

**First Unitarian Society of Ithaca
Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, April 19th, 2023**

Don Barber (President) called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:32 pm on Wednesday, April 19, 2023.

Trustees Present: Fred Balfour, Don Barber (President), Valerie Graves (Clerk), Dick Kurtz, Nancy Miller, Margaret Nichols, Therese O'Connor (Vice President), Rene Rogers

Ex- Officio Members of the Board: Walt Peck (Treasurer), Emily Richards (DRE, DCL)

Trustees Absent: None

FUSIT Members & Guests: Nathan Fawcett, Matt Hare, Michelle Waffner

Handouts:

- [W Treasurer's Report, April 2023.docx](#)
- [Board Meeting Minutes 031523](#)
- [Personnel Com Recommendation for Change of Charge from the Board April 2023](#)
- [23-24 Vision of Ministry](#)
- [Annual Mtg Agenda](#)
- [Annual Meeting Details](#)
- [Liaison Expectations](#)

Agenda Item # 1: Welcome and Chalice Lighting

Margaret Nichols lit the chalice and read a selection.

Agenda Item # 2: Congregational Communication Period

Topic: Stewardship Campaign Report - Matt Hare

The annual pledge drive now has up to 100 pledges from 100 house holds. The pledges are $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way to where the committee expects to be, based on their fundraising goal. 46+ households were identified that may need reminders about pledging. The total pledge amount so far is \$262,000, the goal is \$350,000. The volatility in the economy may affect pledges so that should be considered.

Discussion:

- The pledging is at 74% of the goal right now - is that where we were last year at this point?

Response: last year the pledge drive was approximately in the same place, a lot depends on some of the larger pledges and when they are made. The pledges may end up as high as they were as last year.

- Is the goal of \$350,00 is optimistic?

Response: Yes.

- It would be good to track the number of households, and when they donate, for future reference, and to help to keep track of goals.

Topic: Leaving the Board at the end of the Church Year - Dick Kurtz

Dick joined the board last year, but will not continue with another 3 years - He feels his talents are better used in other areas of the church. He stated that he learned a lot this year on the Board and gained more than he gave. He is aware of how much many people are doing to help the transition to the new partnership governance model and is proud of what everyone is doing. He will continue to help FUSIT in other areas.

Discussion:

- Thank you for all the work with buildings and grounds.

Topic: Seminary - Emily Richards

Emily is enrolled in Seminary, and in the process of establishing aspirant status in the UUA. Her aspirant status will need to be sponsored by a congregation and she would love FUSIT to be the sponsor.

Topic: Meeting Owl - Fred Balfour

The meeting owl device for hybrid meetings was not unanimously found to be helpful and it may be related to settings. Fred would like to borrow it again and set up a mock meeting to test out options before requesting funding.

Discussion:

- This device is not only for the board, there are also other meetings within FUSIT that are held as hybrid meetings.
- There is a spot in the budget if the device is deemed to be useful.

Agenda Item # 3: Changes to Agenda

Don recommended that the Board skip the visioning question this month to leave time for the Budget discussion in executive session. There was no opposition to the recommendation. Later in the meeting, it was agreed to table the discussion about the Board and Team Liaison Expectations because of time constraints.

Agenda Item # 4: Consent Agenda

Consent agenda items:

- [W Treasurer's Report, April 2023.docx](#)
- [☰ Board Meeting Minutes 031523](#)

Motion: A motion was made by Therese O'Connor and seconded by Margaret Nichols to accept the consent agenda.

The motion passed.

Agenda Item # 5: Monitoring Function - Team and Committee Reports, MVT, OAT, and Personnel Committee Recommendations

Personnel Committee Recommendations - Dick Kurtz

The personnel committee charge has evolved with the transition to the new governance model. The current charge from the Board was shown. Items 1, 2, and six remain unchanged. The personnel committee recommends changes to Items 3, 4, and 5. For item 3, the name should be changed from the personnel manual to the employee handbook, and the charge should be to review and update the employee handbook as needed and at least bi annually. Item 4 currently charges the personnel committee to act as an ombudsman for staff concerns. It does not mention issues with congregants. Members of the personnel committee spoke with the healthy congregations team (HCT) and they can address issues that arise with congregants. It is unclear what the process is for issues between an employee and congregant. The charge was changed to focus on employment concerns: "to counsel the Board on any policy matter pertaining to employment of staff and to advise staff and OAT/MVT on employment related practices and procedures." The ombudsman responsibility would not be with personnel. An

ombudsman procedure can be developed with the HCT and OAT.

