



First Unitarian Church of Rochester
Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, December 11, 2023
6:30 pm
Location: Zoom

Attendance: Keith Abel, Ken Buckle, Emily Clasper, Erin Collier, Barbara Gawinski, Lynn Kinsman, Craig Lending, Robert Lyubomirsky, Carl Olsen, Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz, Elise Wall, Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan.

Guests:

Absent: David Pinto

1. Establish a Quorum and Call Meeting to Order at 6:33pm— Lynn Kinsman
Timekeeper for the Meeting: Craig Lending
2. Chalice lighting – Elise Wall “Winter Solstice” by Lao Tzu
3. Consent Agenda [*Note: The 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.*] accepted as stated below:

- a. [BOT November 13, 2023 Minutes](#)

Approved via Email

- b. **Consent Agenda Motion – Approval for Sr. Minister, Associate Minister, and Minister of Growth 2024 Housing Allowance**

Background: IRS requires that on an Annual Basis the Board of Trustees approves Minister’s Housing Allowance.

MOTION: To approve housing allowance for calendar year 2024 as follows:

- Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan \$22,000
- Rev. AJ van Tine: \$33,500
- Rev. Verdis LeVar Robinson \$15,000

- c. **Motion approved by email since last meeting – Approve Covenant between Elisabeth Halliday-Quan and the Board of Trustees**

Background: This covenant was discussed at the last Board of Trustees Meeting, and updated to reflect the comments offered during the discussion.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QpaTU4A_3Sii-

[92WblicNAeEUPntmtja/edit?usp=drive link&oid=104686271741910169952&rtpof=true&sd=true](https://92WblicNAeEUPntmtja/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=104686271741910169952&rtpof=true&sd=true)

MOTION: To approve the Covenant with Elisabeth Halliday-Quan as revised.

MOVER: Keith Abel **SECOND:** Ken Buckle

4. Personnel Committee report (Carl Olsen, Chair)
 - a. Planning Staff Survey - a date needs to be set for this. Plan for communicating this to staff and encouraging participation also needed. Survey questions from last year will be used.
 - b. Staff Appreciation event and gifts - Sat. Dec. 16 between Solstice services which are 6 and 8pm.
 - c. Planning Ministerial Evaluation - Lynn is heading the efforts to begin planning the format. February Board meeting will include discussion of the process.

5. Policy Governance Committee (Keith Abel, Chair)
 - a. Tentative timeline for policy review:
 - i. December (committee meeting canceled)
 - ii. January – Revision of Financial policy interpretation
 - iii. February – Crescendo fund charter revisions (with input from Pablo and new committee if fully formed by then.) Draft from this committee already in progress.
 - iv. March – Staff & Volunteer treatment policy interpretation - bring to full board at March meeting after committee review of Rev. Shari’s interpretation (due in December.)
 - b. Discussion of Gilbert Spirit Fund, Wenger fund and Social Justice fund:
 - i. Lynn confirmed that Gilbert Spirit Fund is committed to help fund “Minister of Growth” for this year and next two years.
 - ii. Rev. Shari reports that the Social Justice Support Team is reaching out to the Gilbert Spirit Fund panel from last year to ask them to be part of a new Social Justice Grants panel, which has been dormant for a few years, since the skillset is similar. They are not getting responses, so may have to start recruiting from scratch. But it is confirmed that Social Justice ministry owns getting this together. No action needed from the board.
 - c. The Policy Governance Committee is required to have at least one educational forum per year. We think that it should be done in March or April. We want to avoid conflicts or overload with the Linkage Committee’s sessions, so coordination is needed.

6. Linkages Committee (Barbara Gawinski, Chair)
 - a. Long-range plan in process to conclude Our Road Ahead and develop a proposal for the next plan for Ends monitoring. By January, there will hopefully be a more concrete plan to present to the Board. This may include the recommendation of working with a

consultant to revise ends and reset our evaluation and assessment strategies. June - Present accomplishments from this process.

- b. Documents need to be gathered, including annual reports and Ends Interpretations, in order to complete the analysis leading to recommendations.
- c.

7. Minister's Report

- a. Lynn expressed appreciation for the update on evaluation of new staff, which provides more clarity on this process.
- b. The church will be closed between Christmas Day and January 2nd.
- c. Religious Education DRE discernment process underway with assistance of an external consultant.
- d. Rev. Shari will be on vacation January 9 - 13. and away on study leave February 9-16 attending the Senior Ministers of Large UU Congregations annual gathering.
- e. We intend to keep worship times the same for the remainder of the church year.
- f. In-person attendance was up 15% comparing the November average to that of October.

