make the building more sustainable and more usable in the future. Third category – how do we help people stay in their homes. For example, a targeted donation to Family Promise of Greater Rochester (formerly RAIHN) to address the imminent housing crisis. **Note:** *There is an organization called Family Promise Rochester that is located in Minnesota. The website for Family Promise Rochester NY is still www.raihn.org.*
 - iii. We had previously talked about committing a match to the \$250K that we are committing to find for the capital projects. At this point, we are looking at \$250K

for priority building repairs and a \$25K commitment to a future planning process for our church home and above that and \$25K to be donated to an organization helping the homeless.

- iv. The fund-raising effort would be kept small. It would not be a congregation-wide ask, avoiding conflict with the stewardship campaign. Instead, we would start with small group who are known to have a passion for the building and expand to others as needed. The group is putting together a brochure. It should also be noted that the Treasurer has identified multiple sources of funding that this fund-raising would supplement.
- v. Rev. Shari proposed forming a task force, including two Board members, two appointed by the Board, and two others to work with the executive over the course of 2 years to prepare for a future capital campaign, working from our Mission and Ends. This group would formulate a set of options, possibilities that would fulfill our Ends and excite our congregation.

MOTION: To approve \$25K to Family Promise (formerly RAIHN) to address the impending housing crisis from operating cash reserve until the fund has been raised.

Moved: Robert Lyubomirsky Seconded: Jon Horne
Passed unanimously

MOTION: In addition to the \$250K for building repairs that was approved at the October Board meeting, we authorize \$25K for a planning process for future needs and capital projects and the Board will appoint 2 members of the board to work with the lead minister to begin the planning process.

Moved: Robert Lyubomirsky Seconded: Ken Buckle
Motion passed with two opposed saying they were still unclear.

- b. 2020 Multi-Year Pledging Analysis – Robert Lyubomirsky
 - i. Analyzed 2016 thru 2020 Annual Pledge Drive by age groups, which showed that our pledge units have been decreasing over last 5 years by 17%, while our pledgers in the 20th thru 60th age group falling on average by 27% (faster). Currently over 40% of our congregation is over 70 years old (while in 2016 it was ~35%). Our Strategic Transformation efforts should continue focusing on reversing this trend to assure our long-lasting sustainability. This analysis should be updated each year.

5. Policies:

- a. Policy Governance Committee – Lynn Kinsman, Robert Lyubomirsky, Gregory North, Anne Perry
 - i. Feedback on 11/18 Forum. It was well attended with 23 zoom connections. Unfortunately, the recording was initiated at the 10-minute mark, making it problematic to post it online. Gregory North explained that one of the valuable learnings was listening to congregant comments and questions. He urged all Board members to attend the next forum which will be held in the spring.

ii. Bylaws Changes Discussion

1. Property Maintenance & Improvement Fund

Treasurer Robert Lyubomirsky reviewed the current bylaws method for calculating the amount coming from the current operating budget and transferred to the Property Maintenance and Improvement Fund. He could not validate where the number came from even though he went back 15 years. He proposes a simplified method that still uses the five-year value of the building as set by the insurance carrier but then uses a flat percentage rather than looking at an increase or decrease in building value. The Board asked him to work with Terri Goldstein who has experience with insurance valuations and to come back in January with final proposed wording.

2. Search Committee number of members

Good discussion of the concept of reducing the number of members on future search committees from nine to seven. The UUA confirms that the most common search committee size is seven with the range being between five and seven. It was suggested that each member of a search committee has a similar time commitment because each person has to do the same work in reviewing applications and interviewing candidates. The Policy Governance Committee was asked to validate with members of the most recent search committee whether having seven versus nine would have made a difference in their work and bring the results back in January.

3. Whether our called minister should be call 'Senior' vs 'Lead' Minister

Good discussion suggests that we are in a period of using both terms and it may not be the right time to change the bylaws. It was decided to make a final decision in January.

4. Committee Accounts

This is an administrative issue. For many years, the miscellaneous accounts were called 'bookkeeping accounts'. The current usage has shifted to 'committee accounts'. This change would align the bylaws with current practice. Again, final package will be determined at the January board meeting.

iii. Ends Monitoring Calendar – Robert Lyubomirsky is working with Lynn Kinsman on putting together a calendar that will be a framework for what topics will come up at which board meeting. It was pointed out that a specific calendar is needed for the remainder of the current board year in addition to a template for future years.

6. Minister's Report.

- a. End 3 interpretation put off to January owing to the very busy church calendar leading up to and during the holiday period.
- b. Grateful to the team for coming up with a calendar template for each year. We need to

have a separate calendar for this year since we are halfway through the year. Linkage team needs to complete the congregational survey as a key task in our monitoring process.

