

**First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 16th, 2022**

Don Barber (President) called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:35 pm on Wednesday, November 16th, 2022.

Trustees Present:

Don Barber (President), Valerie Graves (Clerk), Dick Kurtz, Nancy Miller, Therese O'Connor (Vice-President), Walt Peck (Treasurer)
















Trustees Absent:

Margaret Nichols

FUSIT Members & Guests:

Fred Balfor, Emily Richards, Michelle Waffner, Mary Kirkpatrick

Handouts:

-  Board Meeting Minutes 102622
- [Team and Committee Reports](#)
-  PTO Policy Upaded 6_22.pdf
-  New York State Paid Sick Leave.pdf
-  Social Media Usage final 8-30-22 (1).docx
-  listserv guidelines.docx
-  Database Communication Guidelines (updated 11_22).docx
-  Treasurers report 11-2022.docx
-  Reviewing and Codifying New Organization Structure
-  Memorials at FUSIT.pdf
-  Memorial Services Policy
-  Christmas Eve Sage Chapel Resolution
-  Updated Board Policy Book
-  PURPOSE DRIVEN CHURCH MODEL
-  Ministry Evaluation Process
-  Integrated Balanced Scorecard.pdf (available after meeting concluded)

Agenda Item # 1: Welcome and Chalice Lighting

Peaches Gillette read a passage and Walt Peck lit the chalice.

Agenda Item # 2: Congregational Communication Period

Mary Kirkpatrick:

She expressed that she was intrigued by the open questions and the work of the board to facilitate connection with the congregation. Mary asked about the progress of the listserv. She shared that a calendar of all FUSIT events AND all community events held at FUSIT would be helpful for the congregation and the community.

Discussion:

- Currently, Loretta Heimbuch is working on marketing for FUSIT.
- There will be a Breeze tutorial next Sunday. Everything held at the church is in Breeze, in the events section.
- Everyone is invited to a discussion of the book The Dawn of Everything with Matt Hare this coming Sunday as part of the 9:00 AM Adult RE session.
- Nancy Miller is working on communication and the listserv and will share more about that later in the meeting.

There was general agreement that a calendar of all FUSIT events AND all events in our space would be helpful and that it should be available both online and on paper.

Fred Balfor:

Right now, someone would have to come to Board meetings in person to actually see who is in the room and everyone's faces. The camera used for the hybrid meetings does not capture everyone. It would be good for everyone to have a laptop or device with a camera so that all the people in person could be seen. Fred is happy to help if technology is an issue.

Several Board members have helped with hospitality and Fred shared his gratitude. If Board members are present early for services, it would be wonderful if they could jump in to usher or help the hospitality teams in some way when there is a vacancy. If there was a simple way to easily identify hospitality team members who are working that would help guests and newcomers identify them. Similarly, it would be helpful to easily identify Board members.

Agenda Item # 3: Changes to Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Agenda Item #4: Visioning Question

Fall Open Question: What would make FUSIT more relevant to your life or the lives of those in your community?

Discussion:

- After attending the Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) and Social Justice Council (SJC) meetings I felt really connected to all of those projects. Within the church, there is a place to work with veterans, or work for the environment. If the work of the SJC was promoted more, that would be an amazing service to the community. As people come out of isolation and fear, they are looking for places to get involved in social justice issues and those issues bring people to this congregation.
- FUSIT is more relevant to families when there are family friendly events and childcare for other events, as well as RE during the church services. This will bring families back into the church.
- Opportunities for spiritual growth and spiritual practice. Things such as Tai Chi classes, meditation groups, yoga - there are so many possibilities. If there were programs like this they need to happen with some regularity.
- Madeline has offered to do monthly yoga for parents with kids!
- Adult discussion groups.
- Meditation and discussions of various other religions, philosophy, and practices. We could invite people in to use our space or sponsor it ourselves.
- On December 4 there is a music, meditation, and movement service!
- It has been a struggle to find a childcare coordinator which means it is a challenge for us to have childcare for events.
- I would love to see us utilizing our space better. We could open our space for downtown events - create a more vibrant community in our spaces and make the church more relevant in the greater community.
- Friday night gallery night is starting back up.
- Focus on diversity. Sunday morning is one place to look to see what diversity we have, but there is also diversity in our community when we interact with more diverse organizations in the community.
- There need to be other worship times other than Sunday morning when people have a lot of conflicts. There should be evening events for people who are working.
- Social justice and action with a focus on short term projects. It is harder to get people to commit to longer projects or committees. Focused, short term community work projects, might bring in people if we are the ones hosting them.
- Exploration of other religions would be great.
- A lot of members have interest in environmental issues - we need to get that group going again. There are important local issues like the Ithaca Green New Deal.

