

June Meeting Minutes:

Unity Church Unitarian: Meeting of the Board of Trustees June 8 , 2019

The meeting took place at Unity Church-Unitarian, 733 Portland Ave, St. Paul, MN.

Board of Trustees (BOT) members present: Jennifer Tong (chair), Jill van Koolwijk (secretary), John Steiner-Manning, Nila Gouldin, Ruth Kirkland, Clover Earl, Justin Cummins, Nancy Evert

Executive Team (ET) members present: Rob Eller-Isaacs, Janne Eller-Isaacs, Barbara Hubbard, KP Hong

Guests: Laura Park, Kathryn Jay, Jen Crow, Karen Hering

Jennifer Tong called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

An opening reading was offered by Ruth Kirkland

A journaling prompt was offered by Kathryn Jay:

- Think of a time in your life when you said good-bye well. How did it feel? What made it feel good, what made it right?
- How will you approach the good-byes that Unity Church faces with grace?

Monitoring Reports – ET report

Policy II.E. Financial Condition: Decision: Take drawdown

Justin Cummins moved to accept the Executive Team report as in compliance with policy II. E. The Financial Condition here refers specifically to the May financial reports. The motion was tabled until the next Board meeting in July.

(Discussion: Due to late submittal of the documents, we will postpone discussing the financials until next month.)

The Board approved that the ET can address the budget shortfall by drawing down 5% of endowment earnings based on a trailing three-year period if and when needed in this fiscal year. The motion passed unanimously.

(Discussion about decision: At the May Board meeting, the Board proposed to draw down 5% of endowment earnings to fill the gap from budget shortfalls, rather than going back to the congregation midyear to ask for more pledges. Our Investment Policies have a Spending Policy that states “The annual distribution amount from these funds shall be a percentage applied to

the average market value measured over a trailing three-year period. This percentage amount will be recommended to the Board annually by the Executive Leadership.”

Based on the trailing 3-year as of September 30, 5% would be \$41,862.

This decision effects this year’s finances. Future budget shortfalls will be addressed on a yearly basis.)

Policy II.H. Communication and Counsel to the Board:

Justin Cummins moved to accept the Executive Team report as in compliance with policy II. H. (Communication and Counsel to the Board). The motion passed unanimously.

Policy II.B. Staff Changes:

Nancy Evert moved to accept the Executive Team report as in compliance with policy II. B. (Staff Changes). The motion passed unanimously.

(Discussion: Our comptroller Ying Vu resigned. Barbara Hubbard will meet with Wendy Harden to discuss options for how we might address the gap in order to handle the financial work that has to be done.

Rob mentioned that when we transition with Barbara Hubbard’s retirement, we need to reevaluate our job description of Executive Director who currently manages HR, finances and financial reporting. The role has grown too large for a single person to handle.

The Duplex will be vacant after August 2019 and the ET will discuss further steps in regards to it going forward.

Policy II.B. Staff/Volunteer Survey: Decision: Approve updated staff and volunteer form

John Steiner-Manning moved to accept the red-lined version of the Staff/Volunteer Survey and its change as in compliance with policy II. B. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy IV.C. - ET Performance Evaluation: Decision: Approve updated ET evaluation form

Clover Earl moved to approve the ET Performance Evaluation Form for the new Ends and to empower the Evaluation Subcommittee to adjust the survey evaluation scale if desired. The motion passed unanimously.

(Discussion: We discussed that the ET Performance Evaluation Form could be changed to a 7-point evaluation scale.)

Transition Update with Jen Crow

First of all, we grounded ourselves with a prayer. Jen Crow is a Unity consultant for our ministerial transition. She is also a UUA Transition Coach and will assist us in this capacity next year. Some of the unique strengths of Unity Church are our strong Executive Leadership team and our Ends, vision and mission, which will both be continuing throughout the transition process. On the other hand, there are concerns that live in the congregation about how the last transition went 20 years ago and that should not be forgotten.

There are 3 important points about this transition:

- 1) Saying a good good-bye to Rob and Janne. It will set the stage for a good hello to our next Senior Minister. This includes worship services, celebrations and events. A good good-bye team will lead this effort.
- 2) The interim period. The word has already gotten out about the interim position and there are a lot of candidates who are interested in coming to Unity. The interim assesses where Unity is at.
- 3) Looking for a new Senior Minister. A search committee will be selected to find the new settled minister. Jen Crow will work with our congregation next spring to help put all these pieces into place.

