

**Unitarian Universalist Society  
Board of Trustees  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**March 17, 2021 (virtual via Zoom)**

**PRESENT:** Joe Rasmussen (President), Alan Swanson (Vice-President), Amy Fretz (Past-President), Mike Pavelich (Treasurer), Carol Adamson (Secretary), John Raley (Financial Trustee), Colleen Higgins (Trustee), Paul Pomrehn (Trustee), Julia Audlehelm (Trustee), and Rev. Diana Smith (Minister, Ex-Officio)

**ABSENT:** None

**GUESTS:** Lori Enloe, Winnie Ganshaw, Deb Schoelman

Board President Joe Rasmussen called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm. Julia Audlehelm provided the opening words, with chalice lighting by Rev. Smith. After check-in, the Board discussed its Board Read – *UUA's Widening the Circle of Concern*.

The Board commenced with the agenda as follows:

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

February Board minutes, February Special Meeting Board minutes, March Executive Committee minutes, Minister/Staff Report, Treasurer Report and Financial Summary

*The consent agenda was approved by unanimous consent.*

**COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

- Governance: Amy Fretz reported that the committee continues to work on Policies. Recommendations to amend the policies will be presented later tonight's agenda.
- Personnel: Alan Swanson reported that the next Personnel committee meeting is in April.
- Finance: John Raley reported that the committee has been working on the several financial items that are on tonight's agenda.
- Right Relations: Colleen Higgins and Julia Audlehelm reported the committee will meet sometime in the next two months.
- Mission & Vision Review: Paul Pomrehn reported that the committee met on March 15<sup>th</sup> and discussed its function in connection with the Hotchkiss's Annual Cycle of Planning Model and the process of engaging the congregation in discussing Open Questions. There was consensus on the committee that the timing for such engagement was poor and that any information gained by congregational questioning at this time was likely to be distorted by the many stressors currently being experienced by congregants, particularly those associated with the pandemic. The committee spent considerable time trying to understand its role and purpose, and the purpose of the open questions proposed by the Board. The committee identified several questions that remain

- Are the open questions and the open questioning process supposed to relate to our Mission and Vision statements? Should there be some connection between them, or some reference to phrases that appear in those two statements?
- How do we clarify the difference between ministry goals and board goals presented in the Hotchkiss model of planning, and which set of goals are the open questions trying to inform?
- Does this committee's work really belong in the arrow of "monitoring" (Hotchkiss Figure 8.1) or is the role broader or different than that? How does its work compare to the function of the C-CLAM?
- How do open questions and the annual review process relate to eventual development of a strategic plan? Is there an intention to create a strategic plan at some point?

Board members discussed the Committee's report and questions. Several ideas were discussed. The Hotchkiss model can be adapted to UUS calendar and the Open Questions are to be used to engage the congregation in dialogue. The Open Questions inform the Vision of Ministry which provides the Minister and Congregation with a big picture goal for the coming year. The Board can revisit the Open Questions throughout the year to discern how the goal is being met. This can be done at each meeting or monthly. There was discussion on the importance of obtaining useful data from the Open Questions, versus the information gathered through informal dialogue. While the UUS's annual planning process is in its infancy, it is important to keep future Boards in mind as they will inherit the process.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **Building Re-opening: Benchmarks and Phases: Revision Proposal**

Rev. Smith and Fretz presented the COVID Team's revised Benchmark and Phases for UUS Building Re-opening. The revision was needed because the State of Iowa changed the way it reports COVID cases. Fretz said the Team did consider if vaccination status could play a role in the phases but it was decided that it would be too difficult to manage and therefore will not be used as a criterion in the benchmarks or phases. The Team revised and set the guidelines to fall inline with the CDC's guidelines and are using the metrics posted on [iowacovid19tracker.com](http://iowacovid19tracker.com). Rev. Smith explained that if the Board adopts these revised benchmarks and phases UUS will move to Phase 2.

*Pavelich made a motion, seconded by Swanson, to adopt the revision of the 2020 Benchmarks and Phases as presented. The motion carried.*

### **Spending Guidelines: Process for non-budget expenditures; Finance memo**

Rasmussen reviewed the history of the Spending Guidelines for non-budget expenditures. He asked Board members to determine the route that this type of expenditure should take through UUS leadership to facilitate open communication.

