

MINUTES
Unity Church-Unitarian: Meeting of the Board of Trustees
May 13, 2017

The meeting was held in Anderson Library at Unity Church.

Board of Trustees (BOT) members present: Stu Alger, Estelle Brouwer, Justin Cummins, Nancy Evert, Mark Foster, Peter Heege, Angela Newhouse, John Steiner-Manning, Bailey Webster

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

Others present: Nic Cable and Jessica Clay, ministerial interns; Signe Nestingen, ARLT; Danny Givens, Michelle Hill, staff; Amy Babcock and Chuck Selcer, Schechter Dokken Kanter

Justin Cummins gave an opening reading.

Prophetic Leadership

- **Board Capacity Sub-team**
Bailey Webster and Justin Cummins reported on behalf of the sub-team. A few individuals have expressed early interest in joining the Board this year. Trustees are encouraged to sign up to staff the Board recruitment table in the parish hall the next few weeks. Trustees are reminded of the intercultural competence refresher workshop Janne will lead May 20.
- **Communication & Linkage Sub-team**
Stu Alger reported on behalf of the sub-team, which will have an outline of a linkage plan related to the Ends renewal by the next Board meeting. Several Trustees and congregants attended the Board linkage session in April.
- **Evaluation Sub-team**
Angela Newhouse reported on behalf of the sub-team. There were 272 responses to the congregational survey. Laura and Bill are analyzing the results and will provide a preliminary report to the Board later in the summer. Angela confirmed the timing of the Executive Team's evaluation by the Board; the process will start in July so the ET will have results before their August retreat.
- **Policy Sub-team**
Justin Cummins facilitated the discussion on behalf of the sub-team.
Bailey Webster moved approval of proposed Board policy revisions as summarized on p. 3 of the Board packet. Peter Heege seconded the motion.
Discussion: John Steiner-Manning asked if the reference to "ownership" in policy III.E. 1 should be changed to "moral ownership" or possibly "members." Justin indicated that the policy sub-team will consider this and bring a recommendation back to the Board.
The motion passed.
- **Transitions Sub-team.** Peter Heege reported on behalf of the sub-team. The sub-team has continued to gather information from congregations and individuals knowledgeable about ministerial transitions. The sub-team and Executive Team recently had a joint meeting to discuss pros and cons of engaging an independent consultant to assist with

the process. As a result of that meeting, **the sub-team recommends adoption of the following motion. Nancy Evert moved the motion:**

Whereas the Executive Team and the Transitions sub-team of the Board of Trustees (TSTBT) met on May 9, 2017, to discuss the possible retention of a transitions consultant, and reviewed in that connection a document prepared by the ET and titled “What Could a Transitions Consultant Offer?”, and whereas the TSTBT recommends on the basis of that discussion that the Church hire an independent consultant to advise the ET, the TSTBT and the full Board on the transition process, the Board hereby empowers the ET and the TSTBT to form from their members a Transitions Consultant Team, to prepare a Request for Proposal to be sent to an appropriate list of consultants, which RFP will be submitted to the Board for its approval at the June Board meeting.

Stu Alger seconded the motion.

Discussion: Nancy Evert asked about the likely cost of this work; Rob Eller-Isaacs cited an estimated budget of \$6-10,000 over three years. John Steiner-Manning asked if this should be considered Board work as opposed to joint work with the Executive Team. The sub-team and ET stated that because all the upcoming transitions are related, it seems impossible to isolate this as strictly Board work. The sub-team considered the possibility of parallel processes – ET and Board – but concluded it would be beneficial to have one consultant bridging both. John suggested amending the motion to clarify that the only action authorized at this point is to publish the RFP, not to hire. A question was raised about who the consultant would be accountable to; the response was that an accountability process can be built into the RFP. Members of the sub-team and ET stated that the upcoming transitions will only be successful if we continue to work as closely together as we have, which is what’s gotten us to the point of having such a healthy, collaborative organization and relationships.

Estelle Brouwer moved to amend the original motion to reflect the discussion.

