

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Board of Trustees Minutes
Thursday, February 20, 2020
6:00 p.m.

In attendance:

Board Members: Bill Brauch, Gene McCracken, Sue Huber, Mike Lauer, Patty Notch, Scott Clair, Heidi Mannerter, Sarah Jensen, Katherine Vance

Staff: Charles Lewis, Director of Finance and Administration

Timekeeper: Heidi Mannerter

Process Observer: Gene McCracken

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Board President Sue Huber. Sue Huber moved adoption of the agenda, including the consent agenda approving the January Board Meeting Minutes as published on the church website. The motion was seconded and adopted via voice vote. Board members did a check-in.

Executive Report and Administrative Items

Rev. Shaw previously submitted a written Executive Report. It is posted on the church website. In their absence, Charles Lewis responded to questions from Board members.

Financials and Dashboard

Charles Lewis submitted a written financial report. It is posted on the church website. He responded to member inquiries.

Discussion Items

- 1. Endowment Committee.** Margaret Schultz reported. She noted that the Committee has made it a priority to have at least one REACH grant go to the youth or children. She also noted that the Committee is considering how it might more broadly recognize Endowment contributions beyond donors who give higher amounts. One idea that could be pursued is to recognize all donors, perhaps on bricks within the church. Other means of recognition were discussed.
- 2. Set Annual Meeting Date.** Scott Clair moved May 31 as the Annual Meeting date. It was seconded. The motion passed via voice vote. Scott Clair also moved that the March Board of Trustees meeting be set for the 26th and that the May Board meeting be set for May 14. The motion was seconded and passed via voice vote.
- 3. RAICES Migrant Justice Platform.** Mike Lauer spoke about how the Platform aligns with our church values. He noted that Rev. Shaw signed up personally in support of the Platform. By consensus, the Board decided to consult the Immigration Justice Team as to whether it supports the platform.

- 4. Nominating Committee Report.** Gene McCracken gave a Committee Report.
 - a. Scott Clair moved the adoption of the document: “Role of the Board of Trustees in the Life....” for handout by the Nominating Committee to potential Board members. It was seconded and passed via voice vote. That document is attached to these Minutes.
 - b. Gene McCracken led a discussion regarding whether the church bylaws might be amended to place appointing the members of the Nominating Committee under the responsibility of the full congregation as opposed to it being a Board responsibility. Board consensus was that no bylaw change is presently recommended.
 - c. Gene McCracken led a discussion regarding whether to include church leadership development among the responsibilities of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee will discuss the question with Rev. Shaw.

- 5. Governance Committee Report.** Scott Clair gave a Committee Report, which recommended two Board action items.
 - a. Mike Lauer moved on behalf of the Committee making the Board of Trustees Whistleblower Protection Policy already in existence Article III, Policy I of the church Governing Policies. The motion (not requiring a second) was adopted via voice vote.
 - b. Scott Clair introduced the Committee recommendation to edit all references to “Executive Team” to strike the word “Team” throughout the church Governing Policies. Mike Lauer on behalf of the Committee moved the edits recommended by the Committee be adopted. The motion was adopted via voice vote. (The change recognizes that our church has an “Executive” as that is one of the roles of the Senior Minister but does not have an “Executive Team” as that term was a holdover from a model established by a church in Minnesota which served as the model for our Governing Policies when initially established.)
 - c. Scott Clair responded to a question from a Board member, noting that two main charges remain for the Committee this church year: 1). Whether it wishes to recommend any church bylaw amendments. 2). Providing input on the “how,” meaning what language, if any, the Board might wish to be included in the church governing documents regarding the manner in which the Executive interacts with the congregation in accomplishing the actions required of the Executive in the Governing Policies.

- 6. Unsung UU Award.** Sue Huber led a discussion of whether the Board should consider recognizing more than one church member each year. No decision was reached regarding whether to expand the number of recipients. The Board will seek nominations for the Award starting in March.

- 7. Mission and Vision Statements.** Sue Huber led a discussion of the following questions.

- a. How are the new Mission and Vision Statements being shared within the congregation?
- b. How do the new Statements align with our church Ends?

By consensus, the Board decided to postpone further consideration of this matter pending discussion with Rev. Shaw.

8. Board Goals: Continue Discussion and Plan. Sue Huber led a discussion of the following:

- a. Results of recent, 2-question survey. The Board discussed the attached report of results, which the Board sought in order to provide a baseline for measuring success in pursuing the first of three Board goals for the church year: to be more welcoming . The Board also discussed how to create baselines for the other two goals. 1). Increased engagement by church members and friends. Consensus was to review the number of events held through the first 7 months of this church year compared to the same period of time in the prior church year. 2). Increase congregational visibility in community action. Consensus was to give a short survey to church members to determine how often they attended church services in the last month, on average, how many days they were at church for any reason, and a question about the number of activities in which the member was involved in the past month. Another question might be to determine the distance from which the member lives from church. Scott Clair suggested a fourth question regarding whether the member has a close friend at church.
- b. Update on accessibility. Charles Lewis reported that church members Al Powers and Chris Jorgensen are looking into getting electricity to the east and west doors to enable the doors to operate automatically.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. (Submitted by Bill Brauch, Secretary)

Congregation Survey – Winter 2020

Q1 Compared to other places in the community, how welcome do you feel at First Unitarian Church?