Discussion:

- Who did the personnel committee talk to on the HCT?
Response: Betsy East?
- When had a related conversation in the past with Margaret, HCT did get involved.
- The personnel committee is not necessarily asking that these changes be adopted tonight.
Response: If there is general approval, personnel can explore the ombudsman issue.
- Where would the ombudsman come from?
Response: That is not known yet. Maybe a member of OAT? Should it be a long term or rotating position?
- At the end of the document, it states that the personnel committee will prepare a formal recommendation to the board for an ombudsman position.
- It is asking a lot of volunteers to be an ombudsman. Issues can get tricky and emotional. How will a volunteer be recruited for such a position?
Response: If the ombudsman role was someone from personnel, they are all volunteers.
- But if not the personnel committee, a volunteer would serve alone.
Response: Personnel thinks the ombudsman would likely be from OAT and the responsibility would be rotated.
- HCT could be a place for an ombudsman.
- Originally, there were two teams - one for congregational issues and one for staff issues. The intention was to have separate groups of people.
Response: HCT was established a week before Reverend Margaret left.
- What the teams would cover was not completely clear before Margaret left. But if a new team was formed it should also support staff, not just the minister. Although the idea was to support the minister.
- Is HCT currently active?
Response: The HCT haven't met this year. The team has three members. There have been conflicts but they have not gone through HCT.
- Personnel could look at HCT for the ombudsman function - rather than a single person.
- The power and responsibility is too much for a single person. Interpersonal relationships are hard.
- If there is an Ombudsman - we need two, and then people can choose who they feel most comfortable working with. The person with the grievance can choose.
- The issue is trying to address a situation where an employee has a supervisor who is also an employee. They would need someone else to go do the research and facilitate so they do not have to go to the Board first. The Board will always be there as a last resort.
- The comments will be brought back to the personnel committee. The board tabled the recommendation to change the charge and revisit it at another time.

- There are some questions from personnel that could be addressed by GovCo.
Response: Some concerns might already be addressed in the new BPB. There are some conflicts in the two documents, for example related to whether we can require an employee to be a member of the church. Those differences need to be reconciled. There are notes in the BPB related to the personnel committee questions.
- The BPB should be general and the employee manual can be more specific. We are grateful for work to make them consistent and not overlapping.

NomComm verbal report - Fred Balfour

There was no written report from NomComm this month because of some health issues and other personal issues so it was given verbally. A new picture of how the Board looks like and how recruitment is going will be submitted. A file was shared with the makeup of the Board, that was color coded to help visualize when positions would be opening up. NomComm has started thinking about people on the board representing certain constituencies within the congregation. What about having someone on the Board who is single who could give that perspective? It is important to have representatives from young families and representatives that are active in social justice and anti racism to help maintain the focus on the Board. This also helps give NomComm a way to recruit people based on their involvement and interests.

- Megan McCormick is listed as a visitor, not a member, in breeze. Trustees need to be members of the church so someone will need to follow up with her.
- Megan's child had their fingers pinched in the elevator doors. The incident has been looked into and we cannot install a technological fix, because the technical fix does not actually prevent the injury. The church just needs to make sure parents are aware of the pinching risk..
- How much should nomcomm be on the agenda for the annual meeting?
Response: This can be discussed when we get to the Annual Meeting agenda.

Regarding the MVT report:

- There were helpful points in the report that are related to the budget.
- For the evaluation of the vision of ministry from this year - there should be a conversation with the Board and MVT together.
- Therese O'Connor will resend the request for assessing the VoM from this year - she only got two responses to the prior email.
- Related to the renewal of our commitment to be a welcoming congregation for LGBTQ people, we are in line to reaffirm the resolution. There was a question of whether the renewal should follow a public witness process - MVT has already followed the process, with congregational conversation after services.
- MVT has four people who really like working together but none are on the Board for next year. The plan was to have a trustee on that team. That might need to be addressed. GovCo is aware of the situation as well. MVT will bring ideas to the Board

- A Board member could be appointed as a liaison to MVT.
Response: In MVT discussions it is being discussed whether the team needs a Board member. It has been helpful to have someone privy to conversations that non-board members are not privy to. And MVT would be open to having another member with five members as a max. With more members, it is hard to have a single vision. In the future, Reverend Peaches might no longer be required to be part of MVT meetings.
- The hours needed to be reduced for her position and so that was removed from her required responsibilities.
- Michelle is going to tell us that we need an annual report from the Board. It will need to be emailed to Loretta, and she wants 300-500 words with bullet points - it should be as concise as possible. The annual report is due May first.
- What should be included in the Board annual report?
Response: The report should include quarterly goals, and Open Questions.

