

FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
Board of Trustees – Meeting Minutes
Date: May 9, 2018

Board Members Present: Shelly Wallace (2018), Brian MacConnell (2018), Beth McGrew (2018), Sarah Estes (2019), Amy Hunt (2019), Dan Schneider (2020), Patricia Rohrer (2020), Gary Gebhart (2020), Rev. Benjamin Maucere (ex-officio), Dick Miltner (ex-officio)

Board Members Absent: Beth Whelan (2019)

Staff Present: Carrie Spiess, Meredith Plummer

Guests: David Johnson, Tim Christy, Ray Sinclair

Call to Order: Shelly called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm and provided an opening reading. Shelly welcomed board nominee David Johnson and Ray Sinclair and Tim Christy, representing the Canvass Team. Amy agreed to provide snacks and a reading for the June meeting. Shelly asked members to pick up updates to the board handbook.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of previous meeting, Agenda for current meeting, Interim Minister, Staff and President's Reports: Patricia moved and Amy seconded that the agenda, minutes and reports be accepted. Unanimous approval.

Approval of Purchase of Scaffolding: On April 18, the board voted electronically to unanimously approve purchase of scaffolding at a total cost of \$730 for Building and Grounds to use to change lights in the Sanctuary and for other indoor and outdoor maintenance projects.

Canvass Update: Ray reported that we missed our goal of \$400,000, with about \$380,000 pledged by the end of April. Last year we had a 10% increase. This year, although there are many more pledges that increased over last year than decreased, the average size of pledge decrease is three times the size of the average size of pledge increases. Decreasing pledges occurred for a variety of reasons including (1) personal health and/or aging issues demanding more of the pledger's resources, (2) gradual phasing out of membership/participation, (3) income decreases and retirement, and (4) recalibration of overambitious pledges. Twenty-three pledge units gave no pledge. There were very few who did not pledge because they were leaving the church, and it was very rare for members to not pledge because they were unhappy with the church. We accept new members throughout the year and canvass them immediately. We add their pledges to the total for the current year, causing the total to gradually rise throughout the year.

A number of things went well, including a one-page brochure with a pledge form included, email expressions of appreciation, board involvement, added response channels and a transition to new leadership. A number of things did not go well, including an inadequate emphasis on First Church fulfilling its mission as the main reason to pledge, too few messages about the importance of increasing pledges, too

few stories from members of the congregation, canvasser recruitment and training, and coordination with other functions and events.

Ray made the following recommendations: (1) develop a culture that attends to stewardship year-round by providing multiple giving opportunities, soliciting pledges continually and elevating the importance of the canvasser's job, (2) understand and serve younger givers by teaching about the role of pledges through all message channels, including the pulpit, by explaining all the spectrum of ways to support the church financially, and by providing alternatives to annual pledges, e.g., 3 or 6 months or 3 or 5 years, (3) integrate stewardship with other functions by coordinating ministries and sharing information and by coordinating messaging, and (4) form a Development Committee that works on external funding and coordinates internal funding efforts.

Benjamin commented that many UU congregations require a pledge as a condition of membership and recommended that we make more use of the fair share giving guide. Shelly commented on the value of targeted listening sessions of the minister and the president with major givers.

Financial Report: Dick stated that Carrie would present on the Capital Budget at the May 20 congregational meeting. The budget forum on May 6 had three visitors. Another budget forum will take place at 9:00 am on Sunday, May 13. Carrie reported on revenue and expenses. Through the end of April, we are on track with 86% of budgeted pledges and 84% of budgeted expenses for the fiscal year. On Tuesday, May 8, we discovered that our fire alarm system is obsolete. Carrie obtained a quote for a new panel for \$3,879 plus labor, which is estimated at about \$800. Carrie recommended that we authorize spending no more than \$5,000 from the Capital Budget. Dick commented that we have sufficient carryover money in the Capital Budget to cover this expense. Gary moved and Amy seconded that the board approve spending up to \$5,000 for the new fire alarm system. Unanimous approval.

