

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines

Board of Trustees Minutes

Thursday, November 17, 2020

6:00 p.m.

In attendance (all via Zoom):

Board Members: Sue Huber, Mike Lauer, Patty Notch, Heidi Mannerter, Sarah Jensen, Scott Clair, Andrea LeMeuse, Greg Nichols, Fern Stewart, Rev. Amy Shaw

Staff: Charles Lewis, Director of Finance and Administration

Timekeeper: Mike Lauer

Process Observer: Heidi Mannerter

(Several church members also participated.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Board President Patty Notch. The chalice was presented and a reflection was provided. Check ins were made. Greg Nichols, moved adoption of the agenda, and approval of the October Board Meeting Minutes, seconded by Heidi Mannerter and adopted via voice mail vote.

Executive and Administrative Items

Rev. Shaw thanked the Board for their praise of the new Facebook ads and shared the newly created hands ad.

Barb Royal responded to questions regarding the Communications Committee website timelines. She stated they were a few weeks from submitting to the developers, after which the beta version would be available approximately a month later. The beta version would be reviewed by the Board, group leaders and committee chairs. She also reported the committee was currently working on a social media policy. In response to questions regarding descriptive content, she requested the information be sent to her for the committee to review, Rev. Shaw recognized committee members for their astounding work on this project.

Rev. Shaw responded to questions regarding how we were doing as a church during the pandemic. They explained we were way ahead in many areas including technological knowledge. They recognized Bruce and Barb Martin updating their equipment to provide quality music at a time when many congregations were without music. Rev. Amy stated we continue to communicate with new members and every Sunday we have increased visitors. They recognized the mindful, systematic and thoughtful approach the Lens of the Future Committee provided the congregation in avoiding any premature openings all the while maintaining transparency. They noted we were even with other congregations regarding anxiety and stress with little flares coming across the desk. Everyone doing their best and thankful that no one was behaving badly. Rev. Shaw stated staff had begun to discuss what spring and summer would look like for the church. In response to how the Board could help, they recognized the current Visioning/Big Ideas discussion that had begun.

Financials and Dashboard

Charles Lewis reported the furnace work has been completed. The work included the replacement of four units with two high capacity, high efficiency units, as well as additional duct work.

We were fortunate as the work was more extensive but remained under budget. No thirty year old furnaces to replace in the future.

Charlie responded to questions on the Programming Dashboard explaining the RE history attendance

figures were absent due to a shifting in the metrics and an inability to compare apples to apples. He explained with Zoom attendance, numbers for RE were not as comparable to the former years and noted church attendance via Zoom could easily be doubled. Faith Forward monthly figures were explained as per class.

Responding to questions, he clarified the membership contribution bucket was basically non-plate, non-pledged gifts. A separate gift beyond their pledge.

Addressing the Wake Now Our Vision, he formally recommended the Board reallocate money from the bequest fund, which is unallocated bequest monies, to meet the obligation in full. The recommendation also included moving the remaining \$5,000 in the bequest fund to the Capital Reserve Maintenance Fund to offset the furnace work.

Barb Royal confirmed the Financial Oversight Committee was in complete agreement with Charlie's recommendations.

Discussion was held regarding the use of reserve funds. The discussion identified the funds remain in the church and actually serve a better purpose by being placed in the endowment fund. This also held with the remaining funds as serving a specific purpose of offsetting the furnaces. Rev. Shaw summarized the discussion stating it demonstrates that we are intent on a clear, transparent, process to spend funds in a manner as folks intended.

It was moved by Scott Clair, seconded by Mike Lauer to move \$29,250 from the unallocated Bequest Fund to the Endowment Fund for Our Wake Now Our Vision compensation, and the remaining \$4,986.05 balance to move to the Capital Reserve Maintenance Fund to help offset the cost of the HVAC work. Adopted via voice mail vote.

Discussion/Decision Items

1. Board Committee Reports

Financial Oversight Committee – Barb Royal stated they had met every month not quarterly. They will meet again in January. This month they reviewed accounting and internal controls with information provided by Charlie. Barb does the bank reconciliations as we are without a bookkeeper which will be hired once the building is open again. They also reviewed first quarter financial statements. They will be working with Liz Bredeson and Stewardship Committee on best ways of getting the message out about financial information. Financial Auditing review this month was the handling of on-line payments and security. Discussion included contracts and lawyer services. The Finance Oversight Committee will be available to the Board for developing the upcoming budget. Rev. Shaw thanked them for their oversight and detail they provide.

