

**FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH**  
**Board of Trustees – Meeting Minutes**  
**Date: November 8, 2017**

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

**Board Members Absent:** None

**Staff Present:** Carrie Spiess, Meredith Plummer

**Call to Order:** Shelly called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm, and Beth McGrew provided an opening reading. Shelly noted that the board recently approved a revised overview and organizational chart as part of the new minister's contract by unanimous electronic vote. Representing the Ministerial Search Committee, Patricia moved and Amy seconded approval of another revision of the organizational chart. Unanimous approval.

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

**Financial Report:** Carrie reported that pledge receipts are doing well at 38% through the end of October. The expected pledge receipts for the current fiscal year are \$383,763 compared to approximately \$340,000 for the previous year. Communications will go out to members who have not yet paid any amount toward their pledges. August donations were \$5,198, which includes a matching donation for a pledge. Expenses are on track with the budget.

**HR Recommendation for UUA Healthcare Plans:** Acting on a recommendation from the Human Resources Committee, Sarah moved and Amy seconded that we adopt the UUA High Deductible PPO Bronze Health Plan and the UUA Standard PPO Plan for the upcoming renewal period, January 1-December 31, 2018, with open enrollment November 9-November 22, 2017. Unanimous approval.

**Treasurer's Report:** Dick reported that the Treasury is now smaller because of the boiler and related items, which are being paid for from bequests. The General Fund has declined from 4.48 months of operations in reserve to 3.92 months, which is still healthy. The projected total expenses for the boiler and related items, including a new water heater, are \$48,603, less than the authorized expense of \$50,000.

Concerning the Capital Budget, lobby carpet replacement and exterior trim painting of second floor windows have been postponed to fiscal year 2018. Income includes \$11,930 in ODOT sidewalk funds. We will need to pay for a new sign if the state takes our existing sign. A new electronic outdoor sign would break the budget. We have received estimates for tuckpointing and exterior stone repair of approximately \$200,000, but Building and Grounds is seeking new

estimates. Dan moved and Gary seconded approval of the fiscal year 2018 Capital Projects Budget. Unanimous approval.

**Capital Project Request:** Based on a recommendation from the Worship Committee, Dan moved and Patricia seconded that the Worship Committee in collaboration with the Building and Grounds Committee be authorized to seek bids for building an accessibility ramp at the front of the sanctuary and to spend up to \$7,000 on the project. Unanimous approval.

**Financial Procedures Manual Revision:** Shelly announced that members of the Finance Committee will give comments to Dennis Finney, and Carrie and Dick will work with Dennis on a revision. The revision should be ready for board approval during the current fiscal year.

**Committee Updates:** Community Builders will need a new chair by the end of December, when Bev Baker plans to step down. When Dan finds out from Bev who has already declined any offers to chair the committee, he will share that information with the board. Alice Schneider has agreed to serve as Canvass Chair, and we need a co-chair. It is a three-year commitment. Ray Sinclair will provide orientation. Names were suggested, and Shelly and Beth Whelan agreed to contact those who were suggested. The Adult Religious Education Committee will become defunct for the time being and will be reconstituted under the new minister, perhaps with a different focus. Activities that are already planned will take place.

**Property Task Force:** Beth Whelan moved and Beth McGrew seconded approval of the charter of the First Property Task Force. Unanimous approval. The charter states: “The First Church Board of Trustees has created a Property Task Force to examine potential issues regarding the future use, expansion, development, lease, or sale of the church and/or associated property. In addition to other relevant issues, the Task Force will collect information about the current estimated value of the First Church property and other surrounding properties, future possible development in the areas immediately surrounding First Church, and any restrictions on future use of the property. The goal of the Task Force is to develop proactively an informational foundation for any future decisions that First Church may face about its property. The Task Force will not be making any recommendations about decisions that First Church should make concerning its property.” Members of the task force are Beth McGrew, Dick Miltner, Brian MacConnell, Dave Wallace, Ed Rider, Ralph Jacob and Rebecca Schaefer. Brian expects the task force to complete its work by the spring of 2018.