Citywide OWL: Meredith led a discussion on the status of the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program that is a joint project of First Church, the Gathering at Northern Hills, Heritage and St. John's. OWL is a sexuality education program of the Unitarian Universalist Association. First Church joined the other three congregations in citywide OWL about ten years ago. Operations were split to avoid demanding too much of any one person. Four years ago the local OWL began restricting registration because of the large demand. There is a potential for up to 60 participants for the coming year, with 30 to 40 being a realistic projection. Finding a sufficient number of active, qualified facilitators is becoming a challenge at all four churches, and space is a challenge at the other churches. We try to restrict our classes to ten youth. OWL serves junior high youth and senior high youth in alternate years. Allowing our youth the opportunity to get to know young people from other congregations is a plus. There will be a May 21 meeting at which there will be a discussion of whether the local OWL should be allowed to die with each congregation retaining the option of doing OWL on its own. Meredith prefers to share the burden. The consensus of the board was that we should continue citywide OWL. It was agreed that this item should appear on the June board agenda.

General Assembly Update: Five delegates will attend the General Assembly: Jo Ellen, Tim Kraus, Phillip Schaeffer, Rebecca Schaeffer and Dan Schneider.

Installation and Onboarding Teams: There was discussion of potential candidates for these two teams that will work on the October 28 installation service for Rev. Connie Simon and on helping Connie acclimate herself to our congregation. We will continue to follow up with Connie and with potential candidates for the two teams.

May 20 Congregational Meeting Agenda and Minutes of January 21 and April 29 Meetings: There were no changes suggested.

Church Council Debrief: Beth led a review of the May 9 Church Council meeting. Church Council is chaired by the Vice President and includes the committee chairs. Dick reported on the proposed 2018-2019 budget. Meredith reported on “The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation” and led a discussion on alternative ways of doing faith formation. Her presentation included a description of three types of church board leadership: maintenance, preferential (making everyone happy), and missional. Benjamin led a workshop that examined the church mission statement. The workshop focused on the verbs in the church mission statement: celebrate, support and work, and asked is that what you do, how do you do it, and what else do you do. Benjamin stated that there is a lot of celebrating and supporting but not much on spiritual and ethical paths. Our justice work focuses on charity. Benjamin said there are three components of justice work: hands-on, education and advocacy. Some congregations pick an issue and do all three. He described two justice models for churches, (1) an activist church, and (2) a church that nourishes members to go out to do good work. He said the workshop demonstrated that our mission statement could be more concrete. Beth asked those present to reflect on Church Council and to complete a survey about it. All said it adds value. All agreed that a Committee on Shared Ministry might have a role in dealing with Church Council. Beth will type a summary of the reflections for the new minister.

Thoughts on Fiscal Year 2019: Shelly led a discussion on what we should stop, start, continue and consider. Shelly will compile the results, and they will be shared with the new board.

Additional Comments: Shelly praised her fellow outgoing board members, Beth McGrew and Brian, for their excellent service. Others expressed appreciation for Shelly’s leadership during her two years as president as well as appreciation for Beth and Brian.

Alice the Chalice: Amy and Patricia presented Alice the Chalice to Dan in appreciation for his willingness to serve as president during the coming year.

Adjournment: Shelly adjourned the meeting at 8:33 pm.

Election of Officers for 2018-2019: On May 20, following the election of the new board members at the congregational meeting, a quorum of the new board met to elect new

officers. Present were Ginny Casey-Leininger, Amy Hunt, David Johnson, Dan Schneider, Denys Steele and Beth Whelan. Absent were Sarah Estes, Gary Gebhart and Patricia Rohrer. Those present voted unanimously to elect the following officers:

President, Dan Schneider
Vice President, Patricia Rohrer
Secretary, Ginny Casey-Leininger

Interim Minister
Report to the Board
May 2018

On May 5 I'll lead a conversation on church mission with the Church Council. That will complete the projects I planned to do with the congregation. I'll summarize that work in my annual report.

Other than that, I'm packing, and saying goodbyes. It has been good for us to be together and I wish you all the best in the next phase of your journey.

