

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Board of Trustees Meeting

October 14, 2020 Minutes

President Andy Turner called the regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees (BoT) to order at 6:35 pm on Wednesday, October 14, 2020

Trustees Present: Andy Turner (president), Matt Hare (vice president), Diana Nier (clerk), Therese O'Connor, Lyn Staack, Simon Catterall, Kim Wilkinson, Carsten Hess, and Elton Hall. Rev. Margaret Weis (ex officio), Jennifer Streid-Mullen (treasurer, ex officio)

Trustees Absent: none

FUSIT Members & Guests: Angel Zhang, Stephani Ortolano, Jessica English, Emily Richards, Elizabeth Einstein, Don Barber

Agenda Item # 1: Opening Reading and Consent Agenda Approval

Andy Turner lit the chalice and Rev. Margaret read the FUSIT Covenant.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

- Approve the minutes of the September 8, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting, shown in Google Docs folder as of the date and time of this meeting
- Approve joint Board and Minister letter to congregation regarding the September 13 meeting

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda items. Motion by Therese, seconded by Lyn. **PASSED.**

Agenda Item # 2: Upcoming Dates

(Newsletter deadline this month is October 15, 2020)

Date	Event	Comments
10/28/20	Extra Pub Theology Session	Managing anxiety around 2020 election
12/4/20-12/5/20	Living the Pledge Training	

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Agenda Item # 3: Unsung Heroes for September 2020

WHO	WHY
Stephanie Ortolano	Providing all music for services

- The previous month's cards were not assigned to anyone as a task, and were therefore not sent. Diana volunteered to send the previous month's cards. Elton will send this month's card.
- The Board agreed that it would be a good idea to also thank people publicly in the mid-week announcement. We will need ways for the congregation to report actions to each other and to the Board so we can recognize them.
- Rev. Margaret suggested adding a video to the next mid-week announcement or monthly newsletter. Lyn and Angela Zhang will work on that.

Agenda Item # 4: Dreamcatchers Report

- Don Barber reports that the Dreamcatchers (aka Strategic Planning Committee) met in Stewart Park and agree that there is intense interest in anti-racism and white privilege work, and improving/creating lines of communication that will help bring our community together and see each other clearly.
- Discussion relating to the name of the team and its connection to Native American traditions.
- Discussion relating to the mandate and process of the team. There should be a Board member on the committee, whether officially or ex officio.

MOTION: Accept the final report of the Dreamcatchers Committee, to be delivered to the Board by the November BoT meeting. Motion by Therese, seconded by Simon. **PASSED.**

Agenda Item # 5: Review Board Standard Operating Procedures

- Matt provided the document for review.
- Discussion of what we can/should change right now given the unique challenges of operating during a pandemic. Questions were raised about whether communications referred to are within the Board, between the Board and the congregation at large, or both.
- Therese raised the issue of a meeting summary vs. minutes. Andy clarified that this is the idea behind the new meeting/action summary item at the close of each meeting.

MOTION: Motion to accept the text of Board Standard Operating Procedures with the following change to Item 6 -- "That draft BoT minutes should not be released until approval at the

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following meeting, at which time they should be posted on the BoT bulletin boards, ...available on the website, and linked in the Mid-week announcement. Bulleted Board 'sense of the meeting' should be agreed to at the end of each Board meeting and communicated to the congregation using the same vehicles immediately following each meeting" -- and the understanding that we will review Item 2 in coming months. Moved by Matt and seconded by Elton. **PASSED**.

- Working group of Therese, Matt, and Carsten created to revise Item 2 and review other potential changes.

Agenda Item # 6: Finance/Budget Update

- Jennifer reported on the current financial situation. Most of note: last year's endowment contribution is being used to fund sanctuary A/V updates.
- Rev. Margaret reminded the Board of the need to consider a succession plan for Jennifer.
- Matt reminded the Board of the need to review standing committees of the Board. Jennifer is our representative on Finance and Endowment, but it's important to have elected Board liaisons to ease the transition between treasurers.
- Elton volunteered to be the Board liaison to Finance and Endowment. The Board agreed unanimously with this.
- Finance Committee is interested in doing sanctuary updates while the building is mostly empty, and has floated the idea of a bank loan for those efforts. Jennifer and Rev. Margaret expressed concerns over the risks of loans during uncertain times.

Agenda Item # 7: Pandemic Closure Policy Review

- Rev. Margaret provided the WayForward Team's document for review.
- Discussion of whether this is a general policy or just for right now.

MOTION: Accept the Pandemic Closure Policy and approve sending it to the congregation. Moved by Therese, seconded by Kim. **PASSED**.

Agenda Item # 8: Auction Planning, Timeline and Roles

- Therese collected documents relating to Service Auction planning from Jessica.
- We need to set a date for the Auction and create a working group. We need time to determine the technology platform to use, and who will manage that. The Auction used to be in the spring and was moved to fall to avoid spring conflicts, but that doesn't seem feasible this year.

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- Lyn proposed a February auction, tied to a theme of love. This will also give us time to work out logistics and technology.
- Rev. Margaret created a brief announcement text to send out in the newsletter.
- Discussion of who will be the point of contact and how much responsibility staff should be expected to shoulder. Current contact point is the Board email and we'll choose a point person in November.

Agenda Item # 10: Board Training Partnership Governance/Feedback Process

- The Board intends to do review work on Partnership Governance. Eventually we'd like to move this work to the congregation at large. For now, Rev. Margaret has reached out to Laura Free to run a refresher training session.
- Jessica has copies of *Governance and Ministry* (a book on Partnership Governance) in her office for Board members to read.
- Rev. Margaret has sent the Board and staff an invitation to a district program on congregational governance on November 7, 2020.
- Diana has received information from the Washington's Crossing congregation on their Right Relations Team

Agenda Item # 9: Next Steps and Timeline Anti-Racism work

- The first Living the Pledge cohort training will be December 4 and 5, 2020.

Agenda Item # 11: Meeting/Action Summary for Communication

- Carsten suggested using the agenda as a base. Simon suggested adding the results of any votes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.

Minutes taken by Diana Nier, 10/14/20.