Setting the intent is very important for this search process in terms of building trust with the congregation, the Board and the staff. In some congregations every member receives a call and is asked what they think is needed on the search committee and who they'd recommend to be on it. Another approach might be to have smaller meetings or focus groups and staff the parish hall to provide multiple ways members can engage.

The search committee will be made up of 7 members, sometimes 9 members in a large congregation. Who should be on the search committee? Members who have history with the church, who have a vision for the future of the church, who will work hard and are committed to this work. The work is time-consuming and requires individuals who can work well with others, who can advocate for the church and not just their own view, as well as a good balance of various kinds of people. It will be critical to always ask how this will further diversity and inclusion, and build trust.

There are two possible ways to find the search committee: a) A slate of people would be nominated, voted on by the congregation and presented by the Board to the full congregation to be approved.

b) A group of 15 candidates is voted on, the top 4 vote-getters will be included in the search committee and the Board picks the other members to balance the search committee well, keeping in mind our Ends. Once the search committee is formed, they work on their own to find the new Senior Minister/Co-Ministers. They will **not** be communicating with the ET, the Board, the congregation or the Transition Coach until they present the candidate/s. This search committee will assess among themselves what to communicate to the candidates, taking the church history and the church Ends into consideration.

How do you build trust? How do you further your Ends? What is in the best interest of the church? The leadership of the church needs to rise up to do this work and launch this process. Rob and Janne who typically lead in efforts like this, will not be part of this launching process. It is important not work out of a place of fear or worry, but rather of hope and calm. As one of our Ends is to dismantle dominant white culture, this mind-set should be at the center of the transitions work.

There are several teams that have to get to work:

- 1) The Transition Subcommittee in a multi-year commitment.
- 2) The Board holding the vision and mission of the church in the Ends. Moving the Ends through the process, selecting the search committee.
- 3) Jen Crow as the transitions coach.
- 4) The good good-bye team to prepare the retirement of Rob and Janne. This team will collaborate with the ministers, the congregation and the Board. (Rob would like be comfortable with this team.) This team will be charged with the celebration, the legacy and the grieving process in this transition.

If we can do this transition well, it will be healing to the congregation and resetting the culture around transitions. It will process the history and set a positive stage for future generations. It was suggested that we resurrect the Board's Communication Subteam. The congregation should receive frequent/multiple communications during this period through various means of communication: Newsletter, Table in the Parish Hall, emails, etc.

The Board is charged with selecting an Interim Minister. This work can be done by the Transition Subcommittee or by the full Board. Next year during April/May, the request for an Interim will be sent to the UUA. The UUA will provide a list of candidates to choose from and the Board will vet and select a candidate from the list.

Jen will be speaking to the congregation about the transition. This is tentatively scheduled for January 12, 2020.

Ruth Kirkland moved to approve the Celebration Taskforce Charge document for the Good Good-bye Team and to empower the Transition Subcommittee to name the co-chairs for this team in consultation with Rob and Janne. The motions passed unanimously.

(Discussion: The grief work will be led by Karen Hering and other church programming, such as Chalice Circles, etc.)

The Transitions Subcommittee will consult with Rob and Janne about naming co-chairs for the Good Good-bye Team.)

Break

Monitoring Reports

Policy I.B. Congregational Survey Results: Presentation by Laura Park and Bill Etter

Laura Park presented the highlights of the Congregational Survey in demographic terms of age, gender and income.

The Board discussed in length the results of the congregational survey and gave the interpretation back to the Evaluation Subcommittee to take the next steps.

The Evaluation Subcommittee will revise and perhaps expand the questions for the survey in the future. If people left their names, the ET will follow up if pastoral care concerns were mentioned. The Trustees will contact anyone who left their name and ask if they would like further follow-up.

Revise Board meeting schedule for October

The October Board meeting was moved to October 5, 2019 as to not be in conflict with the Samuel Morgan Forum happening on October 12, 2019.

Approval of May 2019 Meeting Minutes:

John Steiner-Manning moved to accept the May 2019 Meeting Minutes. The motions passed unanimously.

Prophetic Leadership – Subcommittee Reports

No reports were given.

Ruth Kirkland offered a closing reading.

Jennifer Tong adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Jill van Koolwijk, secretary.