**Board Goals:** Concerning Goal 1 on Bylaws revision, the committee will meet soon. A vote on the proposed revision will take place at the January 21 congregational meeting. Concerning Goal 2 on supporting the Ministerial Search Committee, the contract, organizational chart and position description have been revised. The proposed contract will be placed on a web site for review by potential candidates. Shelly will send the entire contract to the board later in November. Dick stated the development of the contract has been a good experience, and there are plans to coordinate the final contract with the employee handbook. The board will hold forums in early December and in January to share and explain the overview and the organizational chart. Dick pointed out three significant changes in the proposed contract: (1) shared responsibility for leadership and ministry between Minister and Board, (2) a Committee on Shared Ministry, and

(3) Minister supervision of all staff. Concerning Goal 3 on a Committee on Shared Ministry, the proposed committee could be included as a part of the forums. Two-thirds of UU congregations of our size have such a committee, which would be finalized in cooperation with the new minister. The framework of the committee could be shared at the January 6 Church Council meeting, and it will be briefly discussed in Patricia's December All Aboard newsletter article.

**Digital Signage Update:** Beth McGrew and Brian agree the first priority should be the sanctuary, followed by the lobby and the outside of the church. Beth continues to seek more committee members and will continue discussions.

**Minister's Discretionary Fund:** Dan moved and Brian seconded approval for special plate collections for the Minister's Discretionary Fund at both services on December 24. Unanimous approval. Benjamin will write a newsletter article explaining the need.

**Office Administrator Additional Hours:** Last year we added six additional hours per week for the Office Administrator, bringing the total to 30. Gary reported that the Membership Committee has benefited from the Office Administrator keeping nametags updated and sending email messages to new visitors, improving the bulletin board and tracking all visitors in the database. Benjamin believes the six hours could be more efficiently used and better coordinated with Membership. He suggested a meeting of Carol Lloyd, Linda Miltner and Barb Rider to discuss further. Carrie reported that according to Ray Sinclair, Susan has taken over some communication duties, which will help in finding a future committee chair.

**Fundraising:** Gary discussed fundraising for the proposed Cuba youth trip. There is a need for \$2,700 per youth, and we need at least nine youth to participate. Meredith said we are inviting youth from other UU congregations as there are currently only 4-5 youth from First Church who have indicated interest in going.

**Alice the Chalice:** Shelly presented Alice the Chalice to Patricia in recognition of her being proactive with everything she does.

At 8:18 pm Sarah moved and Brian seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Unanimous approval.

## **President's Report to the Board for November 8, 2017 Board Meeting**

1. Development Activity – Fundraising Taskforce
  - a. Will be reported on in November board meeting.
  
2. Board Activity
  - a. Executive Committee has asked Finance and HR Committees to review and recommend on the following in order to meet UUA recommendations.
    - i. Time off for jury duty is currently unpaid. Consider changing this to paid going forward.
    - ii. Short term disability for full-time employees is currently at 66.6% of salary. Consider changing to 75%.
  - b. Additionally, the Executive Committee has asked the HR Committee to review and recommend on changing the current language for Extended Medical Leave from, "Extended Medical Leave may be used only to deal with a medical condition of the employee or the employee's immediate family. First Church defines "immediate family" as the employee's spouse or domestic partner, parent, child, sibling, stepmother, stepfather, stepchild, legal ward, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandparent or grandchild." Consider changing to: "Extended Medical Leave may be used only to deal with a medical condition of the employee or the employee's immediate family." Should someone need to use extended medical leave, the HR Committee and Board could decide at that time if it's an appropriate situation for the use of extended medical leave.
  
3. Committee Activity
  - a. Included in November board meeting.
  
4. Member Activity
  - a. None to report.
  
5. Community Activity
  - a. None to report.

Shelly Wallace  
Board President

Interim Minister  
Report to the Board  
November 2017

Linnea provided me with the MSC's draft Congregational Record. As an Interim, I serve the Search Committee by reading over the materials as a kind of "reality check," giving them feedback on whether their presentation of the congregation matches what I see. Overall, (with a few factual changes) our perceptions are in accord.

And, the phone calls have begun. I had my first phone interview with a potential candidate for your ministry. I was impressed with this person's unique perspective and what it might offer First Church.