Charlie reported the PPP loan forgiveness application had been submitted and it appeared we are eligible for 100% forgiveness. If that holds, the \$3,600 in unallocated loan money would be applied to appropriate expenses in this fiscal year.

A request was made to consider the possibility to aid other congregations in obtaining similar funds in the future. If we didn't need that funding, is there a possibility we can share. We need to review our values and equity sharing. These thoughts are for the future consideration.

Governance – Scott Clair reported they had met and discussion centered on the website and the need to provide a coherent description of our current Governance. The committee is scheduled to meet again December 5.

Nominating Committee: Sue Huber reported Kim **McCann** is the third member of the nominating committee. The committee will start looking for Board members and two Finance Oversight Committee members. Scott stated he would contact Bruce Martin to see if he was interested in continuing on the Governance Committee as he was a founding member.

Ministerial Review: Heidi reported the tool used last year was very successful, proposing we use the same for continuity and tracking.

It was moved by Heidi Mannerter, seconded by Scott Clair to use the same ministerial review tool used in 2019-20 review for the 2020-21 ministerial review. Adopted via voice mail vote.

Lens of the Future – Al Powers reviewed the packet provided to the Board which included a more detailed framework for the rules and regulations, the definitions of the four levels, a detailed explanation of each level involving procedures, requirements and activities allowed, as well as inclusion of the revision caveat for updating as necessary. Also included in his review were the criteria to evaluate what level and steps which were similar to prior adopted policy. He reviewed the criteria used to determine the levels. The next section provided tables with specific metrics to use as a guideline to the level of opening. A table was designed for the congregation to illustrate what phases mean, define what is allowed and what conditions apply under each phase. Last page was a table intended to be posted on the church website and updated weekly to inform the current status of the indicators that are being tracked. This is a rough draft provided to the Board for their overview.

The Board thanked the committee stating it was an amazing, data driven document. There were questions regarding inclusion of the choir in the primary document. Discussion supported the macro level and as a separate step on the horizon to discuss micro steps. The Board supported seeing the final draft with whatever edits they want to make to it and with choir set aside as soon as that can happen and put it out to the membership within the next month.

It was moved by Greg Nichols, seconded by Sue Huber to direct the Lens of the Future Committee to take our comments into account and publish to the congregation as our final draft version. Adopted via voice mail vote.

2. Miscellaneous Updates

Leadership Committee – Rev. Amy stated the first meeting went well working through what does it mean to be a leader, what is the pervuew of the committee, by January they should have a nice essential report .

Widening the Circle of Concern – Rev. Amy stated they continue to meet on Tuesdays. The participants are bright, thoughtful and engaged in the material. Rev. Amy stated she was immensely pleased with the group and that anyone one could still participate.

Transfer of Pledges to PushPay/Vanco and Membership/Pledge/Stewardship Two Step Plan - Patty Notch stated we are finding people who fell between the cracks in the transfer. Rev. Amy explained letters have gone out to members who we haven't heard from, haven't seen and haven't renewed their pledge. First letter touching base with members, second letter to those not responding to initial letter will be from Stewardship once again touching base and alerting them that their pledge has not made switch to PushPay from Vanco as no payments coming out of their account. It was noted that the issue in some cases revolved around the pledge being made, but not transitioned to PushPay. Amy Cox, the former bookkeeper, sent emails to all members who hadn't switched alerting them of the steps that needed to be taken. However, if not received or acted upon those then fell through the crack. Rev. Amy stated the process is being refined for next year and people will be called. This two step membership plan is helping cleanup the membership roster. By December 1, it is hoped the folks we see but aren't pledging will be contacted and that will be resolved. This will help with recertification.

Additionally, Lyra will be learning Power Church as Jane will be retiring at the end of December. Jane's position will be replaced once the building is open, currently she works two hours a day, four days a week.

3. From the Congregation – nothing received

4. Regional Updates

Retooling for New Realities – We are approved and moving forward with meeting scheduled in early December. We were paired with two congregations, one in Ames and one in Pennsylvania which are similar in size to ours. Facilitators look good. Members include Greg Nichols and Patty Notch and the leadership team except for Shelley Kaldenberg. This is a UUA sponsored program.

5. On Our Horizon

Budget Forums – required attendance before addressing annual meeting? We will need to discuss in the near future.

Membership definition/requirements – Lyra and Amy have put together.

How do we select our GA delegates? - This will need to be addressed in the next couple of months.

6. Visioning/Big Ideas

Five Assumptions Failing Us Now- visioning work for first Thursday of the month.

No meeting on Thanksgiving.

It was moved by Heidi Mannerter, seconded by Scott Clair to adjourn.

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