

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
April 14, 2020

President Andy Turner called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:05 pm on Tuesday, April 14, 2020.

Trustees Present (via Zoom due to coronavirus pandemic):

Andy Turner (President), Wendy Salomon (Vice President), Matt Hare (Clerk & Scribe), Elton Hall, Diana Nier, Lyn Staack, Kim Wilkinson, Rev. Margaret Weis (ex-officio; minister), Angela Zhang

Trustees Absent:

Jennifer Streid-Mullen (ex-officio; Treasurer)

A quorum was present being a majority of the full Board (currently eight members).

FUSIT Members & Guests:

None

Handouts:

Minister report, financial summaries (digital distribution)

Agenda Item # 1: Opening Reading and Minutes Approval

Andy Turner lit the chalice and read a selection.

MOTION: Approve the BoT March 10, 2020 meeting minutes shown as “2020-03-10 - BoT_Minutes” in Google Docs “BoT” folder as of the date and time of this meeting.

PASSED.

MOTION: postpone annual meeting until June 17. Second and **PASSED** unanimously.

Agenda Item # 2: Upcoming Dates - see minister’s report

All events are by Zoom in accordance with Shelter at Home NY state policy.

Agenda Item # 3: **Unsung Heroes for March-April 2020**

Jennifer, Nathan & Finance Committee	Federal Payroll Protection application
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Susan Weis	Zoom technical production during Sunday services
Suzanne Quagliatta	RE videos and remote family support

Agenda Item # 4: Rev. Margaret Minister Report

8 more “regular” services before summer

~20 responses to call for letting care team know if you need help, helping care givers and receivers

Met with CURW director at Cornell, further meetings being scheduled (with Marla Love); requested Stephanie to join. Any Board Members want to be on that call? Or Walt as historian?

Questions? How are staff doing, and any support needed? They are pitching in and doing okay under the circumstances.

Agenda Item # 5: Finance

PPP application was submitted to Tompkins Trust, approved by unanimous email vote before meeting.

MOTION to submit application: Given the financial uncertainty wrought by the coronavirus pandemic, the Board of Trustees recommend submission of a FUSIT application to the Federal Payroll Protection Program as soon as is practical. Move by Diana, 2nd by Angela. **Unanimous approval.**

COVID cash (federal stimulus checks getting sent this week) - send a message to congregation suggesting 50/25/25 split donation from those who are able? To FUSIT dedicated fund? Ministers’ Human Needs Fund (this was also an option for ways to help in recent survey)?

Covid response fund? Who would oversee this? GIAC Robin Fund already set up to do this - so try to help them? Not much point replicating that effort.

Should the recommendation be to support FUSIT given our financial uncertainty?

How to choose recommendations? Why funnel to particular organizations? Not feeling comfortable with general one-size-fits-all recommendation, but we should have an answer if people ask.

May newsletter deadline on Thursday - place for a message?

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Human Needs Fund - no oversight, solely minister discretion. Only used 3 times - very few asks. May newsletter message to focus on Human Needs Fund. Don't want to burden Margaret with more administrative obligations.

Congregational Life, HNF, community. Don't list specific organizations.

From the Board? From Margaret? From FUSIT leaders?

No shame in saying we need your money too.

Make it a more general letter from the Board - yes. Matt will write first draft. We are not panicking, lots to appreciate about congregations' generosity already. Monday or Wed. e-newsletter could work.

Agenda Item # 6: DRE Search update

Hopeful that Board will support keeping the search moving forward as started. Delayed search progress for one month. Board already gave the Search Committee a green light for advertised "full time" 35 hr/week, 12 month position, but recent Treasurer advice has been to reconsider. What about middle road - can we do 30 hour? Jennifer has been asked to revisit the comparative budgets for 30 vs 35 hours.

Why not do some initial interviews? Do not present 35 hrs as the default - be transparent about the possibility of an interim reduction in hours. Right now we don't have a good set of projections, but DRE search is central to our mission & vision. If we are going to cut corners, we would not choose DRE or RE program as the first place to cut. Board is committed and requests that the search committee proceed cautiously.

Agenda Item # 7: Recycle Sale

It seems like time to move forward deliberately with Recycle Sale one way or another, taking stock of the current situation. Two options; saying 'GO' on one hand, vs. recognizing COVID-19 risks this year and continuing leadership gap, let's redirect toward planning for fundraisers later in the year (hopefully further from COVID risks). Our committee decision should communicate a 'GO' to the congregation one way or the other, just deciding a direction.

Lyn previously volunteered to be a Board volunteer to Recycle Sale leadership, and to take some of the stress involved with pulling back and with summer risk.

Is there a proposed fundraiser that we could say we are redirecting to? Not really.

This may be a good time to take a hiatus on Recycle Sale due to circumstances.

What about delivering our mission? Maybe more people need this now? Maybe move to Columbus day?

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Middle road? Proceed with Recycle Sale in a limited way, and work on new fundraiser?

Straw vote: 7 for option 2 (hiatus 1 yr), 1 for option 1

Communicate (meet with) Recycle Sale folks first (Lyn, Elton, Wendy to set up with Sue). Key messages will be agreed on in that Recycle Sale meeting.

Option 2 needs to keep Mission & Vision high priority. Also use FUSIT web page to communicate change to community, offering ideas of where to bring/receive items in Ithaca.

MOTION: Given the strong likelihood that the 2020 Recycle Sale will not be possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the considerable effort that goes into the sale before the summer begins, and ultimately for the safety of our staff and volunteers, the Board is reluctantly canceling the sale for 2020. The priority will shift toward development of a new fundraiser(s) that can be planned more reliably for later in the 2020-21 church year. The Board goal for this unpredictable year is to increase revenue from the Service Auction and develop other fundraisers capable of generating \$28,000, which represents 80% of recent annual fundraiser proceeds. So moved and seconded, **PASSED** unanimously.

Action item: Communication of the decision to the Recycle Sale Committee and the congregation and identify Board members to support/lead fundraiser development initiatives.

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Minutes taken by Matt Hare

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