8. Treasurer's Report (Robert and Florence) -

- a. Documents:
 - i. [Treasurer's Report #1](#)
 - ii. [Treasurer's Report #2](#)
 - iii. [Treasurer's Report #3](#)
 - iv. [Treasurer's Report #4](#)
- b. October Financial Report
 - i. YTD Total Income is 46.61% of the FYB. This is (\$54.5k) less than PY YTD, predominantly due to a change in Endowment transfer frequency (from quarterly to monthly). Per prior Board Meeting, since some of our Full Year Pledge Income assumptions have some risk associated with Stewardship Commitments – this is a good Start. Continue Monitoring.
 - ii. Full year Expenses are 29.69% of FYB (Full Year Budget), below the 33.33%-time progression. YTD Expense total is \$354.1k (vs. PY YTD \$327.27k), i.e., increase in spending by (\$26.79k). Spending overall is well managed!
- c. Update November: Income pace is slowing down a bit (YOY), while expenses have grown YOY (due to increased spending in multiple ministries, per plan).
- d. Fall Stewardship Campaign - this has been completed, yet the work will continue to reach out to newer people especially. Some increases were seen, but are offset by a decreased number of pledges.
- e. Audit Committee update
 - i. The recommendation of the Audit firm to perform 2023-2024 Audit is still in process. The proposals from 3 firms range in scope and costs. The Audit Committee might require a bit longer to complete the analysis. Expect an update early next week. If a recommendation is received, appropriate information will be emailed to the Board for a vote.

f. Minister For Growth Reporting

- i. On September 9th, 2022 BOT meeting, the Board offered support to our Lead Minister to seek financial enablement and pursue the creation of a Minister of Growth position.
- ii. Since then, the Congregation/Board of Trustees received an Annual Plan presentation indicating how this position is to be funded for 3 years
- iii. Starting in January, an additional report will be included in the Treasurer's Report Financial Package, which will summarize where we are in spending for the Minister of Growth position.

9. Other Business:

- a. Progress report on obtaining 501(c)3 status/ Documentation on church name change (Elise and Keith)
 - i. Project documents are available to the Board in a folder in the Shared Google Drive.
 - ii. Original Articles of Incorporation were obtained from the Monroe County Clerk's office. The original name the church had when it was first incorporated was The First Unitarian Congregational Society of Rochester. Although it has been known as First Unitarian Church of Rochester for a long time, no official documents showing a legal name change have been found. Documenting this name change needs to be resolved before pursuing 501(c)3 designation with the IRS.
 - iii. The team will be meeting with an attorney Jan 10 to determine next steps.
- b. Rescheduling April board meeting from April 8 (Total Eclipse Day) to April 15, since there are 5 Mondays in April. Final determination TBD.
- c. Craig will coordinate board-provided meals for vanTine family when the baby arrives.
- d. Reflect on Minister for Growth position, goals and 5-month progress
 - i. Two major areas of attention for this position
 - Building Unitarian Universalism across NY State with First Unitarian as an anchor organization
 - Diversifying the cultural expression of Unitarian Universalism at First Unitarian and engaging in Social Justice Outreach
 - ii. Upcoming projects and deliverables
 - A podcast is being developed as a project to reach out to those who feel an affinity with First U - goal to launch in March
 - Involvement in service at minimum once per thematic season (every other month) - already scheduled in January and February (during Rev. AJ VanTine's parental leave.)

10. Reminders:

- a. January board meeting will be in person at church and rescheduled to Jan 20 (9:30-Noon) Exec team is meeting Jan. 9 to plan the workshop.
 - b. Winter Solstice Saturday, December 16: 6pm and 8pm
 - c. Christmas Eve December 24:
 - i. 11:30 am Family Service
 - ii. 4 PM Masked Candlelight Service
 - iii. 6 PM Traditional Candlelight Service
 - iv. 8 PM Rock Candlelight Service
 - d. Christmas Day December 25 *Informal gathering*
 - e. December 31st: Online-only service with Rev. Sofia Betancourt preaching.
 - f. January 7: Rev. AJ's last service before parental leave
 - g. MLK Day of Service Monday, January 15: Join the Social Justice Support Team for team-based service opportunities in our wider community.
11. Check out: (meeting process or sharing something you heard around church)
- a. Appreciation for candid discussion, leaning into difficult conversations, keeping one another accountable. Efficiency in the beginning of the meeting allowed for a deeper discussion later on.
12. Chalice Extinguishing – Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan
13. Adjourn. With no objection, meeting adjourned at 9:07pm