The Transition Team and I have decided on a change of plan. We're offering the Covenant workshop on December 2. Here's how we'll promote it:

On November 12 I will preach on Covenant.

On Dec. 2, Saturday from 10--12 (with an optional pot luck to follow) I'll be leading a workshop on creating a Covenant of Right Relations.

A covenant statement is an agreement on how people want to be with one another. It sets out the qualities that will sustain their life together, and it contains the promises you make to one another in religious community. It answers the question, what are the qualities we want in our life and work together?

A behavioral covenant is a written document developed by leaders, agreed to and owned by its creators, and practiced on a daily basis as a spiritual discipline.

Covenant is the silk that joins Unitarian Universalist (UU) congregations, communities, and individuals together in a web of interconnection. The practice of promising to walk together is the precious core of our creedless faith.

The Non-defensive Communication workshop will be in mid-late January.

Yours in faith,

Benjamin

Operations Manager Report to the Board  
November 8, 2017 Board Meeting

**A. Top Accomplishments October**

**a. Facilities**

- i. Continue coordination of boiler replacement and related projects including water heater replacement and boiler piping insulation
- ii. Coordination of parking lot maintenance performed by Houck Asphalt for the sealcoating and striping
- iii. Meet with janitorial company to continue to improve services provided
- iv. Manage logistics for rentals and private members reservations
- v. Cintas semi-annual inspection scheduled and completed for the kitchen hood suppression system
- vi. Update key fobs – deleting and programming fobs
- vii. Update capital list into categories vs. fiscal years
- viii. Schedule oven repair company to replace an oven part to improve safety of those entering our building
- ix. Meet with Lawn Life to work out a maintenance schedule for yardwork, including cleaning gutters and drains on a consistent basis, awaiting proposal

**b. Finance**

- i. Continue to review financial systems to look at streamlining accounting processes, including meetings with current bookkeeping services and potential providers
- ii. Provide committee financial reports, as requested by Committee Chairs

**c. HR**

- i. Prepare paperwork for hiring of Sr. High Advisor and Infant/Toddler leader
- ii. Continue to research healthcare plans for the upcoming enrollment period including the review of UUA health plans and UUA agreement
- iii. Inquire about health care renewal rates for 2018 with current provider and UUA
- iv. Work with HR and Finance Committees to change workers' comp risk management services from CareWorksComp to The Matrix Company to reduce costs

**d. Other**

- i. Update staff calendar with big printing jobs and reaching out to members who typically have large printing jobs throughout the church year; this will help anticipate and work out a schedule, as well as communicate between key people using the copier
- ii. Provide time to support MSC for Settled Minister contract

- iii. Schedule and lead monthly staff meeting
- iv. Monthly meeting with Office Administrator and Custodian
- v. Continue to receive youth Cuba trip updates
- vi. Consult with Communications, as needed, to resolve any issues that arise

**B. Priorities for Months ahead**

- a. Safe congregation policy
- b. Financial systems review

**DFP's Report to the Board  
11.8.17**

**Prepared:10.26.17 Board Meeting**

Top accomplishments this month:

- On boarded new Sr. High youth advisor.
- Facilitated K – 1<sup>st</sup> OWL planning meeting (Oct. 1).
- Facilitated FP meeting (Oct. 8).
- Administrative work for Sr. High OWL (Oct. 8 & Oct. 22).
- Facilitated Mandatory Informational Meeting on Cuba (Oct. 15).
- Hosted first Volunteer Breakout Breakfast (Oct. 15).
- Attended Worship meeting (Oct. 16).
- Facilitated K – 1<sup>st</sup> Parent / Child Orientations (Oct. 21 & Oct. 25).
- Met with youth advisors and Rose Conley to begin preparing for Christmas Eve pageants.  
Prepared for Dia de Los Muertos Service (Oct. 29).
- Administrative work for youth outing to Lazer Kraze (Nov. 4).
- Infant / Toddler and PreK – K Classroom Recognitions.
- Delivered 1 additional Time for All Ages.
- Chalice Lighter Administration.
- Continued recruiting Classroom Ambassador Families.
- Sent Email notifications to parents about upcoming events.
- Composed and mailed Cuba invitation letters to the youth at St. Johns (see 'Other').
- Read 'The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation' (see 'Other').
- EqUUal Access work (see 'Other').
- Other Administrative work (attendance, registrations, etc.).

