

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines
Board of Trustees Minutes
Thursday, March 23, 2023

In attendance via Zoom:

Board Members: LeeAnn Back, Kevin Boeckholt, Reba Eagles, Jeremy Guenther, Andrea LeMeuse, Crystal Loving, Greg Nichols, Fern Stewart

Staff: Transitional Contract Minister Victoria Safford and Alice Stewart

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Board President Reba Eagles. The chalice was presented. LeeAnn Back led the Board in reading the covenant. The check-in question was "If you were invited by the advisory team, who's searching for an interim minister, to spend an hour with the candidates, what one question would you ask the applicants? Trustees responded.

Public Comment:

Ann Mowrey reported replacement tables had been ordered for the Griffin Hall. The tables are sturdy and require additional storage space. She asked for consideration of a potential redesign of one of the coat closet bays for use as a storage area for tools and winter chemicals. She requested it be considered an extension of the kitchen project and allow usage of the already approved Endowment Funds for the kitchen project to pay for the remodeled closet. Additional storage is also available in the archive room #109 after the removal of a bookcase and photo storage.

Discussion included whether this was a storage issue or an extension of the kitchen project and how it would be viewed by the Endowment Committee and membership. It was noted that the Endowment Committee was aware. The Facilities Committee will be meeting the second week of April to discuss and review the development of a plan of storage throughout the church. The Board requested a plan be made available at the May Board of Trustees meeting, to allow the Board and Endowment Committee sign off and to inform the congregation at the annual meeting.

It was moved by Crystal Loving, seconded by Andrea LeMeuse to approve amending agenda to include Executive Session and minutes from the February 23, 2023 meetings. Motion approved.

Minister's Report

Transitional Contract Minister Victoria Stafford reported her written report was included in the packet. She gave a shout out to the Trans Live Action Group for their response to the Iowa Legislature which included their support of a statewide lobby day which was so large it moved from capitol to First Unitarian, as well as the planned Trans Fest

scheduled for next weekend held at our church. She noted it was a celebration of joy, art and creativity. She described a discussion with an individual regarding our church and the safety it provides to the trans community.

Director of Finance Report:

Alice Stewart, Director of Finance, This month our expenses exceeded our revenue by \$26,537, exclusively due to lack of pledge payments. The payments were under 40% of budgeted, perhaps related to three manual deposits instead of average four. A quarterly scheduled pledge notice was sent out. Expenses were a bit high due in part to software & licensing (formerly Tech Support) due to Visa bills paid on the first and 27th of the month.

It was pointed out the complications of the former pledging process, there is a total mismatch between the pledges of record and the actual revenue does not match up. Going forward the plan is to have them better aligned.

New Business

Transition Report: The group met, discussed target areas and met with the congregation. The group has a very good place to go forward with the Congregational Record that will be submitted in April, with a two week turnaround scheduled in May depending on the first or second round to make a decision. The Interim Ministry Advisory Committee will make the decision regarding the best candidate. The team is meshing well.

Budget Update: The \$615,000 budget which includes moving expenses.

By-Law Proposal: Margaret Schultz reviewed proposed changes to Section 2: Continuing Membership, Section a. Membership continues as long as the member remains in covenant, ~~and~~ has made ~~and pays~~ a financial pledge and has paid a contribution of record in the amount of that pledge during the fiscal year. ~~(or has been granted a waiver)~~ A member is in covenant who honors our shared values (the Seven UU Principles and our Bond of Union) in our relationships with one another.

Discussion included identification of the need to contribute to supporting the congregation, the need for language to address inability to meet pledge, without sounding dismissive of those who fall short. Discussion of the misuse of waivers was also included. The development of an operating policy by staff and the board for waivers or pledge shortfalls, newly renamed pastoral exemption, is in process and will be presented at the annual meeting along with the proposed change in the by-laws.

After discussion, the following verbage: Section 2: Continuing Membership, Section a. Membership continues as long as the member remains in covenant, ~~and~~ has made ~~and~~ ~~pays~~ a financial pledge and has paid a contribution of record *towards that* pledge during the fiscal year. ~~(or has been granted a waiver)~~ A member is in covenant who honors our shared values (the Seven UU Principles and our Bond of Union) in our relationships with one another.

It was suggested to table to the April meeting until supporting policy is provided.

Policy Change Publicly Traded Securities Policy: Margaret Schultz explained it was determined a policy was needed to set out the handling of pledges and other securities from receipt, the subsequent sale and the final recording and reporting of the proceeds. Basically it explains how we identify the amount of the pledge and how we identify the amount that we get, it is an asset and has a constantly changing value. The donor gets the credit at the price on the date it was donated, we liquidate as soon as possible taking an average of the high/low for the day on the donation and any difference of gain or loss just hits our books. We pay the brokerage fees. It is a tax advantage for the donor.

It was moved by Greg Nichols, seconded by Kevin Boeckholt to approve the Publicly Traded Securities Policy. Approved.

It was moved by Crystal Loving, seconded by Kevin Boeckholt to move into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues at 7:17 p.m.

It was moved by Kevin Boeckholt, seconded by Crystal Loving to move out of Executive Session at 7:39 p.m.

The next Board meeting will be held Thursday, March 23, 2023.

LeeAnn Back provided the closing and the chalice was extinguished.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.,

Submitted by Fern Stewart, Secretary