The proposed (amended) motion reads as follows:

Whereas the Executive Team and the Transitions sub-team of the Board of Trustees (TSTBT) met on May 9, 2017, to discuss the possible retention of a transitions consultant, and reviewed in that connection a document prepared by the ET and titled “What Could a Transitions Consultant Offer?”, the Board hereby empowers the ET and the TSTBT to form from their members a Transitions Consultant Team, to prepare a Request for Proposal to be sent to an appropriate list of consultants, which RFP will be submitted to the Board for its approval at the June Board meeting.

Peter Heege seconded the motion to amend. The motion to amend passed.

The motion passed as amended.

- **Ends Statements Task Force.** Estelle Brouwer and Justin Cummins reported on the first meeting of the task force. In the near term, the task force will: analyze results of the 2017 congregational survey and written output from the 2016 pledge drive as a way to begin to formulate a generative question to drive discussion around renewing the Ends; take steps toward engaging Laura Park as a consultant to the process, and develop a timeline for the overall process. The task force is considering revisiting the church’s core values and mission as well as the Ends statements. The task force will frame a deeper discussion of the generative question for the July Board meeting.

Facilitated discussion

Laura Park facilitated a discussion about how a strong Board and a strong Executive Team relate effectively to one another in the context of financial review.

Highlights of the discussion included:

- The Board needs to have objective ways of judging whether the financial information we're receiving allows for compliance with the policies.
- Part of being a strong board is to ask clarifying questions until true understanding is reached.
- We are working with two different languages (Board policies and accounting language) and the two do not match up. It would be wise to ask the auditor to report to the Board within the context of the Executive Team limitations.
- The possibility was raised of establishing a finance sub-team charged with educating itself and the rest of the Board on effective financial monitoring. This was held for future consideration.

Auditor's Report

Amy Babcock and Chuck Selcer of Schechter Dokken Kanter presented the church's year-end financial statements for 2016, along with suggestions for how the Board can more effectively use the statements to monitor financial performance.

John Steiner-Manning moved acceptance of the financial review.

Peter Heege seconded.

The motion passed.

The Board then met in executive session with Amy Babcock and Chuck Seltzer to further discuss the financial review.

Business Matters

- Consent agenda

The minutes were removed from the consent agenda and revisions were suggested to correct errors in the transitions sub-team report and a reference to the co-ministers' letters of agreement.

John Steiner-Manning moved approval of revisions to the April minutes.

Peter Heege seconded.

The motion passed.

Nancy Evert moved approval of the letters of agreement.

Angela Newhouse seconded.

The motion passed.

Monitoring

Executive Team Report

I.B. Congregational Survey and Membership

Nancy Evert moved to accept the Executive Team Report as compliant within the limitations of Policy I.B.

Bailey Webster seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

The motion passed.

II.B. Staff Changes and Staff/Volunteer Treatment Survey

Peter Heege moved to accept the Executive Team Report as compliant within the limitations of Policy II.B.

Mark Foster seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

The motion passed.

II.D. Financial Planning

Mark Foster moved to accept the Executive Team report as compliant within the limitations of Policy II.E.

Bailey Webster seconded the motion.

There was no discussion.

The motion passed.

II.E. Financial Condition

Peter Heege moved to accept the Executive Team report as compliant within the limitations of Policy II.E. with the exception of clauses II.E.3, related to inter-fund shifting and II.E.6, related to the reserve account.

Mark Foster seconded the motion.

Discussion: Barbara Hubbard stated that a plan for achieving compliance will be delivered to the Board in June. She proposed adding a key financial indicator that will facilitate the Board's ability to monitor progress toward compliance.

The motion passed.

II.F. Asset Protection

Nancy Evert moved to accept the Executive Team report as compliant within the limitations of Policy II.F. with the exception of clause II.F.11, related to intellectual property.

Peter Heege seconded the motion.

There was no discussion

The motion passed.

II.H. Communication & Counsel

Angela Newhouse moved to accept the Executive Team Report as compliant within the limitations of Policy II.H.

Nancy Evert seconded the motion.

There was no discussion

The motion passed.

Justin Cummins offered a closing reading.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Estelle Brouwer, Board Secretary