Response Options	Online Responses	In Church Responses	Total	%
Much More Welcome	14	44	58	38.4%
A Little More Welcome	19	32	51	33.8%
Equal in the Community and Church	19	13	32	21.2%
A Little Less Welcome	7	1	8	5.3%
Much Less Welcome	1	1	2	1.3%
	60	91	151	100.0%

Q2 Would you recommend First Unitarian Church to others?

Response Options	Online Responses	In Church Responses	Total	%
Definitely	26	62	88	58.7%
Probably	12	19	31	20.7%
Possibly	13	8	21	14.0%
Probably Not	6	1	7	4.7%

Definitely No	2	1	3	2.0%
	59	91	150	100.1%
Observations/Reflections:				

The Role of the Board of Trustees in the Life of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines And Expectations of Individual Board Members

The members of the Board of Trustees are the voice of moral ownership of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines. The moral ownership is defined as the past, present, and future members and friends of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines, and the principles of Unitarian Universalism.

The board speaks authoritatively when it passes an official motion at a properly constituted meeting. Statements by individual board members have no authority. The board speaks with one voice or not at all. The one-voice principle makes it possible to know what the board has or has not said. This principle does not require a unanimous vote, but it does require that all board members respect decisions made. Board decisions can be changed by the board as a whole, but never by individual board members.

Governance Style and Job Contributions

The board of trustees will approach its task with a style that

- emphasizes strategic leadership rather than administrative detail
- communicates a clear distinction between board and staff roles
- Is focused on the future rather than the past
- Is pro-active as opposed to reactive

In this spirit, the board will:

1. Focus chiefly on intended long term impacts or ends, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those effects.
2. Direct, control, and inspire the organization through the establishment of broad organizational values and policies. Writing governing policies that at the broadest levels address:
 - a. Ends: Organizational products, impacts, benefits, outcomes (what good for whom at what cost).
 - b. Executive Limitations: Constraints on executive authority that establish the prudence and ethics boundaries within which lies the acceptable arena of executive activity, decisions, and organizational circumstances.
 - c. Governance process: Specifications of how the board conceives, carries out, and monitors its own tasks
 - d. Board-Executive Relationship: How power is delegated and its proper use monitored.
3. Assure senior minister's performance through monitoring and evaluation in accord with policies 2.a., 2.b., and 2.d. above.
4. Link First Unitarian Church of Des Moines with its stakeholders.
5. Enforce upon itself whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence.
 - a. Discipline will apply to policy-making principles, respect for defined roles, and attendance.

- b. After subjects have been discussed and voted upon, both majority and minority will support the action taken and speak with one voice.
6. Be accountable to the congregation and other stakeholders for competent, conscientious, and effective accomplishment of its obligations as a body. It will allow no officer, individual, or committee of the board to usurp this role or hinder this discipline.
7. Monitor and regularly discuss the board's own process and performance.
8. Ensure the continuity of board improvements through systematic treatment of its own institutional memory.
9. Be an initiator of policy, not merely a reactor to staff initiatives. The board, not the staff, will be responsible for board performance.

Responsibilities of Individual Board Members:

- Develop an understanding of current church by-laws, ends statements, policies, processes, programs, services, strengths, and needs of the church, and enter into creative interchange with others to achieve a collaborative understanding.
- Understand the principles of policy governance and make decisions and take actions based on those principles. As stewards of the Ends Statements making sure that we are meeting them today and being visionaries for the future.
- Serve in leadership positions and undertake special assignments willingly and with accountability.
- Avoid prejudiced judgments on the basis of information received from individuals. Urge those with grievances to follow established policies and procedures to create linkage with those who can assist in solving the issue. (All matters of potential significance should be called to the attention of the minister and the board's elected leader as appropriate.)
- Make a commitment to be true to the covenants made with others in the church and to integrate skills to one's best ability to speak truth with love.
- Encourage members of the congregation to apply to serve on the Board of Trustees and the Endowment Committee.
- Participate in creating linkage with the congregation and staff so that a mutual understanding of the policies, procedures, defined roles and responsibilities of committees, staff, Board of Trustees, and lay congregation is most effectively working together.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 1/12/12 – reviewed 4/12/18

Reviewed, amended and approved by the BofT 2/20/20 – “Executive Team” was changed to “Executive” (2 instances).