Yours in faith,
Benjamin

President's Report to the Board for May 9, 2018 Board Meeting

1. Development Activity – Fundraising Taskforce
 - a. None to report.
2. Board Activity
 - a. The DFP provided a proposal for the Accessibility Team which was well written, well thought out and very helpful. Executive Committee discussed the proposal and thinks that it would be most appropriate for the DFP, board and Connie to discuss this further during the August board retreat so that it can be considered in the context of all initiatives that are being considered (on-boarding team, installation team, ad hoc committee on shared ministry and a few other initiatives that Connie has mentioned).
 - b. I will work with Susan Christy to identify church members to take over leadership of the Heart & Hand Auction and train with Susan during next year's auction.
 - c. In response to the Property Taskforce Recommendations, the Executive Committee is working with Carrie and church members to find related

church documents and work toward next steps in ensuring that right of first refusal is in place for the Payne building, and discussions about right of first refusal take place for Dr. Washington's property and TriHealth's Hand Surgery Center.

3. Committee Activity

- a. Justin Ellis and Barbara Bonney have agreed to be candidates to fill the 2 at large positions on the nominating committee for a 2-year term. The congregational vote on this will take place at the congregational meeting on May 20.

4. Member Activity and Community Activity – none to report

Shelly Wallace
Board President

Operations Manager Report to the Board
May 9, 2018 Board Meeting

A. Top Accomplishments April

a. Facilities

- i. Scheduled semi-annual kitchen hood suppression testing
- ii. Aid in management of the ceiling wood panel repair project
- iii. Extra time devoted to management of conflicts with church events and outside rentals
- iv. Offer support to Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Artist in Residence program
- v. Schedule appointment with building insurance sales rep and Ralph Jacob with B&G to provide information for a quote
- vi. Work up contracts for outside rentals
- vii. With guidance from Joe Busby, contacted Spectrum to upgrade our internet connection; moved from 15 x 2 mbps speed to 100 x 10 mbps; the new contract offers increased speed and about a 15% savings per month

b. Finance

- i. Support canvass, as needed
- ii. Meetings to discuss FY19 budgets
- iii. Provide information to upcoming budget forums

- iv. Facilitate the receipt for members taking advantage of the qualified charitable distributions (QCD)
- v. Provide requested committee financial reports

c. HR

- i. Complete evaluations for custodian and Office Administrator
- ii. Complete self-evaluation
- iii. Oversee staff evaluation process
- iv.

d. Other

- i. Provide support to MSC
- ii. Monthly meeting with Office Administrator and Custodian

B. Priorities for Months ahead

- a. Budget planning
- b. Performance appraisals

**DFP's Report to the Board
5.9.18**

Prepared: 4.25.18

Board Meeting

Top accomplishments this month:

- Vacation (Mar. 23 – 31).
- Easter Sunday (Apr. 1)
- Facilitated FP meeting (Apr. 8).
- Sr. High OWL Administration (Apr. 8).
- Candidating Week (Apr. 22 – 29).
- Summer Camp Administration, Planning and Communication.
- Chalice Lighter Administration.
- Volunteer Recruitment.
- Delivered two Times for All Ages.
- EqUUal Access work.
- Other Administrative work (attendance, registrations, etc.)
- Finished Summer Curriculum.
- Made a few arrangements for GA 2018.
- Completed Performance Appraisals
- Jr. High OWL Administration (see 'Other').

Priorities for the months ahead

- Continue Writing Summer Camp Curriculum.

- EqUUal Access work.
- Continue other administrative work.
- Continue making arrangements for GA 2018.
- Jr. High OWL Administration.
- Rites of Passage Ceremonies (May 6 – June 17)
- Flower Communion (June 3).
- Start Summer Programming (June 10).
- Accessibility Team? (see ‘Proposal’)