Priorities for the months ahead

- Lead Make-up Orientation for K – 1<sup>st</sup> OWL.
- Facilitate Chalice Lighter Talk Back Session (Nov. 5).
- Oversee Sr. High OWL (Nov. 5 and Nov. 19).
- Facilitate Cuba Planning Meeting (Nov. 12).
- Facilitate Mandatory Informational Meeting on Cuba (Nov. 13)
- Bread Communion (Nov. 19)
- One Room School House (Nov. 26)
- Continue Summer Camp Ideation.

- Continue administrative work
- Continue planning for the Holidays.

#### Other

- **Cuba Trip:** For this trip to be viable, we need 9 participating youth. We currently have 5. I've reached out to the other UU congregations, to invite their youth. So far, St. John's has been the only one to respond to my request.
- **Death of Sunday School:** I highly recommend members of the board read this 33 page report from the New England District. It can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2yq23Y0>. However, if you do not have the time, please see my addendum for a 1 page summary.
- **EqUUal Access:** I've accepted the position of communications chair of EqUUal Access.
- **Numbers:** See below for October's numbers...
  - **Total Registrations:** 49 children and youth from 28 families.
  - **Average Attendance this Month:** 28.5 children and youth (Oct. 29 not included).

#### DFP's Report to the Board, Addendum 11.8.17

Prepared:10.26.17 Board Meeting

In "The Death of Sunday School and the Future of Faith Formation," Kimberly Sweeney, a staffer for the New England district, makes the case that the way we have done Sunday school for 50 years no longer meets the needs of post-modern families. She insists...

- We must change the way we approach faith formation – it is our responsibility!
  - There has been a demographic shift. Where Kimberly Sweeney is from, the public school enrollment has decreased by more than 10% in the past decade. Here, in Hamilton County, the birthrate decreased by 25% from 1990 to 2010! Her conclusion, "There is no reason to believe that attendance numbers for children and youth in Sunday School programs will rise."
- Finding a different religious educator will not solve our problems.
- Increasing staffing to minister to specific age groups maintains segregation (bad!)
- As Baby Boomers retire and Gen Xers move into leadership, the volunteer pool is cut in half!
  - "Today's generation of parents, Generation X, is roughly half the size of the Baby Boomer generation, with intense expectations and requirements for volunteerism. The number of volunteers needed to staff these programs has not changed, but the number of adults in this generation has decreased by 50 percent. Add in the decrease of religious identity in each successive generation, changes in family structure, the economic reality that necessitates more parents working outside the home, and the culture of intense overscheduling affecting people of all ages in our society, and there just isn't the capacity to replace the Baby Boomer volunteer base."
- Curriculum will not save the day.
- Adults need faith formation just as much as children and youth.
  - "The lack of faith development for UU adults is a serious problem, resulting in a high percentage of adults with a tenuous connection to or understanding of



Unitarian Universalism. Parents and other adults within the congregation cannot be the guides our children need until they have developed their own spiritual capacity.”

So, what does Kimberly Sweeney suggest is the future of faith formation? Family ministry of course! She states, “Today’s reformation calls for the centering of faith formation in the mission of our communities of faith. The reformation called for within Unitarian Universalism asks religious educators to lead in a new way. Religious Educators are being invited to engage the entire congregation in faith formation... Intentional family ministry provides adults with opportunities to dig deeper into their own beliefs, and strengthening their ability to discuss the values and history of Unitarian Universalism with their children... With intentional family ministry, faith formation is no longer seen as just for children. In fact, it is structured in a way that encourages participation from the entire congregation... Intentional family ministry welcomes the whole congregation to worship together on Sunday morning.”

