**Unitarian Universalist Society**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

**AUGUST 18, 2021** (Zoom)

**Present:** Alan Swanson, Joe Rasmussen, Rochelle Honey-Arcement, Hazel Seaba, Mike Pavelich, Diana Henry, John Raley, Julia Audlehelm, Reverend Diana Smith via cell phone.

**Absent:** Board Secretary vacancy

**Call to Order and Chalice Lighting:** President Alan Swanson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. John Raley provided opening words.

**Check-In:** members present provided personal updates.

**Board Read:** UUA *Widening the Circle of Concern*

The Board has completed this group read. Discussion in the future will involve what actions UUS may take per the recommendations contained in the reading.

**Consent Agenda:** July 14 Board minutes, August 6 Executive Committee email action minutes, Executive Committee August 11 minutes, Treasurer report, and minister/staff reports. *Moved by Pavelich, seconded by Henry, approved without objection.*

**Board Committee Reports:**

Governance – Rasmussen reported that the committee will meet in September. Next agenda will address a bylaw change regarding eligibility to hold elected office, Board committee appointments, and drafting a policy and procedure for the memorial garden.

Personnel – Honey-Arcement is contacting a possible committee replacement.

Finance – Raley reported that BGI involves most of the Finance members, so those meetings are also serving as Finance meetings. The entire committee will meet in September.

Right Relations – Audlehelm reported that the committee has not met. The minister’s installation is their current focus.

Mission & Vision Review – Seaba and Henry are developing a procedure for assessment. Paul Pomrehn, Kelly O’Berry and Winnie Ganshaw are also on the committee.

**COVID BENCHMARKS AND PHASES**

COVIDTeam met on August 12. The State of Iowa has changed to only one weekly report on Wednesday nights and changed the data base. The Team has two competing objectives: keeping everyone safe and opening the church. Based on the current benchmarks UUS would be moving to a phase that closes the church, but UUS is planning on opening to a hybrid in-person service on August 22. Some UUS members have expressed concern this is too early. The Team believes using a database from COVID ACT NOW would be more accurate than the state data and more liberal in its benchmarks. The majority of the Team proposes the Board adopt this system. That suggests a new Phase 2 that would only allow worship team members present in the sanctuary. Nevertheless, there is also sentiment that Sunday services should be opened to in-person attendance. Johnson County’s vaccination rate is higher than other counties. The protocols UUS has been following have not resulted in any known COVID cases. The multiplatform UUS service that has been initiated provides opportunities for members who cannot get vaccinated. The most recent news is that earlier vaccinations are losing some of their effectiveness.

*Motion by Pavelich: That the August 12 COVID Team recommendation of replacing the UUS Benchmarks and Phases with the COVID Act Now Phases and Benchmarks be adopted. Second by Henry. All ayes. Motion adopted.*

The Director of Congregational Life (DCL) is working on renewing a UUS rental program, but the question is What COVID protocols does a rental group need to follow? For example, same mask requirements and what happens if UUS phases change that affect the rental contract? The Executive Committee was in favor of being less stringent with rental groups while placing responsibility for cleaning on the group. Discussion involved how protocol enforcement would be done, how the rental contracts are designed to remove UUS liability while providing a liberal cancellation policy for rental groups. What would be proper notice from either UUS or the rental group due to changing covid circumstances? Reverend Diana will take the points of this discussion to the DCL and report back at the next Board meeting regarding a proposal.

**Balance and Growth Initiative Update**

Chair Rochelle Honey-Arcement reported on recent meetings. Dave Martin joined a meeting to explain how the Listening Campaign will interact with BGI’s goals. Endowment funds have also been discussed and how reporting/communicating with the members will happen.

Questions for the Board are:

--Is the Board willing to put together a two-year funding plan from the Endowment with clear parameters at the end of what happens if we don’t meet the goals?

Discussion involved 2022 and 2023 budgeting versus using all available funds. Endowment may have to provide some deficit funding for 2022 and a greater amount in 2023. Depending on revenue growth and expenses, the total for the two years may not exceed $400,000 from Endowment earnings/income, and not from the Endowment corpus of original donations. The two-year period would contain goals to meet, and if those goals are not met then additional budget cuts would replace the Endowment funding in 2024. The deficit problem did not arise in one year but evolved over a period of years, so a two-year plan is not unreasonable.

--What is the total amount for the year that the staff can build the budget on?

A proposal would be to reduce the 2021 budget by about $20,000 for 2022. The 2021 budget of $600,000 would be $580,000 in 2022. This would give UUS staff and teams a target to work with for budget requests in 2022.

--Who else is it important for BGI to meet with as a group?

BGI has met with various groups and individuals and is next interested in meeting with the new Director of Lifespan Religious Education, who first needs to get fully on-board at UUS. Persons who have served on the Endowment Committee in the past also will be asked to visit with BGI.

--Would it be okay if part of our plan is to continue conversing with the congregation over the next couple years about fundraising/educational events (similar to the Crisis Center’s Hunger Banquet) that the congregation can get behind that will help with the funding of programs?

It is hoped UUS groups can work to raise some of the funds for the work they do, and that there are different events they can schedule and actions they can take to provide funding outside the operational budget.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**Fellowship Hall** – Work that began July 12 on the Fellowship Hall’s new wood ceiling is finished.

**Listening Campaign** – This effort for closer connections will be announced on August 22 at the Sunday service and the campaign volunteers commissioned.

**Stewardship Campaign** – Starts September 26 with a target of $420,000.

**Minister Installation** – Now scheduled for October 24. Due to COVID concerns this may be planned as an online event with the possibility of attending in person.

**Memorial Garden** – Four meetings are being held in August. Ground was broken this week. Rasmussen raised some questions concerning Governance Committee drafting a policy and procedure for the Garden and cremains interments so the Board would be aware of this need.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Reverend Diana’s Fellowship Status** – Our minister is due for her third and final renewal for preliminary fellowship. This requires a report from the Board to UUA by November 1. The Board needs to decide on which of two forms to use to do the report. Seaba and Henry will look at the different forms.

**Congregational Meeting Dates** – Swanson proposed December 19, 2021 and May 22, 2022.

There were no objections.

**Bio-Retention Cell Repair** – The Executive Committee voted by email on August 6 to approve an out-of-budget expenditure of $1,650 to complete work on the bio-retention cell following concerns expressed by the Z&Z Condo Homeowners Association next door. Rasmussen reported that he has walked the construction site with Land Ministry Team members and the extra work was warranted to correct unforeseen problems and to keep good relations with UUS’s neighbors.

**Treats & Talents Auction** – It was very successful last year, but a person to lead the effort needs to be found. Audlehelm will speak to Judy Tokuhisa about this.

**Process Observer** comments provided by Julia Audlehelm

**Closing Words** provided by Rochelle Honey-Arcement

**Adjournment** – 9:05 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Joe Rasmussen

Next Meetings: Executive Committee September 8, Board of Trustees September 15.