*Pavelich made a motion, seconded by Swanson, for non-budget expenditure requests to be routed as follows:*

*Team leader ⇔ Staff Liaison ⇔ Minister ⇔ Board President ⇔ Finance Committee or directly to the Board.  
[The Finance Committee sends its recommendation to the Board. The Board may decide to authorize the expense, authorize a fund-raising effort, or make a recommendation to Endowment Committee.]*

*After further discussion, the motion carried.*

### **Land Ministry Proposals: Endowment Committee and Finance Committee Feedback**

Board members reviewed the Finance Committee's and Endowment Committee's recommendations for the funding of the Land Ministry Proposals which include:

- Pathway with Limestone Outcropping Steps: \$7,542
- Memorial Garden Pathway: \$1,668
- Memorial Garden: \$15,279

Pavelich reported that a majority of Finance Committee members recommended funding be postponed until we see how finances work out this year and reconsider funding in 2022 or 2023. The Endowment Committee voted unanimously to fund the Land Ministry proposal by using existing Memorial Funds for the Memorial Garden Pathway with the remainder to be funded from the Jean Reese Fund. There is currently \$8,789 in the Memorial Fund. The Jean Reese Endowment fund was created with \$100,000.

*Pavelich made a motion, seconded by Swanson, to table the decision on funding the Land Ministry Proposal until December 2021. After lengthy discussion, the motion failed 2:6.*

*Pomrehn made motion, seconded by Higgins, to fund the Land Ministry Proposal as recommended by the Endowment Committee. There was no further discussion. The motion carried 5:3.*

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **June Board Retreat: Date and Time**

Rasmussen reported that the date that worked best for everybody is June 19, 2021. After discussion, it was decided the retreat will start at 10:30 am.

#### **Board Policy Revisions**

Board members reviewed the recommendations from the Governance Committee as summarized in the Board Packet.

*Fretz made a motion, seconded by Pavelich to approve the amendments to the Policy Section as presented in the Board Packet. The motion carried.*

#### **Fellowship Hall Gift Proposal**

A donor who desires to remain anonymous has made an offer to fund installation of a cedar wood ceiling in the Fellowship Hall. The donation would be in the range of \$35,000 - \$45,000 per a contractor's estimate. The original UUS building plan included this ceiling but it was not done due to cost when the building was built. The Finance Committee has recommended the Board approve this project funded by the anonymous donation.

*Swanson made a motion, seconded by Fretz, to accept this gift and proceed with the contract for the work. The motion carried.*

#### **Fundraising Requests**

The Social Justice Team submitted a fundraising request to collect money for the Center for Worker Justice COVID relief program. The Social Justice and Racial Justice Teams would like to encourage UUS

members and friends to contribute some of their upcoming stimulus money to this program. Rather than simply directing people to the CWJ site, they are requesting that a special fund be set up so we can know how much we have given as a congregation.

*Pomrehn made a motion, seconded by Pavelich, to approve the request.*

Board members discussed the request. There were concerns about the wording of the donation request. Specifying that a donor use their stimulus payment may be felt as intrusive or insensitive to some people's personal finances.

*After discussion, the motion failed 3:6.*

**Film Sponsor: The Race to Save the World**

Miriam Kashia is requesting UUS sponsorship for a virtual showing of this documentary film. It becomes a fundraiser in that the \$10 ticket cost is split so that UUS would receive \$4 from every ticket sold. The opening is April 22 (Earth Day), and it will be available on-line for 6 weeks. UUS would select a date and time for its showing and promote it to its members to buy tickets. There is no upfront cost for this event.

*Rasmussen made a motion, seconded by Fretz, to sponsor the film with a portion of ticket cost going to UUS. After discussion, the motion carried.*

**Endowment Committee Interim Appointment**

Kris Canfield has resigned from the Endowment Committee. The Leadership Development Committee has nominated Carmen Griggs as the interim replacement. Pursuant to UUS Bylaws the Board may appoint a successor to fill the vacancy until the next congregational elections meeting (May 23).

*Fretz made a motion, seconded by Raley, to appoint Carmen Griggs to the Endowment Committee. The motion carried.*

**GUEST COMMENTS** – none

**CLOSING**

There were no process observer comments, Adamson provided closing words, and the chalice was extinguished. *Higgins moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Fretz. Rasmussen adjourned the meeting at 9:23 pm.*

The next Full Board meeting is Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 7:00 pm.

Carol Adamson, Secretary