

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Board of Trustees Meeting

June 9, 2021 Minutes

President Andy Turner called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:39pm on Wednesday, June 9, 2021.

This was a hybrid meeting, partially in-person and partially via Zoom.

Trustees Present: Andy Turner (president), Diana Nier (clerk), Therese O'Connor, Elton Hall, Simon Catterall, Jennifer Streid-Mullen (co-treasurer, ex officio), Walt Peck (co-treasurer, ex officio), and Rev. Margaret Weis (minister, ex officio). Carsten Hess joined at 7:00pm. Kim Wilkinson joined at 8:00pm.

Trustees Absent: Matt Hare (vice president), Lyn Staack

FUSIT Members & Guests: Margaret Nichols, Don Barber, John Gaines, Angela Zhang, Nancy Miller, Marie Benedetti, Jens Wennberg, Emily Richards (DRE), Michelle Waffner (Administrator). Fred Balfour joined at 7:30pm.

Handouts:

- [DRAFT - 2021 Recycle Sale/Community Exchange Online Auction](#)
- [BIO - Rev. Dr. Anthony Johnson](#)
- [BoT Onboarding Course Description](#)

Agenda Item # 1: Opening Reading and Consent Agenda Approval

Angela Zhang lit the chalice and Andy Turner read a selection.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

- Approve the minutes of the May 12, 2021 Board of Trustees meeting, shown in Google Docs folder as of the date and time of this meeting
- Approve edits to the Bylaws to bring them in line with amendments passed at the 2017 Annual Meeting. (Full text of motion at the end of the document.)

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda Items. Moved by Therese O'Connor, seconded by Diana Nier. **PASSED.**

- Diana Nier and John Gaines will review text before Michelle Waffner makes any changes to the posted Bylaws on the website.

Agenda Item # 2: Congregational Communication Period

- No communication from congregation members

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Agenda Item # 3: Minister's Report and Upcoming Dates

Reverend Margaret Weis updated the board on:

- Very exciting to reopen the sanctuary, though we will need to dust some physical and metaphorical cobwebs
- Andy expressed the Board's gratitude toward Rev. Margaret for all she has done for and with our congregation

Date	Event	Comments
6/13/21	Stewart Park service	3 services, at 10:00am, 11:45am, and 1:15pm

Agenda Item # 4: Virtual Recycle Sale

- Marie Benedetti presented a program for a virtual Recycle Sale
 - Dates: August 20-22, Friday 9am to Sunday 9pm
 - Advertising Announcements - Loretta: Months of July & August, (to FUSIT and Ithacan community)
 - Intake: First two weeks in August
 - Previewing: Third week in August
- Donors: FUSIT members/family/friends and the larger Ithacan community.
- Donations must be in excellent condition, working order, and appearance; inclusion pending approval of gatekeepers. Donors will submit their own photos and descriptions.
 - Maximum Fair-Market (not Retail) Value: \$200 (recommended)
 - Maximum Number of Items per Donor: 5 (recommended)
 - Minimum Bid: \$20
- Previewing/Transporting: will be arranged by the donor and potential bidder/buyer
- Use BiddingOwl as the tech platform. Automatic bidding will be disabled, and all payments must be electronic.
- Advertising and auction site (5%) costs will be deducted from the proceeds.
- Angela Zhang will provide tech support, including home visits to help with photographs and listings
- Jewelry/Antiques donations will be submitted directly to Robin Cisne who will (1) arrange vendor pre-sales, (2) arrange sales via eBay, or (3) submit to our auction site for bidding.
- Discussion of how this might interact with Kim's suggestion of coordinated physical garage/yard sales across the city of Ithaca
- No Board motion required for this version of the Recycle Sale to proceed, but the Board expresses approval and looks forward to continuing updates!

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Agenda Item # 5: Website update from Michelle

- Michelle has started going through the website page by page and making a spreadsheet, correcting minor typos and broken links as she finds them and creating a schedule for regular ongoing updates
- Larger changes will wait until she has reviewed the whole website
- Sent various pages to people responsible for that area to review and update
- Will check back in at the July Board meeting

Agenda Item # 6: Interim Search Update

- Our new candidate is Dr. Anthony "Tony" Johnson
- Experience as a settled minister, interim minister, and teacher at Meadville-Lombard
- Walt and Jennifer will discuss contract details with him on Thursday, June 10, and will copy details to the Board and to Michelle Waffner
- Reminder that the Board must work with the interim minister to create goals for the congregation to work on over the next two years
- The contract will be for one year with an option to renew for a second year
- Congregation must express interest in renewing the contract by March 1, 2022. The minister must respond by March 15, 2022.
- Where does the Interim Search Committee's work end and the Transition Team's work begin? Transition Team is a lot of work and may be difficult to balance with Board service
- Therese will contact Keith Kron at the UUA for advice on building a Transition Team

MOTION: The Board approves the hire of Dr. Anthony Johnson as interim minister, subject to successful contract negotiations within the constraints of the 2021-2022 budget. Moved by Elton Hall, seconded by Therese O'Connor. **PASSED.**