Kimberly Sweeney goes on to suggest a second-hour of religious education programs could be added to congregational life to provide adults and children with additional opportunities for faith formation. Then, she concludes by suggesting a path forward – how one might lead their congregation in making such a cultural shift. I will conclude with this quote, “In his book *Doing the Math of Mission*, Gil Rendle describes three types of leadership conversations: maintenance, preferential, and missional. Congregations engaging in maintenance conversations will find themselves focused on preserving who they are and what they usually do... Congregations engaging in preferential conversations will find themselves focused on satisfying the people who are already in the congregation... Congregations able to have missional conversations will focus on purpose and the possibility of the future. Missional conversations where people truly say ‘yes!’ create the possibility for the evolution of a church’s relevance, and – in this case – its approach to faith formation.”

## **Office Administrator’s Report to the Board**

**October 2017**

### **A. Top Accomplishments from the Month**

October has been relatively quiet – no Annual Meeting, no new Directory – so special projects have settled down. However, it is a month with five Sundays, so an extra OOS and extra Newsletter happened. It should be noted that October 1 was on a Sunday, so most of that work was done in September (to be honest!).

Other monthly accomplishments include changing the newsletter clippings on the bulletin board twice a month (when the newsletter comes out).

This month I attended the Membership Committee meeting on Oct. 22. This gave me a chance to attend a really amazing worship service! Attending the Membership meeting helps keep me aware of what they are doing as well as helps gain knowledge of what they need me to do.

Our Facebook reach was down this month – I did not receive a lot of content to add to what was placed in September. I kept our presence alive by re-posting from the UUA, Alice the Chalice, etc. However, this last newsletter was packed with new events that have now been posted – and boosted – on Facebook, so I expect to see our reach go up.

I continue to update the calendar on the web page – as well as keep the worship service information up-to-date.

I spent some time over several days trouble shooting a problem with Church DB with their tech people. Many of our members were not getting the digital version of the Newsletter. I had a few complaints, but as information went out, I found that at least 100 people did not get the newsletter. Digital copies were sent to those who contacted me. The issue is now fixed, and we all hope that doesn't happen again!

#### B. Priority for Months Ahead

1. To continue to improve our presence on Facebook.
2. To “experiment” with the newsletter format (see below).
3. To make the holiday content of all materials fresh and relevant.

#### C. Help Needed

I need everyone to know that info they want published to Facebook needs to come to me – with photos! If you send photos and content at the same time – so much the better! I have received comments about how important Facebook is – but the person who shared the comment was not aware that I managed our Facebook presence.

An “FYI” note on coming newsletters. You’ll note on the back page of the latest newsletter that the date for the second newsletter in November is on a Wednesday. We didn’t do that to confuse people – although it might. We (this was worked out with Operations Manager Carrie Spiess) plan on doing a “digital only” newsletter in a shorter format to go out right before Thanksgiving. It will be a shorter format because the week is short, and I’ll need to complete it in one workday. This is an experiment, but it also maintains a workable schedule for the holiday season. The next newsletter will have an article explaining the new tight deadline.

D. Changes are ahead for me that I hope to turn into a positive thing for First Church. I have resigned from The Gathering at Northern Hills, effective the end of October. Beginning the week of Nov. 6, I will begin working in the office from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. – with a half-hour lunch break on Monday through Thursday. On Friday, we will close the office in the afternoon. I will work from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. This change is noted on the first page of the newsletter, as well as an article included in the 10.29 newsletter. I hope to accomplish two things doing this – one is to have

more time for needed life-style changes to deal with a medical issue. The other is to make my presence at First Church more consistent.

Susan West

Office Administrator

#### October 2017 Music Director Board Report

##### Accomplishments:

- Coordinated and performed for 5 worship services
- Held 4 choir rehearsals
- Held 4 handbell rehearsal, and included a new member on October 22
- Consulted with Rozy Park about including more youth in services
- Confirmed upcoming performances by youth for 10/29, 11/19
- Hired Danny Groh for percussion on 10/22
- Hired Noriko to accompany and play a piano/organ duet on 11/8
- Hired Sally and Joe Lukasik for trumpet and clarinet on 10/22
- Confirmed first handbell performance date of 11/12

##### Goals:

- Continue the use of guest and youth musicians

##### Help needed:

- Continued support

Submitted by,

Jera Cox

Music Director/keyboardist