In attendance:
Board Members: Bill Brauch, Sara Jensen, Gene McCracken, Sue Huber, Mike Lauer, Heidi Mannetter, Patty Notch, Katherine Vance, Rev. Amy Shaw
Staff: Charles Lewis, Lyra Halsten
Timekeeper: Heidi Mannetter
Process Observer: Mike Lauer

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Board President Sue Huber. The agenda was adopted by voice vote, including the consent agenda approving the September Board Meeting Minutes as published on the church website. Mike Lauer moved adoption, Patty Notch seconded. Board members and Charlie Lewis did a check in.

Executive Report and Administrative Items
Rev. Shaw submitted a written Executive Report. It is posted on the church website. There were no questions from Board members.

Financials and Dashboard
Director of Finance and Administration Charlie Lewis submitted a written financial report. It is posted on the church website. He responded to questions.

Discussion Items

1. Accessibility concerns at First Unitarian – Sue Huber reported on communications from church members about accessibility. The issues raised included whether to install a hearing loop system, possible modification of the sound system in Channing Hall, the addition of 2 more handicapped spots in south parking lot, and whether to post a sign in the east lot giving notice of the availability of handicapped spots in the south lot. Rev. Shaw thanked the church Accessibility Team for its work (members were in attendance).

   a. Sound issues: Janice Hawkins reported on the work done by the Accessibility Team, including the need for an assistive listening system and better acoustics in Channing Hall. Rev. Amy reported on the hearing concerns with our building and said that we need a hearing loop. She also noted that the location of our sound booth makes it difficult for the sound technicians to hear the actual sound levels the congregation hears. Rev. Amy suggested it be moved to the center of the back area of the Mary Safford area to improve the sound tech’s capacity. We may be able to move the sound booth on our own or go with a more high-tech solution as some churches handle sound via a single laptop. The goal also includes live-streaming our services so a camera would be needed as well. She also reported that our sound system is not good, noting that our system wipes out the low
tones in a female voice. It was further suggested by a member of the congregation in attendance that we consider hiring a professional sound evaluation of the Auditorium to get ideas on how to best and most efficiently improve the sound system.

b. Platform Lift issues- Charlie – Charlie reported that Al Powers looked into the situation with our chair Lift. It is no longer in production so it will eventually be difficult to find parts when needed. We have received an estimate of $8000 to improve the lift. A new hydraulic chair lift could be purchased but would cost $60,000 to install. What we have now has several years left of use but once it goes, we likely won’t be able to repair it for lack of parts. It is in as good a condition as possible, short of spending another $8000. Even if we installed a new chair lift or elevator there is a question of whether we have a means of providing access to the lower portion of the basement and there is no real means of providing access because of the half-flight of stairs to that lowest level as there isn’t enough room to take out the steps and put in a ramp that is ADA compliant. Charlie noted our current chair lift is ADA compliant. Rev. Amy also reported on the inability of disabled folks to get up to our stage as it is not accessible to wheelchairs.

c. Handicapped Parking Report. The Accessibility Team reported a need for additional handicapped parking spots in the south lot. Charlie noted that we currently meet code as to the required number of handicapped spot, but that the question, now, is how many we need. Discussion centered on whether to add 2 or 4 new spots in the south lot and what that may leave for staff and church members.

d. Power doors for both east and west sides of the church. Chris Jorgensen reported that he is getting bids for power doors and that we need to be aware that, above such bides, we will have to pay extra to get power to the doors.

e. Funding for accessibility needs: Rev. Amy will visit with the Stewardship Team about their plan for a capital campaign, and also see who in the congregation has grant-writing skills and would be willing to help. Rev. Amy has been exploring alternative funding sources.

f. Accessibility will continue to be a focus. Sara Jensen asked that we keep this on the agenda on a monthly basis due to its importance to our membership. Rev. Amy said she agrees with that suggestion. Sue noted she will keep it on future agendas.