Agenda Item # 7: 2021-22 Budget and how to manage it

- No additional clarity yet on what the year will bring
- The 2021-22 budget passed at the Annual Meeting has a \$32,000 contingent component. How to manage that in the short term and long term?
- Finance Committee has identified specific expenses that total \$32,000 as recommendations to the Board, but the Board and minister can juggle as needed. These items do not impact hours or salaries of current employees, and we do not need to commit to these expenditures until late fall or later.
 - 2nd Half of UUA Dues, due 6/30/22 - \$13,000
 - Repairs and Maintenance - \$3,000
 - Guest Honorariums - \$500
 - Leadership Development - \$700
 - New Mission-driven Ideas - \$500

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- Organ and Piano Repair - \$800
- Sheet music - \$500
- DRE Assistant, \$3,407
- Nursery, \$1,704
- Outreach/membership coordinator \$7,242
- Outreach/membership programming, \$700
- Total \$32,143
- When can contingent funds be spent?
 - Finance recommends waiting until revenues get to \$408,000 before we start to release contingent spending
 - **Do not** allow any commitment of contingent spending until August or September when we can reassess with better data
 - If RE can reopen in-person in September, pressure will be on DRE to hire an Assistant DRE
- Recommendation to approve list of contingent spending tonight, with reassessment in August or September.
- Continual reassessment will be required throughout the year, based on information provided by the Treasurer on a regular basis
- If the interim minister is willing, the Board can turn over management of the contingent portions of the budget to the ministry

MOTION: Approve the \$32,000 list of contingent spending as provided by Jennifer Streid-Mullen. Moved by Therese O'Connor, seconded by Simon Catterall. **PASSED.**

Agenda Item # 8: 2021-22 Board of Trustees Onboarding and Governance Work

- Fred Balfour explained the proposed onboarding meetings and the process which has produced them
- What are the issues most important for the transitional period between the 2020-21 Board and the 2021-22 Board?
 - Budget management
 - Ministerial transition
 - Transition back to in-person and hybrid structure
 - Understanding of partnership governance in practice
 - Communication among Board, Minister, congregation, and staff
 - Clarification of Board's role during times of crisis and in relation to the Ministry
 - Relationship to/with the UUA. What support can the Board expect in times of crisis? What support can the Ministry expect?
- Governance Committee? Personnel Committee?

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- These are frequently felt to be missing pieces in our implementation of partnership governance
- Our bylaws describe standing committees as having an advisory role to the Board. Many have been restructured into Ministry teams, but what groups does the Board need in order to do its job?
- What monitoring systems does the Board have in place? Are we performing this function effectively?
 - A Board liaison to regular gathering of committees and ministry teams would be simpler than liaising with each individual group
 - Because Ministry team reports are collated into the Minister's report, it's more difficult for the Board to monitor individual teams
 - Financial committees are effectively monitored via the Treasurer; additionally, the Board is working to establish a regular meeting of all financial committees to create a big picture view of the congregation
- If the Personnel Committee has been unstaffed for years, perhaps the Bylaws should be amended to remove the requirement for such a committee and bring our legal structure into line with our actual structure
 - One task of a Governance Committee would be to review that and similar issues and make recommendations to the Board, in advance of a meeting of the full congregation

Agenda Item # 9: Meeting/Action Summary for Communication

- Diana will send out a summary.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.

Minutes taken by Diana Nier, 6/9/21.

MOTION: In order to bring the Bylaws of the Society into compliance with amendments passed in the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society, the Board hereby directs the Congregational Administrator to make the following edits:

1) In Article VI, change Section 2 from *"The Minister shall be called by a nine-tenths (90%) vote or removed by a majority vote of members present at a special meeting of the Society. The conditions of employment and tenure and the requirement for performance review shall be set forth in a Letter of Call negotiated by the Board. The Minister's performance shall be reviewed annually by the Board in collaboration with the Committee on Ministry as stated in the Letter of Call. The Letter of Call shall, after three years, be reviewed and may be altered by mutual*

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agreement to reflect new circumstances, or performance evaluations. The Board **and Committee on Ministry** in consultation with the Finance Committee and Personnel Committee may adjust the Minister's compensation to be voted on as part of the annual budget."

to

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2) In Article XIII, change "**10.5 Name TBD**Ministry: This team shall work to increase the effectiveness of the ministry by providing an active communication channel among the Minister, the Board and the congregation

10.6 Membership/Outreach: This team shall work with the Minister and staff to assist in bringing newcomers into a path for membership and build/promote relationships among members and friends of the Society. In addition, the team will coordinate and publicize events and other outreach efforts to attract newcomers and increase exposure of the Society within the larger community.

10.7 Religious Education: This team, with the Religious Education Director and staff, shall plan and present programs for our children, youths, and adults. Such programs shall foster personal and social development of the participants and reflect the nature and philosophy of the Society."

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