Action Items:

Therese O'Connor will resend requests for assessing the effectiveness of the VoM from this year.

Valerie Graves will write the annual report for the Board and Therese O'Connor will edit the report.

Agenda Item #7: Adopt Vision of Ministry

Create opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development by:

- Centering Social Justice as a core part of who we are and an avenue to individual and societal transformation.
- Inviting more opportunities for connecting with each other in meaningful ways.
- Exploring our roots as a pluralistic community and offering ways to engage in wisdom and practices of many spiritual traditions.

MVT preferred the original version, without edits:

Create opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development by:

- Centering Social Justice as a core part of who we are and an avenue to individual and societal transformation.
- Inviting more opportunities for connecting with each other in **deep and** meaningful ways.
- Exploring our roots as a pluralistic, **multi-faith** community, offering ways to engage in wisdom and practices from a variety of spiritual traditions

Discussion:

- Without the words "learn with" related to spiritual practices the VoM could sound appropriative.
Response: Would the words "learn from" be better?
- These are huge requests

- The VoM is meant to be aspirational.
- Someone should move a version and amendments can be suggested.

Motion: A motion was made by Therese O'Connor and seconded by Fred Balfour to accept the second version of VoM as shown.

Discussion:

- In the past people have issues with the term faith.
- But pluralistic loses its meaning - it doesn't clarify what we are pluralistic about. We are a pluralistic faith community.

Motion: A motion was made by Nancy Miller and seconded by Margaret Nichols, to amend the VoM to include the words "multi-faith" after the word "pluralistic."

The motion passed.

The motion to adopt the VoM with the amendment passed.

Agenda Item #8: Annual Meeting Agenda

The draft agenda for the annual meeting was included in the Board handouts. The agenda needs to be decided tonight.

Discussion:

- In the past, in order to entice people to come we used to feed them? Is there space in the budget to feed people?
Response: Food makes it more of a community event. Yes - there are some areas of budget that were not used.
- There will be childcare.
- Where will the pizza be from? Pizza Aroma? ETA Pie? Pizza Aroma has gluten free crust and daiya cheese.
- Should the agenda include results of the assessment of VoM from this last year?
Response: That could be included in the "year in review" part of the agenda.
- Year in review should also be a review of the new governance structure.
- Move "LGBTQ+" in front of welcoming so it is clear what we are welcoming.
- We will need someone to respond to the chat on zoom. A person dedicated for this task would be helpful.
- Will Stephanie play music?
Response: Last year there was some musical interludes. It could be the FUSIT house band, but they have not been active.
- Are we past the point of new members having needed to sign the book to be able to vote? If there is still time, a message needs to be sent out.

Response: A member has to be a member for 30 days to vote - Sunday is the last chance to sign the book and become a member to vote in the annual meeting.

- Who will run the the agenda item - “nomination of candidates”

Response - Don Barber will be running the meeting and NomComm will present a slate of trustees. Then we will ask for nominations from the floor.

Action items:

Michelle Waffner will send out a message to non members to let them know they need to sign the membership book on Sunday if they want to vote in the annual meeting.

Emily Richards will contact the Celebrations Associate to have it announced in the pulpit on Sunday and will be present to be a witness.

Roles during the annual meeting:

Therese O'Connor - Chat Monitor on virtual portion of the meeting

Nancy Miller and Margaret Nichols - Register people and tallying in-person votes

Emily Richards - Order food with work credit card

Michelle Waffner - Online check in for participants and will send information and instructions through chat

Valerie Graves - Note taker

Don Barber–facilitate meeting

Motion: A motion was made by Don Barber and seconded by Margaret Nichols to accept the agenda as edited in meeting.

The motion passed.

Agenda Item # : Closing Words

The closing words were read by Margaret Nichols.

Meeting adjourned at 7:51pm.

Minutes taken by Valerie Graves, 4/19/2023.

Resolutions and handouts:

Treasurer's Report

April 2023

Walter Peck

This month is critical for the future of the church. The budget proposal presented to members of the Board will be discussed at an Executive Session. Normally, this would not be too complicated. But we have several areas of need that all call for our financial support, but we cannot afford to pursue them all. Our selections will determine much of the trajectory of the church in upcoming years.