Other

- **Jr. High OWL:** There has been a lot of talk lately about changing the structure of City Wide Jr. High OWL. A large number of possible youth participants (between 50 and 60), coupled with a lack of facilitators, means City Wide Jr. High OWL may not continue in its current form. The program may be disbanded, or reimagined. I will be talking with Jr. High parents, and the FP committee about this, asking for their opinions on HOW First Church should be involved in City Wide OWL, now and into the future. And, I welcome any feedback the Board may have to offer.
- **Numbers:** March’s Numbers...
 - Registrations: 62 children and youth from 33 families
 - Average Attendance: 26 children and youth

DFP’s Report to the Board, Proposal Meeting 5.9.18

Prepared: 4.25.18 Board

Recently, the congregation has demonstrated a heightened awareness around accessibility issues: a ramp to our stage will soon be constructed; the MVP team is wondering how and where to add accessible seating to the sanctuary; and the Board adopted a Service Animal Policy this past fall. Most of these issues have been tackled successfully, but haphazardly. My proposal is to assemble an accessibility team. Originally, this team would serve as an ad-hoc advisory committee, addressing concerns around accessibility as they arise. However, it is possible this advisory committee may wish to take their duties further, and lead the congregation in becoming AIM certified (Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry). You can learn more about the AIM program here: <https://www.uua.org/accessibility/aim>

If the Board approves, I will assemble the accessibility team, but I will not chair it. There is a saying in disability rights circles, “Nothing About Us Without Us.” I believe it is time we let those who know best, people who live with disabilities, advise us on how to become more accessible and welcoming.

April 2018 Music Director Board Report

Accomplishments:

- Successfully performed Music Sunday with 4 guest musicians
 - Hired Matt McAllister for 4/22
 - Hired Brian Rivers and Tracy Walker for 4/29 offertory
 - Hired Colleen Cambron to sub on 4/29
 - Rehearsed singers 5 times
 - Rehearsed ringers 3 times
 - Rehearsed with youth singers who will perform on May 6th 2 times
 - Met with worship team to collaborate for worship service on 4/22, which included Connie Simon, MVP team #4, worship committee members, MSC members
 - Attended potluck and worship meeting on 4/23, which included past and present committee members
 - Accompanied Vespers service on 4/25
 - Attended potluck and choir rehearsal on 4/26
 - Acquired subs Tracy Walker and Brian Rivers for worship service on 6/10
- (I am having hip surgery on 6/8)

Goals:

- Register for UUMN conference in August
- File music in cabinets downstairs

Help needed:

- Continued support

Submitted by,

Jera Cox

Music Director/keyboardist

Office Administrator's Report to the Board

April 2018

A. Top Accomplishments from the Month:

While I'm sure I did most of the usual things during the month of April, Candidating Week took front and center. Events had been scheduled since early March, but there were occasional tweaks to the schedule as the month went on. I spent some extra hours attending candidating week events as the photographer. The week was not a newsletter week, so it was a little bit easier to fit it in. I have to say, I thoroughly enjoyed this role and it gave me an opportunity to see the bond develop between Connie Simon and the congregation. Those photographs are available to those who have access to Own Cloud in the "Photo Library" folder.

As usual there were the newsletters and orders of service to do. However, there was nothing normal about the numbers that had to be printed! Attendance was a little higher on April 8, the "Reveal Sunday" but for the two Sundays that Connie was in the pulpit as the candidate, the numbers were quite a bit above average – approaching 250.

The day-to-day things were as usual– the doorbells that ring, LLAD, Linton and other outside rentals. The volume was a little unusual, though! There were definitely more events attended by First Church members in the last week.

B. Priority for Months Ahead

The main priority is the same as last month - in the months ahead is the transition to the new minister! I expect that this will hold a lot of excitement as well as some challenges.

It's also come to my attention that it is getting time for Board Handbook updates. This needs to be done by the time you read this report!

C. Help Needed

Carrie and I have discussed this, and I hope you'll recognize the need and understand. Instead of occasionally publishing an article about submitting articles for the OOS an Newsletter, I plan on beginning to do a short reminder blurb in every newsletter. Last issue I put a little blurb in that said, "Three Things to Make Your Editor Happy." The newsletter this week (I think) will be about posting items on the bulletin boards. Each time it can be brief and humorous, and I will avoid the urge to rant!

Susan West, Office Administrator