- c. Installation update. Tend not to do these during church services because colleagues can't come at that time. Online is another story. We will do it during the church service on Sunday, January 31.
- d. ABD update. Plan to use small group leaders to connect with people. Asking people to complete their pledge in SimpleChurch didn't result in the expected savings in time and effort. Team has started work and already come up with lots of ideas.
- e. Raised up what it means for people to be the church. Holiday gift bags, Thanksgiving, new things during services. Shout out to Granny Annie for an outstanding job in organizing the Thanksgiving meal delivery event, which was an excellent example of engaging the congregation during these COVID times.
- f. In the process of making some changes in the administrative staff structure/roles. Right now, our communications process is under-resourced. This impacts outreach, especially to the younger age groups. We are talking about a reallocation of work/role not a change in personnel. Excited to have the opportunity in the future to open the building with the right staffing for our needs.
- g. Beloved Conversations is a program for Unitarian Universalists seeking to embody racial justice as a spiritual practice. This program is offered by the Fahs Collaborative based at Meadville Lombard Theological School. It is our major anti-racism/anti-oppression adult spiritual development offering this year led by our R3 group. Registration begins in February, and the program runs March-May. It is my hope and expectation that staff members and lay leaders will make a concerted effort to participate. It involves a fairly large time commitment. 45 minutes to an hour and a half per week. Would like all Board members to participate. There's \$6K in budget that may be used to subsidize registration. Individuals may choose to pay their own registration or request scholarship support. Encouraging a soul matters group to do this instead of packets. Scheduling is done by UUA Fahs Collaborative. **Note:** *There are discounts for groups signing up together (20% if more than 20 people). Please wait until there is more information in the newsletter before you register so you will be part of the First Unitarian group.*

7. Monitoring:

- a. Treasurer's report — Robert Lyubomirsky
 - i. Financial Short Term: October report is on Google Drive. Income & Expenses YTD are in line with last years (showing minor slowdown in October Revenue vs. Prior Year). Update from November: Current YTD results are now a bid ahead of last year.
 - ii. Financial Long Term: The final bequest's settlement check in the amount of ~\$1.04M was provided on November 9th and deposited into Income Endowment Fund. As of 12/14 evening, our Alesco Schwab Income Endowment Fund is over \$8M
 - iii. PPP – Loan was officially forgiven on Nov 14th. \$117.325K was moved to Operating Cash Reserve in November. As a result, our Operating Cash Reserve is

close to \$200K.

iv. Audit:

1. The Audit team has selected 3 finalists. Awaiting their recommendation of the firm. May be an email vote to approve the firm.
2. All 3 firms are recommending a Review level report vs. full Audit for the Church/non-profit of our size. Review is consistent with prior First Unitarian Audits. I support Review level analysis.

8. Linkage:

a. Linkage Subcommittee – Kyle Williams, Jon Horne, Terri Goldstein, Ken Buckle & Paul Suwijn

- i. Terri Goldstein sent out a compilation of the information they've been gathering in order to better understand the Board's role in linkage and how to determine who are our moral owners? Several other churches have researched this, and we looked at their definitions. From there, we looked at prior year surveys and Rev. Shari's evaluation. We talked a little bit about our survey . . . we weren't sure that the survey was our responsibility. We need to do this digitally – Gregory offered to help with that. Will get it out early January. Synopsis of information that Terri put together is very much worthwhile and an article referenced would be good for board orientation. Strongly encourage everyone to read it. Helpful input into what linkage means. If linkage is taking lead on survey – what's more important: timeliness? or revision to fit changes due to COVID? There are specific questions that came out of our discussion of ends interpretations that should be included – Paul Suwijn asked Robert Lyubomirsky to make a list. Looking at comments from previous surveys has been important. The Ends that came out of Our Road Ahead are the basis for the survey. We are not asking the congregation to recreate the Ends – that process occurs every 5 to 7 years. The survey is not an opportunity to change our Ends but an opportunity to find out how we are doing towards achieving them.

b. What's happening around church?

- i. Paul Suwijn shared that Doug and Betty Evans are in Highland with COVID. Golfers have been calling them.
- ii. Mary Hammele and Kevin Glover also had COVID – they are recovering.
- iii. Greater Good is already close to \$26K with donations on Sunday 12/13 plus some that came in prior to the Greater Good Service.

c. Cards of Caring and Concern – Since the previous meeting, the following cards were sent:

- i. Howard and Jo Cone – Howard is at Highland Hospital with COVID. Jo tested positive as well and is currently symptom-free. Howard was in the hospital for another issue and came home positive for COVID. He was home for two weeks before hospitalization for COVID was necessary – Paul Suwijn

9. Adjourn. With no objection, meeting adjourned at 9:05.

10. Closing and extinguish the chalice – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan

APPROVED