

Unity Church-Unitarian
Board of Trustees Meeting
January 8, 2011
Minutes

Draft minutes

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

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

Others: Jason Seymour, Laura Park

I. Opening Reading and Focus Question

II. Policy Governance (Carver) Method Training

Laura Park provided an in-depth review of the Carver method of policy governance for the Board to describe the governance process at Unity and the separation between Board and Executive Team business.

III. Review of the Past

- Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the board meeting on November 15th, 2010, as corrected, was made by Bob and seconded by Laura. The motion carried.

- ET Report

The ET reported that 30 families at Unity have been chosen for the Unity Tomorrow feasibility study and have all agreed to be interviewed.

The Unity Tomorrow Communications Committee will present on Sunday at 12:30 for their monthly update meeting for the congregation. Craig and Bob will try to be present. The Unity II team continues to meet and organize opportunities for input while the current site team is on hiatus pending a special meeting of the congregation to vote on the capital drive. Rob E-I reiterated that the “designs” presented to the congregation are actually “concepts” and that any design work won’t happen until the congregation makes a decision to move forward. Barbara hopes that the feasibility study will be available as a written report prior to the February 16th Board meeting, at which point the Board will be asked to consider approving a capital drive and recommendation to the congregation. As the ET looks forward to considering a date for a special meeting of

the congregation they are attempting to work around St. Paul and Minneapolis public school spring breaks, as well as the weekend of the children's musical (March 4th and 5th).

Rob E-I went into more detail about the results feasibility study, which will provide a professional evaluation of what present Unity donors will be willing and able to contribute to a future capital campaign – it will *not* evaluate potential community partners or foundations. There will not be an assessment of the likelihood of foundation contribution by February. Bev mentioned that the makeup of the committees reflects a broad and inclusive invitation to Unity members to participate. The Communications team is made up almost entirely of new members and people who attend Unity but who aren't members yet, people who said "I would really like to do this." The Board recommends that the Communications team share this with the congregation.

Barbara Hubbard presented the financial statements and reported that if we compared last year to this year our total assets have grown, our total liabilities and net assets have a positive change and we have a healthy balance sheet. With 40% of 2010 pledges unpaid, Barb doesn't believe that we will reach our goal of 4% shrinkage. Bev asked about the follow-up with those members who have not continued their past pledges with the church, suggesting that a pastoral rather than fundraising outreach would be appropriate to find out if there was something missing in their experience of Unity that we can learn from. The ET expressed interest and said they would take the idea into consideration.

The auditor interview team put out an RFP, interviewed three auditing companies and came to a unanimous decision to recommend Schechter, Dokken and Kanter. Positives mentioned that the the firm has a mission to be an educator as well as a CPA firm, that they came highly recommended by others and answered with confidence about past experiences with organizations going into a capital campaign. While they submitted a 3 year proposal, this was provided in order to give Unity a sense of future steps: the ET is asking that we approve a motion to engage their services for one year.

A motion to approve \$13,000 for Schechter, Dokken and Kanter to provide a financial audit for Unity Church-Unitarian was moved by Bev and seconded by Sue. The motion carried.

IV. Creation of the Future

The Board discussed responses to the 2009-2010 Annual Report on Institutional Progress from the Anti-Racism Leadership Team, and again wrestled with the Board's relationship with and response to the ARLT. The mission of the ARLT is to provide

monitoring and make recommendations on how the Board and ET can reach towards Unity's goals of transformative change. The Board asked: how do we bring service and joy to anti-racism work at Unity? How can we as a Board serve the goal of an anti-racist organization at Unity? How can the Board do the work of anti-racism within, among and beyond Unity Church? As we think about changing an institution, growing an institution, opening an institution, how do we do that? Who for? Why? What does that feel like? How can we use critical anti-racism lenses as we move forward with Unity Tomorrow? How can we do this work with integrity, service and joy?

Rob E-I sees Unity at a point as an institution and community where our biggest challenge is engaging across difference with moral owners that we don't know. He wants the Board and the ET as professional leaders to have better tools, more courage and more heart to engage more completely with people who are not in the church across different models. One of the items that the ARLT has asked for is that all Board members are trained in some sort of systemic anti-racism model. While many Board members have participated in one model of anti-racist training in the past and had positive experiences, it is clear that there are many different methods coming from different backgrounds with different aims in mind. Board members expressed a concern that good-hearted people looking for deeper spiritual healing out there can come to that end on their own without help. Leon hopes to see an anti-racism effort at Unity that feels good and creates a space for forgiveness without censorship.

Ann and Laura volunteered to pause the policy committee and focus on connecting with the ARLT, with Rob F. as chair. This committee will bring a recommendation to the Board. Suggestions included involving ARLT team members in the policy review process, and creating a space in our agenda at the end of the ET report where we step back and ask whether there is anything in this report that suggests to the Board that in moving towards the Ends we have missed a piece or done something hurtful.

The Board wants to acknowledge the hard work that the ARLT contributes and celebrate their positive impact. We are now more inclusive in terms of programming, readings, workshop and music – and it has brought this community joy. The fact that we have more work to do does not minimize that.

IV. Board Business

An article for the Community and a letter to the congregation addressing both the outcome of the pledge drive and the Fill the Gap campaign as it relates to the budget and going forward what the Board sees as it's role to continue with more detailed information on the Unity website.

A motion to write an email and a letter to be boxed it in the Community rather than a separate mailing was made by Laura and seconded by Tim. The motion carried.

A motion to call a special meeting of the congregation (date to be determined by the ET) for the purpose of considering a capital campaign was made by Bev, Laura seconded. The motion carried.

V. Closing Reading

*Respectfully submitted by Board Secretary Neely Crane-Smith
Minutes approved February 18th, 2011.*