Submitted by Walt Peck, treasurer

Personnel Committee Recommendation for Change of Charge from the Board April 2023

The Personnel Committee's work includes continuing review of its role in the Shared Governance structure, particularly its relationship to the evolving responsibilities of OAT and MVT. This work is being done with consideration of the Board's Charge to the Personnel Committee. In that matter, the committee, after much review, recommends and asks the Board to amend its charge to Personnel in the following areas:

- To expand counsel to the board beyond just policies pertaining to compensation and benefits;
- To change the name of the Personnel Manual and the schedule for review;
- To eliminate the responsibility of ombudsman and recommend to the Board the creation of volunteer positions to serve in that role; and

-To eliminate any reference to the role of the committee in the grievance process.
(Items 3, 4, and 5 of the Charge to the Personnel Committee below,)

The current FUSIT Board Charge to the Personnel Committee:

Resolved, in compliance with Article IX of the Bylaws, the FUSIT Board of Trustees hereby creates a Personnel Committee which acts as resource for the Board and staff on Personnel matters; including but not limited:

- 1. To ensure compliance with state and federal employment statutes;*
- 2. To counsel the Board on compensation and benefit policies;*
- 3. To bi-annually review the Personnel Manual;*
- 4. To serve in the ombudsman function for staff concerns that are not felt to be satisfactorily addressed by supervisor;*
- 5. To support and counsel the Board on proper grievance procedures when the Board is called into fulfilling Section 3.4.3.3 of Policy Book;*
- 6. To advise the Board on other matters, as requested by the Board.*

Further resolved, the Personnel Committee is a resource for staff supervisors but does not participate or interfere with their supervision authority.

A revised charge would look like (red-lined version—strike throughs are deletions; red text is addition)

Resolved, in compliance with Article IX of the Bylaws, the FUSIT Board of Trustees hereby creates a Personnel Committee which acts as resource for the Board and staff on Personnel matters; including but not limited:

- 1. To ensure compliance with state and federal employment statutes;*
- 2. To counsel the Board on compensation and benefit policies;*
- 3. To ~~bi-annually~~ review **and update** the ~~Personnel Manual~~ **Employee Handbook as needed, at least bi-annually;***

4. *To counsel the Board on any policy matter pertaining to employment of staff and to advise staff and OAT/MVT on employment related practices and procedures; and*
5. *To advise the Board on other matters, as requested by the Board.*

Further resolved, the Personnel Committee is a resource for staff supervisors but does not participate or interfere with their supervision authority.

PROPOSED NEW VERSION...without redline edits:

Resolved, in compliance with Article IX of the Bylaws, the FUSIT Board of Trustees hereby creates a Personnel Committee which acts as resource for the Board and staff on Personnel matters; including but not limited:

1. *To ensure compliance with state and federal employment statutes;*
2. *To counsel the Board on compensation and benefit policies;*
3. *To review and update the Employee Handbook as needed, at least bi-annually;*
4. *To counsel the Board on any policy matter pertaining to employment of staff and to advise staff and OAT/MVT on employment related practices and procedures; and*
5. *To advise the Board on other matters, as requested by the Board.*

Further resolved, the Personnel Committee is a resource for staff supervisors but does not participate or interfere with their supervision authority.

With these proposed changes, the Personnel Committee formally requests that the current Employee Handbook retain that title, and all references to a Personnel Manual in the Board Policy Book be changed to Employee Handbook.

Further, the Committee will be preparing a formal recommendation to the Board regarding the creation of an Ombudsman position, to be served by a volunteer(s).

FUSIT 2023-2024 Vision of Ministry

Second version #1 with revisions as suggested by a couple of Board members.

Create opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development by:

- Centering Social Justice as a core part of who we are and an avenue to individual and societal transformation.
- Inviting more opportunities for connecting with each other in meaningful ways.
- Exploring our roots as a pluralistic community, and offering ways to engage in wisdom and practices of many spiritual traditions.