- It would be helpful to develop a three-year liturgical calendar - with programs on a three year cycle. Events such as NICE (Newcomers Inspired Connected Engaged) could always run at a specific time of year. It would be helpful to have some predictability and a system that could continue to go on year after year.
- Under the current circumstances, more people are willing to commit for short terms.
- SJC is listed as a team, but it is individual groups of people working on separate things. It would build community to have more of a collective effort.
- Focus on collective action for social justice and the community outside our walls. Advancing spiritual growth is an individual action, we also need things to do together as a community for community development. Need to live and bring forward our eight principles.
- UUA looking to do away with eight principles - but we don't have to!
- Our bylaws refer to them so it would be a conscious choice.
- Everyone should look at values based system - article two of the UUA bylaws. It includes new values centered on love - with a statement and covenant for each.
- The adoption of the 8th principle was the impetus to make this happen but the values based system is even better.








Determine next month's question:

- Get back to the mission - what is FUSIT's purpose?
- How are we going to use this space? This can be a future question or an open question to the broader congregation.

Agenda Item #5: Consent Agenda

Consent agenda items:

Handouts:

-  Board Meeting Minutes 102622
-  PTO Policy Upaded 6_22.pdf
-  New York State Paid Sick Leave.pdf
-  Social Media Usage final 8-30-22 (1).docx
-  listserv guidelines.docx
-  Database Communication Guidelines (updated 11_22).docx
-  Treasurers report 11-2022.docx

Discussion:

- The three communication policies are policies that have been approved already and have been edited to include the listserv. The changes are highlighted and changes are shown with strikethrough.
- Social media seems fraught with issues, it is not the best place to direct our youth.

Motion: A motion was made by Don Barber and seconded by Nancy Miller to approve the consent agenda.

The motion passed.

Agenda Item # 6: Team and Committee Reports

Topic: Safety Team Report

Discussion:

- There was mention of needing to check with the Board about having a rover on Sundays. The Safety Team should probably check with MVT, not the Board if this is a ministry issue.
Response: Perhaps a better place to bring this is the Hospitality Team and Team Leadership Council (TLC).
- Regarding cameras, the team asked if there is a competitive bid requirement - the finance committee can decide if there is a need for a policy related to competitive bids. One does not currently exist.

Topic: Listserv

Discussion:

- The listserv is ready to go now that the policies have been approved. Michelle's idea was to take the listserv outside of breeze and to make it a Google group, which makes it easy to remove someone if there is an issue. listserv@uuithaca.org - People will sign up for it using an application. The three monitors have met and will divide the time.
- Are there any reservations given issues in the past with the FUSIT Facebook group and other listservs?
Response: This was discussed by the board already. There has already been a lot of work to put this in place. It is a risk, but people are asking about it. People need a place for communication within the congregation.
- Board did have this discussion and set some broad guidelines, which the communications committee has followed. There is no further action needed by the Board.
- At least it is optional to join.
- It feels like going back to what we had previously. Breeze allows congregants to email others and groups of people and will that be turned on again.

- There is still the ability to send a mass email to the whole congregation but the community has agreed not to.

Topic: MVT Report

Discussion:

- Engagement and outreach coordinator job description has been written and the report stated they will run it by the personnel committee. Just to clarify, the personnel committee does not make decisions, but they have developed a template for job descriptions. Contact Jenna Rosenberg and Susan Murphy. Their goal is to have all staff position job descriptions in a standard format by the end of the year.
- The team questioned who should be supervising this coordinator - OAT is the supervisor. MVT is still intimately involved in giving direction and support for the position.
- In addition to being a support for team and committees - MVT should be looking for opportunities to collaborate and coordinate to work toward the vision of ministry.

Topic: Personnel and OAT

Discussion:

- There was no report from the personnel committee nor Operations and Administration Team (OAT).
- OAT only held one closed meeting and next month there will be no meeting.
- Dick Kurtz, as liaison, should get the personnel committee minutes into the Board Slack channel and encourage them to develop a general report for the consent agenda. Response - Dick was gone for a month, but will attend the meeting on Saturday morning.
- Last week during the Board retreat, there was some concern about job descriptions being finalized so that the Board can move forward with planning functions.

Topic: Grant income on Profit & Loss statement

Discussion:

- The "grant" income is actually pledge income. So we have received 53% pledges.
- Matt Hare will be talking with Lauren Ponzoni, bookkeeper, to simplify the books so it is more obvious that grants are part of the pledge income.

Agenda Item #7: Reviewing and Codifying New Organizational Structure

The updates to the BPB and job descriptions are almost done. The Board should set up a special meeting with MVT, OAT, and the Congregational life staff to review our organizational structure.

Agenda Item #8: Engagement and Outreach (E&O) Coordinator Position

Any updates from prior meetings? The Board was in favor of hiring an E&O coordinator.

Discussion:

- In MVT - thought this position could be done in 10 hours a week at \$20/hr. The amended resolution was not put in for discussion but was just added - it is a revision of last month's resolution. Finance thought that money could be found within this year's budget.
- If anyone wants more information there is more in the treasurer's report. Thank you to MVT for working on hiring an E&O coordinator..
- MVT will work with personnel on job description.

Agenda Item # 9: Establish Process for Reviewing and Amending Memorial Service and Building Use Policy

Last meeting the Board created a committee to review and document the current process for determining cost for using the FUSIT building. Membership needs to be defined. There is also work to be done with MVT to increase the memorial reception team roster. There will need to be an updated policy for sound system fees. Also need a policy and definition for family members that would be included in this policy.

