

First Unitarian Church of Des Moines
Board of Trustees Minutes
Thursday, April 20, 2023

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

Staff: Transitional Contract Minister Victoria Safford and Alice Stewart

The meeting was called to order at 6:07 p.m. by Board President Reba Eagles. The chalice was presented. LeeAnn Back provided a reading. The check-in question was “If you were writing a card in support of our trans families, what would you write?” Trustees responded.

Process Observer: Jeremy Guenther

It was moved by Kevin Boeckholt, seconded by LeeAnn Back to approve the agenda and minutes from the March 23, 2023 meeting. Motion approved.

Minister’s Report

Transitional Contract Minister Victoria Stafford stated her written report was included in the packet.

Director of Finance Report:

Alice Stewart, Director of Finance, This month our expenses exceeded our revenue by \$13,000, exclusively due to \$9,000 in lack of pledge contributions and fund-raisers with more expenses than income at this time which is similar to last year. Expenses were as expected with the PushPay annual payment of \$3,500, along with snow removal, making it a bit high. She expected the Food Fair to be a benefit to the church. Kevin pointed out there would be variability in months and stated it was normal. The shortage of pledged income for the past two months was discussed, and the Board requested Alice to review. The Stewardship representatives stated the reach had been made to individuals during the pledge drive to discuss the switch from monthly to annual pledge campaign. A courteous, loving letter to those who may be unaware of the status of their pledge contributions. The letter also needs to include potential risks to programs that define our church which could include AMOS, assisting refugees, and educational programs.

New Business

Transition Report: Scott Emison Clair submitted via email a report to Reba in which he noted the packet was done, they were on schedule, and our church was one of the first, of 32 churches, to be submitted. The month of May will be full of deadlines.

Stewardship Update: Mike Merrit provided an update reporting 168 pledges out of 285 pledging units had been received, with a 59% return rate and \$431,953 pledged, making 73% of the goal. The question remains how to get the remaining \$180,000. Mike explained there were three groups: those who think they are pledging, those who aren't and those who are pledging. The message to the congregation needs to be that we can no longer pass a deficit budget. The fair share needs to be a reality and basic numbers need to be shared with the members. A frank conversation needs to be had with the congregation as what is at risk if we do not meet the budget. A letter will be sent to the congregation if the average pledge was made, we would make our goal, however acknowledging not everyone can increase. Reba will provide a spotlight on Sunday, Reba and Victoria will draft the letter and Stewardship will provide numbers.

Covenant Meeting: Bill Brauch, Right Relations, invited the Board to attend a covenant workshop on May 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Lisa Presley from the UUA will be leading this first step in the process of creating a church-wide covenant. The covenant's determining theme is to define how we are to be with each other. Information and input will be gathered at this meeting and a draft covenant will be created. Additional meetings will be held to refine the covenant until the process is complete.

By-Law Proposal: Margaret Schultz reviewed the updated proposed changes to the by-laws which would be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting. Along with the changes, a Pastoral Exemption Policy will be developed which will not be part of the by-law revision and not require congregational approval.

It was moved by Greg Nichols, seconded by Andrea LeMeuse to approve the changes to the Article III Membership, Sections 1 and 2.

Discussion resulted in the following proposed changes:

ARTICLE III: Membership

Section 1: Becoming a member

There shall be no creedal test, explicit or implied, for membership. Individuals who are 16 years of age or older may obtain membership status by ~~ascribing~~ subscribing to the purpose set forth by Article II (The Bond of Union) and completing the following steps:

1. Participate in the path to membership process;

2. File a pledge and pay the first installment of the pledge; and,
3. Sign the Membership Book in the presence of a member.

Section 2: Continuing Membership

a. Membership continues as long as the member remains in covenant and has made a financial pledge and has paid a contribution of record toward 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. Or

- b. The Senior Minister extends a congregant's membership as per policy.

Motion approved.

The next Board meeting will be held Thursday, May 18, 2023.

LeeAnn Back provided the closing and the chalice was extinguished.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.,

Submitted by Fern Stewart, Secretary