

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Board of Trustees Meeting

October 9, 2018

President Angela Zhang called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:05 pm on Tuesday, October 9, 2018.

Trustees Present:

Angela Zhang, Jennifer Streid-Mullen, Marie Benedetti, Matt Hare, Kim Wilkinson, Whitney Wiggins, Wendy Salomon, Andy Turner (via Zoom).

Trustees Absent:

Oliver Habicht

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

FUSIT Members & Guests:

Rev. Margaret Weis

Nathan Fawcett, Chair of Endowment Committee

Arthur Woll, Chair of Nominating Committee

Marie McCrae

Kelsey Fiori

Handouts:

Hard copy handouts were available upon request with a few copies printed for guests. Electronic copies of documents were displayed and gratitude was expressed for wifi connectivity.

Agenda Item # 1: Opening Reading and Minutes Approval

Whitney lit the chalice and Angela did a reading

MOTION: Approve the BoT September 11, 2018 meeting minutes as updated. **PASSED.**

Agenda Item # 2: Upcoming Dates

Date	Event	Comments
10/10	All Church night	
various	Additional events	Postcard mailed to members/friends

Agenda Item # 3: Unsung Heroes for September 2018

Sarah Buckser & Membership Team	Stepping up and coordinating Sunday Sundaes
Rita Barber & Nancy Dolge	Coordinating memorial reception for Mark Pedersen

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Agenda Item # 4: Signing of 2018-2019 Board of Trustees Covenant

Board Covenant created at August 2018 Board (& FUSIT Staff) retreat and finalized at Board meeting 9/11/2018 signed by all Board members physically present at the meeting.

Agenda Item # 5 Check-in/Discussion about status of FUSIT congregation, staff, and their workload since Mark's passing

Jennifer Streid-Mullen has agreed to coordinate volunteers to answer the phone and do all the work that Sr. Congregational Administrator, Mark Pedersen did on a regular basis. Jennifer is working very hard and is carving out pieces for other folks to handle. Rev. Margaret is doing the mid-week announcements now. Wendy Salomon is coordinating/setting up childcare for FUSIT events. Sarah Buckser is doing more (web updates especially), FUSIT staff, although in mourning, is doing okay. Rev. Margaret indicated that we will need to hire a new Congregational Administrator soon and doing so will likely be challenging for staff. We all need to look for ways to support Care Team.

Agenda Item # 6: Check-in with Board Committees

Endowment Committee: Nathan Fawcett, Finance Committee member advised that Rich Dolge, Chair of Endowment Committee was not available for tonight's meeting. He will attend BoT meeting in November and provide financials for Endowment then. Endowment Committee wants to simplify FUSIT investments to streamline and assist with transition to a new Endowment Treasurer. Pat Jordan, current Endowment Treasurer will not remain in that position forever.

The Committee believes that BoT has copies of their up to date Committee policies.

Finance Committee: Nathan Fawcett, committee member advised that there are things that flowed through Mark Pedersen, that are more challenging right now. Finance Committee and Jennifer Streid-Mullen are not able to access the UUA accounts directly as Mark did. They are working to identify any/all bills that came to FUSIT electronically to insure that everything is paid on time. Nathan reminded the BoT that the Endowment Committee meets monthly in a group with the Finance Committee.(and Stewardship Committee/Team). He agreed to discuss with the committees how best to regularly communicate with the Board. Finance Committee has provided their update to the Board directly to the Board via Jennifer Streid-Mullen, Finance Chair, FUSIT Treasurer and Board member in recent years. There was general agreement that providing a brief written report regularly would be useful. It is extremely helpful that the current Finance Chair and FUSIT Treasurer is a member of the Board, but this might not always be the case.

Nominating Committee: Arthur Woll, Chair indicated that he was fortunate to have very good conversations with FUSIT members and friends about their participation in our community last Spring that resulted in good candidates for the Board of Trustees elections at the Annual Meeting last May. Fred Balfour was appointed to the Nominating Committee and brings systems/organizational thinking to the group. The Nominating Committee is reviewing UUA guidelines/recommendations and is thinking about their role at FUSIT. Arthur indicated that the Committee wants to create a job description for their committee members. A job description will make it easier to get more participation in their committee work. Board members encouraged the Nominating Committee to seek out potential leaders for all parts of the FUSIT community, not just potential BoT members. Additional members are needed for the

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Stewardship Committee/Team and especially help for David Salomon, long time Chair who wants to be relieved of that responsibility. Discussion about the possibility and value of hosting UUA or other leadership training at FUSIT. Nominating Committee requested a list of Board members who are willing to be contacts for folks considering running for the Board. Discussion about the possibility/need for a Board Liaison to the Nominating Committee. More discussion about hosting leadership training at FUSIT to attract young people interested in building skills.