Discussion:

- Looking at the document - number one is board work, number two is best delegated to MVT, number three could be delegated to OAT, number four is Board work, and number five could be delegated to OAT.
- The Board has to ultimately approve the policy, but MVT and OAT can advise the Board on those topics.
- Our inclination would be to form an ad hoc subcommittee of the Board.
- Therese O'Connor volunteers to work on membership and family members and would like to work with Michelle Waffner. Don Barber will serve on the committee as well.

- There is a question about how long ago the membership list was culled - during Covid, Angela Zhang, who was the leader of E&O, made a major effort to go through the list and find out who was still alive and to contact people.
- Those updates have not been made in breeze and the people on the list have not been contacted.
- NomComm has a list of people we were going through to see if they were engaged at all in the last few-ten years, which could be a starting point.
- It would help to talk to Angela Zhang about what she defined as a member - She had a simple definition.
- We could get a list from Matt hare of active members - every household with a pledger is included as active. The list is used carefully by NomComm.
- The church has a history of congregants being enthused when we have a settled minister, then fading away.
- Does zoom provide any information about who is watching?
Response: Youtube gives numbers but not individual names.
- OAT will discuss the items (three and five) delegated to them from the list.

Agenda Item # 10: Christmas Eve Plans

There is a resolution for the board to find the funding for renting SAGE chapel for \$2000 plus the cost of a Cornell staff person to be on site. Emily Richards will also talk about additional resources needed.

Discussion:

- We also need candles and candle holders, sheet music, and advertisements. The staff will work to find readers and create the order of service. Fred Balfor will deal with ushers. Rachel Seymour, Sexton, will clean up the facility. There will be just one service at 4pm.
- People will be excited that we are bringing the Sage Chapel service back - We will need to advertise it well.
- We may have an attendance problem with one service. The Ushers might have to count and have a limit of how many people are in the chapel.
- We are still bringing in less than ½ our usual numbers for regular services.
- Is there a limit? Yes - in the 90s, it was standing room only and people had kids on their shoulders, and there were people in the aisles with candles. Cornell was not happy and has gotten more strict since then.
- Geoff Dunn and Steve Hand will be the coordinators for ushers, hopefully.
- The \$2000 Fee does not include the fee for one Cornell employee.
- There would be a shared plate with Babies First.
- Will FUSIT take some of the collection to offset the cost of the event?
- We could split 50-50.
- Maybe there is money in the bank to cover this without having to split the plate.

- Need to be careful with donations from the public - they will be happy to give more if it goes to an important cause..
- There are lines in the budget related to the holiday services that are not being spent.
- There are no car seats offered for free in the area - the demand is through the roof, Babies First needs the money.
- At sage chapel, there will only be the choir and a few other instrumentalists.
- There will be no service here at FUSIT.
- Can there be pamphlets in pews?
Response: Yes!
- We should have a QR code for donations to the plate for people that do not carry cash.

Motion: A motion was made by Don Barber and seconded by Therese O'Connor to approve the Christmas Eve Sage Chapel resolution.

The motion passed.

Agenda Item # 11: Board Policy Book

The Governance Committee (GovCo) has updated the BPB and invited the Board to look over the document and send in suggestions. The Board needs to establish a process for increasing their comfort with and awareness of the document. This could entail a retreat with GovCo, MVT and OAT to discuss how everything is going, and what is missing. The Board was in agreement and the retreat can take place in the new year.

Agenda Item #12: Ministry Evaluation Process

Don Barber spoke with Andrew Quagliata about an evaluation process for the governance of the church now that we have MVT and OAT. The importance of evaluation was stressed, in order to reflect on how we are doing as an organization.

Discussion:

There was a hand out on the Purpose-Driven Church as a reference and the "Balanced Score Card" was referenced will be added to the Google drive for Board members to review after the meeting. The evaluation of the congregational life staff will happen in the coming months and the evaluation of the Board, MVT, and OAT will happen at the end of the church year. It was agreed that the meeting or retreat early in the new year will allow some evaluation and reflection.

Action item:

Don Barber will add the Balanced Scorecard for the Board to read.

Agenda Item # : Closing Words

The closing words were read by Rev. Peaches Gillette.

Meeting adjourned at 8:19pm.

Minutes taken by Valerie Graves, 11/16/2022.

Resolutions and handouts:

Christmas Eve Sage Chapel Resolution

Whereas, the Christmas Eve Service at Sage Chapel has been strong community building event for FUSIT with several hundred community members attending, and

Whereas, the 22-23 Vision of Ministry states a 22-23 goal to: “Build and rebuild connection and community”,

Therefore be it resolved, that the Board of Trustees hereby authorizes the use of Board Discretionary funds and other Christmas eve budget line items to pay the \$2000 Sage Chapel rental fee plus staffing fee for one Cornell employee during the 2022 Christmas Eve event

Don Barber 11/14/22