Original version as proposed by MVT. MVT prefers this version

Create opportunities for spiritual growth and faith development by:

- Centering Social Justice as a core part of who we are and an avenue to individual and societal transformation.
- Inviting more opportunities for connecting with each other in deep and meaningful ways.
- Exploring our roots as a pluralistic, multi-faith community, offering ways to engage in wisdom and practices from a variety of spiritual traditions

Nancy Miller for MVT

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Annual Meeting

May 24, 2023 6:00 PM

Sanctuary at 306 N. Aurora St, Ithaca

and Zoom (email office@uuithaca.org or check the Weekly Announce for link)

DRAFT Annual Meeting Agenda

6p - Call Meeting to Order

6:10p - Welcome and Chalice Lighting

6:15p - Year in Review

Vision of ministry 2-22-23 evaluation

6:30p – Hybrid Meeting Protocols

6:40 Approval of May 25, 2022 Annual Meeting Minutes

6:50 Adoption of 23-24 Budget

7:05 Election of Candidates for the Board of Trustees and the Nominating Committee
Nom comm presents the slate of candidates.

7:15 Renewal of LGBTQ+ Welcoming Congregation Resolution

7:45 Adjourn and Closing Words

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca Annual Meeting
May 24,2023 6:00 PM

5:30 Need 4 Trustees get Orientation and Registration materials. (2 at Garden and 2 at Narthax)- Nancy, Margaret, _____, Both entrances will have printed copies of the membership list and will check off each member as they arrive. Members should also be handed a ballot during registration

5:40 For the Zoom portion, we plan to have 3 people to admit members into the meeting from the waiting room. (Note: Michelle can be one of these people (and attend from the parlor) and will make the other **two co-hosts**). Therese has signed up, _____

Each person will have a digital copy of the membership list and will check off members as they are admitted into the meeting. Each person will be responsible for a portion of the alphabet (person 1 will admit everyone with an A - G last name, person 2 will admit everyone with a H - O name, etc.

6:00 Call Meeting to Order- Don- this will probably be some time after 6. I will need confirmation from the sign-in teams that the process is in the closing stages (We should let late stragglers join when they show up- we can leave doors open at both locations so that sign-in Trustees can hear what is happening

Welcome and Chalice Lighting - _____

Year in Review- Staff and Don

Hybrid Meeting Protocols- Valerie will be minutes taker. We will announce that folks are attending in-person and via zoom. To acknowledge and place in order persons willing to speak, I will need someone to do this and share that order with me to call on folks. Who will do this? _____. The presentation will be done at the sanctuary. Will we have the ability like we do with live streaming to show zoom attendees to presenter and subject matter? I will review these process steps and how we will be taking questions/comments. I will also provide a quick primer on the Parliamentary Procedure which we will be using (starting with motion, second, discussion and vote- and then a few other tools like table, call the question, point of order) And I will emphasize several time that all comments are to the issue on the table and directed to me as the presider. We will give all who want to speak a chance before second chances)

Approval of 052522 Annual Meeting Minutes motion, second, discussion and vote. motion, second, discussion and vote. I will announce the vote result after tallying.

Please note there will be about 5 minutes while votes are counted after each motion. Your ideas for filling this time slot please. We learned that one congregation gave volunteers and staff special recognition during this time slot

Adoption of 23-24 Budget - Presentation by Treasurer and/or Finance Committee- motion, second, discussion and vote. I will announce the vote result after tallying.

Election of Candidates for Board of Trustees & Nominating Committee- presentation of Slate of Officers recommended by NomCom- I will ask for questions and also nominations for the floor. NomCom should plan to address the process going forward if not all positions are filled by this election. I will announce the vote result after tallying.

Reaffirming Welcoming Congregation Resolution-

Closing Words- _____

When voting starts, Michelle will put the link to the google form into the chat. Each member will vote separately.

When voting ends, Michelle will tally the digital votes.

We also need to appoint a **parliamentarian and a minute taker**.DB, parliamentarian

There are 11 tasks all together although the vote counters can be sign-in folks which gets us down to 9. I don't know why we can't find members to fill these roles, but I will ask you to find them. I expect to be busy that evening managing meeting logistics and facilitating the gathering.

Don

The expectations of a Board Liaison are to act as a link or intermediary between the Board of Trustees and Committees or Teams to facilitate communication, collaboration, and coordination between those bodies.

Expected tasks include:

- Monitor Board activity that might be relevant to the Committee/Team;
- Monitor Committee/Team activity that might be relevant to the Board;
- Communicate relevant Board agenda topics, actions, documents, discussions, and questions to the Committee/Team;
- Communicate relevant Committee/Team actions, documents, discussions, and questions to the Board;
- Promote effective collaboration and coordination between the Board and Committee/Team on topics of mutual interest.