

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines
Board of Trustees Minutes
Thursday, September 16, 2021

In attendance (all via Zoom):

Board Members: LeeAnn Back, Scott Emison Clair, Reba Eagles, Andrea LeMeuse, Greg Nichols, Patty Notch, Fern Stewart, Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw

Staff: Charles Lewis, Director of Finance and Administration

Several church members also were in attendance.

Timekeeper: Patty Notch; Process Observer: Scott Emison Clair

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Board President Greg Nichols. The chalice was presented and a reflection was provided. Check-ins were made.

Executive and Administrative Items

A comment was raised regarding the Executive Report being linked to the ends statements instead of a checklist.

Financials and Dashboard

Charlie noted attendance should be increased by one-half of the number reported as most related to electronic device viewing.

Charlie Lewis responded to questions regarding the Lift replacement. He explained while code requirements had changed, it appeared with two vendor bids,, that there would be no significant increase in costs. The Board thanked Al Powers for his assistance in the lift replacement. He also reviewed the ADA updates that were being funded by congregational donation.

He reported on the destruction that had been incurred by beavers in the creek area and the effort to share a certified trapper with the Druid Hill Townhomes Association. Charlie noted the removal of a groundhog will also be included in the trapping fees.

He reviewed the August financials, indicating expenses and revenue were within what was anticipated. He noted the use of the reserve funds would not appear until the end of the year once the actual amount was confirmed.

A request was made to include the endowment fund information in monthly financial reports. It was clarified the reports were submitted quarterly by the Endowment Fund chair.

Committee, Team and Task Force Reports

A. Financial Oversight Committee - The committee meets later this month at which time the September mini-audit would take place, review of credit card line items and ad hoc policy for capital expenditures. Currently Barb Royal is handling deposits. The committee plans to discuss its charter in the future. In October, the first quarter financials will be reviewed for July, August, and September of 2021.

B. Stewardship Committee - Liz Bredeson reported the August kick off went well with only three individuals needing followup. The next scheduled event is Saturday, for young families with an ice cream theme, October will be for families with older children and November Heidi Lackman will be heading the group. The year-round stewardship is going well.

C. Kitchen Committee - Ann Mowrey reported the committee had met with the architects and three concepts had been firmed up. On October 4, the committee will receive the full drawing, a church forum with the architect in attendance is scheduled for October 17th. The committee is prepared to offer additional on-line forums for the congregation if necessary. The committee will ask the Board for direction at the October 21 meeting,

Questions regarding the Green Committee were addressed at this time, noting the designation was earned a number of years ago. Ron Heideman, current chair, was encouraged to review the UUA requirements green initiatives and update. It was noted there needed to be a connection between the Kitchen and Green committees to address the use of disposables, composting, recycling and how we want to be.

D. Governance Committee - Bill Brauch, committee chair, noted Bruce Martin's term had expired and he would no longer be serving on the committee. He requested assistance in locating a church member to serve. A review was given regarding what the governance committee responsibilities are which included review of policy and procedures, recognizing changes to be made so our practices and governance are in sync.

New Business

A. Lens of the Future - Al Powers reviewed the current metrics and acknowledged the growing need for members of the congregation to come together. He explained the recommendations for allowable activities and restrictions as follows: 1. All persons eligible must be fully vaccinated to attend any church sponsored event that is held indoors, and for all events held in the church building. 2. Properly worn and fitted facial coverings are required when 2 or more people are in the same room or working space in the church building. 3. Singing by both the choir and congregation is allowable with all participants wearing facial coverings, including both indoor and outdoor events. 4. Air purifiers must be operating when more than 2 people are together in a classroom or other similar sized room in the church building.

All references to levels, thresholds and number of people have been removed thus allowing opportunities to gather in large groups. He noted there were a few committee members who were not in agreement with the recommendations. Concerns included

the number of increasing cases, crowded conditions for extended time periods, break through cases in fully vaccinated individuals, trigger measures, elimination of reference to levels of opening and closing, reaction time when conditions dictate revisions.

The Board discussed proof of vaccinations, youth too young to be vaccinated and the potential implications in adopting the latest recommendation from the Lens Committee. Questions were directed to the committee regarding the lack of social distancing guidelines. The committee would continue to use CovidActNow recommendations. People will make the decisions that work for them, there is a clamoring to be in church, wristbands are available and allow distancing. As a group, the committee could not make a consensus recommendation and explained how they had evolved and how far they could go. Two committee members expressed their concerns regarding the proposed changes.

It was moved by Patty Notch, seconded by Reba Eagles to receive the report and the two dissent notices and defer action until the first meeting in October to allow time to hammer things out and meet the needs of the congregation.

Discussion included the need to be together as a group. It was recognized that timing matters, routines matter, it is on us to nail this down by the first week of October. Programming and kick off events are scheduled for early October with service starting at 9:30, forums at 11:00. The Board recommended a meeting on September 30th, at 6:00 p.m. to address the various perspectives.

The motion was amended to meet September 30th, at 6:00 p.m. Adopted via voicemail vote.

B. Human Resources Committee - Reba Eagles presented the proposed charter for the Committee which included the mission statement, organization, leaders and members, meeting schedule, reporting relationships and accountabilities.

Discussion included a policy for exit interviews,

It was moved by Reba Eagles on behalf of the Committee, to adopt the proposed charter for the HR Committee. Adopted via voicemail vote.

From the Congregation - No additional inquiries were received by the congregation.

Executive Session: Motion by Patty Notch to enter Executive Session for the purpose related to personnel, seconded by LeeAnn Bach. Adopted via voicemail vote.

Board reconvened from Executive Session at 8:18 p.m.

Announcements and other additional business - The Board will convene a special board meeting to take up the subjects encompassed in Lens Report on September 30, 2021. The October 7th Board Meeting will encompass the Kitchen Committee report.

Membership Coordinator Position - Discussion included evolving church needs including multiplatform church, correct utilization of personnel funds and position's time allotment. The position will require competence in social media, digital technology and in-person skills for current membership.

It was moved by Reba Eagles, seconded by Patty Notch to eliminate the membership coordinator as it currently exists in order to be retooled and reimagined to focus on the digital and interactive experience that we are projecting forward. Adopted via voicemail vote.

Director of Religious Education - Discussion included the UUA guidelines outlining the number of enrolled, active and involved youth to determine the RE director employment hours. The reality is a decrease in participation over the past few years. While it is hoped with the new stewardship program and getting back into the building, we will see additions, the numbers are expected to remain stable with little substantial change. This decision is for the Board to be responsible with the personnel funds provided by the congregation as well as addressing the inability to use reserve funds in the future.

It was moved by Reba Eagles, seconded by Patty Notch, that the Director of RE be allocated along the UUA Guidelines for a person directing or coordinating the RE for high school and under: when actively enrolled and attending children are 60-100 that position should require 30-40 hours proportional to number enrolled; near 50 the allocation should be 20-25 hours, and below 30 it should be allocated 18-20 hours. Adopted via voicemail vote.

Closing words were and extinguishing the chalice provided by LeeAnn Back.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m. (Submitted by Fern Stewart, Secretary)