2. New payment vendor. Charlie reported on communications with a potential new provider – Push Pay. He showed a short video supporting his interest in that provider. Choosing Push Pay would require a $2400 up front payment. But, if our giving doesn’t go up 5% after year 1 we get the $2400 back. Push Pay would provide an app available to staff and church members that would allow us to better communicate – e.g., weather closures, live-stream of services. Church members could make pledges and pledge payments via the app. The annual cost to the church would be $3000. After discussion, Rev. Amy and Charlie agreed to seek proposals from at least two other vendors.
3. Governance Committee

   a. recommendations to executive limitations.  Tabled until next meeting, without objection.

4. Policy for Church Use/Affiliation Groups. Tabled until next meeting, without objection.

5. Installation of Rev. Amy.  Rev. Amy noted Board President’s role in the installation service.

6. Board Retreat on Saturday, Nov 9.  Lisa Presley of the UUA will be here on Friday, 11/8, along with Michael Slack.  They will hold a workshop with staff that Friday a.m.  Rev. Amy reported she is considering scheduling a whole-congregation event that Friday evening.  Lisa and Michael would meet with the Board on Saturday.  The Retreat will be at church.  Lunch will be ordered in.  Rev. Amy will get a Save-the-Date notice out to the congregation for the 11/8 evening event.

7. Discussion of Board Forum Results
   a) Patty Notch reported that 52 members of the congregation showed up for 3 meetings, in addition, several Board members and counselors were present at each meeting.  Patty reviewed a handout that she created by compiling the comments made by participants during the forums.  The handout is attached to these minutes.  The Board discussed the comments.

   b) Next steps: Sue Huber suggested “engagement” as the focus for the Board for the remainder of the year.  Sue also noted that she plans to draft a regular Board communication to church members with information about the Board’s activities.  Board members will join in a workshop at church on 10/24 at 1:00 p.m. to discuss Board goals.  Church members are welcome to attend and participate.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.  (Submitted by Bill Brauch, Secretary)
**Social Justice**

Take a concrete focus – an inquiry into racism and anti-racism, and all its intersectionality work in the greater community; work within one’s being

Climate change; more climate action work; more support and leadership around environmental issues – our 7th principle; Re-energize our Energy and Justice Group – revisit Green Congregation certification

Become the “IT” place for social justice

Social justice should be woven through everything/all we do – all committees and groups

Continue providing meals with FEDS to CISS, but have periodic food drives for food pantries

Focus social justice to root issues

Legislative presence at the Iowa Statehouse

There’s a lot of social justice causes that need help. We can’t work on all of them, but what things CAN we do that help with many at once

Connect with UUA Social Justice movements – Green New Deal, Poor People’s Campaign, etc.

Connect with UUA and other denominational and interdenominational movements/actions

Establish process for determining a local daily social justice need we will focus on in the next year and beyond

Follow through with maintaining our initiatives

Re-up certification as a Welcoming Congregation – needs to be ongoing with people going to meetings and events

Strong social justice infrastructure so our church is known as a strong social justice advocate that has strong collaborative relationships with the other justice seeking organizations in the community,

Figure out what’s next for social justice – movement building, higher levels of engagement from congregation.

Develop a UNIFIED social justice program with participation from all church members (kids too!) Get rid of silos

Fully participate in all organizations we are a part of – AMOS, DMARC, ISM,
Partner with more groups in the community – Monsoon, EMBARC, Plymouth, CCI

Hire a community organizer to network/communicate with community and organizations

**Religious Education**

Offer children’s music programs – PK-HS

Revitalize children’s program attendance

Young adult programming

Attract kids and be user-friendly

We need a strong RE program. When children enjoy their time at church, parents can also enjoy their time and know their children are ok

Where are the kids? RE needs to be revitalized

Action in RE now. We’ve been treading water/in a holding pattern too long. Need a STRONG administrator

We need a strong DRE/administrator with a strategic plan who can promote within and without

Look at current RE model and see if it can be improved

RE that meets folks where they are as well as where they want to be

Adult RE and workshops

I need help in figuring out what I believe

How to get more kids involved in RE and in other activities – i.e. ground maintenance, etc.