Agenda Item # 7: Strategic Planning

Discussion about the state of the congregation and the relative importance of strategic planning at this point in time. Concerns were raised about the amount of congregational energy available for long term planning when we are adjusting to changes in FUSIT staff. A full leadership team for strategic planning is not in place yet.

Conclusion: Board to begin talking/presenting it's vision for strategic planning and build a strong leadership team for the process. This Fall 1) introduce the questions related to strategic planning to the congregation with the goal of planting the seeds for larger conversations next fall 2)Solidify Strategic Planning Leadership Team by Spring 2019 for an officially strategic planning kick-off September 2019. During the last ExCo meeting members discussed the possibility of a Board member doing an optional short presentation to the congregation once a month during service to talk about what the Board is working on. Presentation ideas included the Board member communicating some piece of the Vision of the Ministry/living our values, etc. that resonates with them. Angela Zhang indicated that she planned to present information on strategic planning in October. Rev Margaret will put a sign up sheet in the shared Google Drive.

Agenda Item # 8: Nexamp Community Solar Presentation

Marie McCrae, leader of the Environmental Interests Action Team, opened a discussion/presentation by saying that NY state regulations related to community solar projects are now stable and conditions related to participation are in now in FUSIT's favor. Marie introduced Nexamp Representative, Kelsey Fiori to the Board. Nexamp is a community solar company created by US military veterans and based out of Boston, MA. Nexamp has partnered with several local organizations (Catholic Charities, 1st Congregational Church, 1st Presbyterian, Covenant Love Church in Dryden, and more) to build a community solar farm (7.5Mg array) in Newfield, NY. Marie and Kelsey asked that FUSIT join the project. Nexamp is utilizing a subscription model. Subscribers receive net-metering credits on their bill based on the % commitment/shares purchased. 10% discount on KWh credits for 20 years for as long as we choose to participate. There is no annual contract, no upfront costs, or termination fees.

FUSIT/customers can change their commitment/allocation of the farm with 90 days notice. All service is provided by the small, local Nexamp Community Solar team (based in Ithaca and Boston) Customers are guaranteed 10% savings compared to NYSEG. Nexamp's analysis of FUSIT bills indicates we would offset 25 metric tons of CO2 with our subscription. Nexamp bills separately from NYSEG.

Nexamp will provide more financial details and answer questions in a meeting with Jennifer Streid-Mullin. The Newfield array is nearing capacity and will go online at the end of October 2018 so FUSIT would need to sign up soon to participate in that farm. Nexamp expects to have another farm up and running in late March 2019.

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The Board communicated its general support for FUSIT joining this community solar farm, but reminded the guests that FUSIT bylaws and policy indicate that the minister makes these decisions for FUSIT.

Agenda Item # 9: FUSIT Financials Update

Jennifer Streid-Mullen, Treasurer reported that 2017-2018 has officially closed. FUSIT Revenue exceeded expenses last year. Unused money donated by the Endowment for 2017-2018 has been return to the Endowment per FUSIT policy.

Jennifer reviewed the 2018-2019 budget changes resulting from Director of Religious Exploration (DRE), Ann Stephenson's resignation and hiring of interim DRE Suzanne Quagliata.

The unexpected death of our Congregational Administrator also impacts the 2018-2019 budget.

Although it may appear to generate budget savings, we won't know until someone is hired for the position and we understand their health insurance needs. No budgetary adjustments will be made at this time.

Rev. Margaret will talk to Mark's husband, Rod Howe about how to utilize donations made to FUSIT in Mark's memory. A new telephone system (Mark found the existing system lacking) and a fund to support people wanting to attend UUA General Assembly (a meeting that Mark attended regularly and appreciated) were discussed.

Agenda Item # 10: Confirm Board Goals for 2018-2019

Angela Zhang presented the Board goals that were drafted at the August 2018 retreat.

The Board discussed revisions and refinements.

Motion: Adopt the following Board Goals for 2018-2019

1. Cultivate Leadership Culture: a. Leadership training b. Support continuing development of Nominating Committee c. Find a chair for Stewardship team
2. Continue to grow partnership with minister/ministry teams a. support all Church night b. support RE visioning
3. Review Board committees, clarify and improve the process to guide the committee's work
4. Support technology upgrade to improve communication
5. Prepare for launch of Strategic Planning (Sept 2019) a. Set up SP committee b. layout process to facilitate quick start

Motion: Approved

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.