

**Unity Church-Unitarian**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**December 15, 2010**  
**Minutes**

**Draft minutes**

Board members in attendance: Rob Fulton (chair), Craig Allen, Sue Babcock, Bob Peskin, Laura Smidzik, Beverly Heydinger, Tim Thoreen, Neely Crane-Smith, Sarah Pradt

ET in attendance: Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs, Leon Dunkley, Barbara Hubbard, Christi Saari

Others: Jason Seymour, Nick Allen

**I. Opening Reading – Laura**

**II. Review of the Past**

A. Approval of Minutes – November.

A motion to approve the minutes from the board meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2010, as corrected, was made by Laura and seconded by Sue Babcock. The motion carried.

B. Executive Team Report

Report on Black Friday celebration created a discussion about independent projects by church members and the allocation of church resources, specifically staff time. ET reported that the Black Friday project came out of a year of very thoughtful meetings with a core group of volunteers that was deliberate about negotiating with the church for resources, and was positive for the church both as outreach and publicity.

Many appreciative comments from Board members about the visit from the Macalester Choir, which is an annual event arranged through Ruth's donation of her time as an accompanist for the group. Bob mentioned seeing 40-50 Unity members at a recent choir concert at Macalester, it's a great connection between the communities.

There were some questions and concern about the low attendance in the RE program in October. ET reported that RE attendance normally drops off during winter.

A motion to pass a resolution accepting the \$85,000 grant from The Saint Paul Foundation to help finance the budget of the Unity Tomorrow Capital Campaign Planning and Development Project was made by Laura, and seconded by Craig. Motion passed unanimously.

C. Financials

The Domebuster Blizzard prevented completion of the financial report to the Board. Barbara said she will provide it later in the week.

**III. Creation of the Future**

#### D. Approve Amended Budget

Incoming Chair Rob Fulton provided background to new members about the budget process, proceeded by a report on the Fill the Gap campaign: 88 members increased their commitment for 2011 by a total just over \$25,000. The budget presented at the annual meeting was \$1,352,679 with a projected \$1,024 surplus. For the first time in three years staff received an average 2% increase on salaries, bringing the co-ministers from -9% of market (as determined by NACBA) up to -5%. The RE program will also receive an additional 5 hours per week of staff time for the year. We were also able to restore a budget for the All-Congregation Merging of the Waters service and are hoping to reduce the amount needed for that particular service through a fundraising event.

An all-congregation email and letter will go out to thank people for their efforts in the Fill the Gap campaign, along with individual thank-you notes to everyone who increased their pledges. Several Board members asked that the letter addresses specific concerns, including bringing ministers up to market and be transparent about places where we didn't meet our goal.

A motion to approve the amended budget as submitted was made by Craig and seconded by Laura. The motion passed unanimously.

#### E. *Unity Tomorrow* Update

Rob Eller-Isaacs provided a brief overview. At this moment, all four planning teams are in place or in process (the capital campaign committee will be finalized if the results of the feasibility study are favorable and the campaign is approved by the congregation). The feasibility study is currently in progress. The Unity II team has been meeting regularly and making sure that their meetings pay ample attention to the ways in which ministry has to remain at the heart of this conversation, to the qualities or values that we would want to look for in partners, and then and only then to potential sites. They are choosing not to hurry the conversation.

In all of the teams, the open invitation that the communications team urged us to issue has garnered new people and they have brought their own gifts to the conversation (which works towards fulfilling the Ends statement around widening the circles of influence and access). Enthusiasm is high!

With sensitivity to past interactions neighbors, the Unity Tomorrow team has leafleted the neighborhood and met with neighbors twice to involve them in the process early on, which has been successful if not easy. Neighborhood concerns include light, parking and beauty. The Unity Tomorrow team recognizes that this is not a one-time discussion, but rather an ongoing conversation with the neighborhood and are developing a mailing list to use for future communications. Barbara Hubbard is also on the neighborhood email list and can utilize that for publicity purposes.

Since the Domebuster Blizzard prevented the last congregational forum on the Unity Tomorrow process, the next congregational forum will be held on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The Board was encourage to attend and listen. It was also reported that all submissions from the suggestions box are being reviewed and responded to.

#### **IV. Board Business**

- Response to Board's budget letter

Bev, Laura and Craig drafted the initial letter to the congregation, and will be leading the effort to create a positive and hopeful response that acknowledges the areas that we need to improve, airing on the side of transparency and authenticity.

- Response to ARLT Report

At the last Board meeting members of the Anti-Racism Leadership Team pointed out that the Board lacks a formal process to maintain consistent communication with them. The Board acknowledges the lack of a formal process and realizes that we continue to wrestle with our relationship with the ARLT as a monitoring committee. The Board committed to set aside time at our next meeting to analyze the latest report from the ARLT to determine what is appropriate Board action in response to concerns. It is a very complicated relationship and many people expressed concern that information flows in all directions. Leon, the staff connection to the ARLT, hopes that despite the inherent challenges of this conversation, we work on transcending the strained and constrained nature of this conversation and risk coming into real community. The Board is committed to improving and developing right relationship with the ARLT within the policy governance structure.

- Appoint Policy Review Committee

We need to finish reviewing Policy H. The Board decided to wait until after the January review of governance policy to seek volunteers to join Sue and Laura on the Policy Review Committee.

#### **V. Focus Question – Rob F.**

Please share with the others an important memory of the upcoming holiday season.

#### **VI. Closing Reading - Neely**

*Respectfully submitted by Board Secretary Neely Crane-Smith  
Minutes approved on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.*