How many kids do we have in our congregation and why don’t they participate?

Build Wednesday night community for all ages – guest speakers?
How do we build up and re-energize our RE program both for kids, adults and families

Need family activities

Youth pastor

Children’s choir
We have several who have gone to leadership school – where are they? Why aren’t they participating?

**Engagement**

Onboard new minister and integrate them and us together as a community

More people meeting face to face. Engagement with other members makes stronger relationships

Wednesday – informal time with BOT and Minister

Why don’t people come when we have a guest speaker?

Make time and space to bring different groups and activities to come together to hear what’s happening and how it all intersects

Building real connections across the generations

Need more volunteers for Sunday hospitality

Continue strong Caring Ministry program for our members

Transportation to and from services and programming for people with mobility issues. We’re doing it on a temporary basis now – need to be long term

Need more male involvement

Workshops/classes lead by persons of color

Work as a congregation to build connections with members, minister, the immigrant community and other like-minded congregations

Build connections between elders and youth – innovative programs and services that create opportunities to get to know each other and feel valued

Outreach to minorities, with our goal for our church to reflect general population mix

Improved engagements in mission/vision areas – increase relationships and commitments

Growth of connections between and among people here and in the broader community

More visibility in the community

Wholeness in our sense of community
More adult-child partnerships

Leadership with an action plan

Get members, regular visitors involved in a class, group, event

More/better lay leader development Focus on fostering good democratic processes, so we experience a strong democracy in our community

Youth BOT member

Building diversity

Focus on processes that develop good creative interchanges and a strong UU identity

Follow up “program” – personal calls – to speak to those who have stopped coming, drastically reduced their pledging or commitment/engagement and find out WHY and what they need to come back

Continue to build a fully functioning pastoral care program

Invite more people to BOT meetings

More information about “downstairs” activities from pulpit*

Circle groups emphasized more. It has affected the culture of all of our classes and groups. We LISTEN to each other. It is the only place I experience this.

Expand ways to communicate with the congregation about everything going on, committee work, BOT action/discussion, members in need

Educate more people about the value of knowing what’s happening at the UUA, Mid-America Region and across the nation. Make denominational connections

**Budget/Finance**

Bring budget into balance (multiple people) reign in spending

Develop a structured capital maintenance program

Increase pledges (multiple people), increase revenue, “financial well being”, financial health from giving to spending
Periodic budget updates in the weekly emails

Put routine maintenance in the budget

Transparency regarding finances – the congregation has the right to know how much each employee is paid and have input on the value of the position to the congregation

Re-work policy governance so it is “The People’s Church”

The congregation should be involved in FINAL decisions about all significant budget issues, possibly by vote

Commit to a budget process that derives from our mission, vision and values

**Staffing**

Determine proper staffing. Recruit and retain the BEST people for the jobs

Staff job descriptions, along with regular staff evaluations and clarity as to what the process is to terminate. Develop accountability for staff positions and performance; Hire effective staff members who receive feedback and evaluations on a regular basis

Think about a second minister and what their role would be

Adjustment to staffing changes as it connects to the budget

Align congregational needs with staffing

**Volunteer development**

Re-energize the congregation in engaging as volunteers

Be very intentional in creating and sustaining lay leader development strategy

More volunteer involvement beyond the “usual” people

More volunteer recognition – from the pulpit and in the Intercom
Marketing/Outreach

Make ourselves more visible in the community – more outreach regarding what we’re doing

“The Uncommon Denomination”

Attract diverse peoples

Build a culture of growth in congregation size

An effort to attract the many young “unchurched” residents moving into the new apartments, condos and housing developments springing up nearby

Sustainable growth, revenue and membership

Infrastructure

What should be our focus for upkeep and having the money to pay for it

Still need to finish the bridge project

Continue forest/grounds/parking/maintenance enhancements