

Unitarian Universalist Church of Indianapolis – (UUI)
Board of Trustee (BoT) Meeting Minutes
August 21st, 2023/7pm/Regular Meeting/Zoom

Prepared by Tammy Jackson, BoT Secretary
Our Slack Website: uu-indy.slack.com

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Gatz – President
Reuben Benzel – Treasurer
Tammy Jackson – Secretary
Mike Hertel – Trustee
John Russell – Trustee
Kate Stephens – Trustee
Sharon Chrust – Trustee
Sarah Cannon – RE Director
Rev Dawn Cooley – Interim Minister

Absent:

Jerry Foster – Vice President
Sergio Cianci Chapman - Trustee

Guests: Judith Skyles, Carla Koertge, Tyler Gobble, Ray Wilson

Meeting called to order by BoT President Jennifer Gatz at 7:00pm

Chalice Reading – Rev Dawn Cooley – Taken from a book entitled, “The Spirit that Moves”

Gratitude Cards

- *Thank you cards to be sent to Tim Thomas for getting the cabinets for the RE building and to Tim Bryant for his work on the floors in the church and in the RE building. (John Russell will write these and send them out).*

Member Input

- *Tyler Gobble is asking for donated space for his group, Emotions Anonymous (EA). It is basically a 12-step program, modeled after Alcoholics Anonymous, for those struggling with emotional issues. They have weekly meetings so would need space one night during the week. The group’s goal is to instill serenity and peace of mind in everyone involved. They are not asking for any kind of financial support. Donations are accepted from the group’s members. The group is open to UUI members and non-members alike. Because it is anonymous, the group knows each other on a first name basis only. Tyler is asking to promote the groups meetings in the UUI e-blast. In addition, EA has their own website and information will be posted there as well as their other social media avenues. Jennifer Gatz advised that the group’s ideals fit into our mission and values and felt that it would be a good match. Kate Stephens voiced concern regarding putting the information in the UUI e-blast since we don’t list others i.e., the Buddhist Recovery Group. Jennifer stated that we could promote this group and would be happy to do so in the future. Mike mentioned that we need to clarify access in terms of space. His concern was giving folks*

keys to multiple spaces. Jennifer will talk to Erica Pahud regarding available space and e-blast promotion and will get back to Tyler.

- Ray Wilson stated that he had a concern with energy use for groups using our buildings.

New Business:

Board Vice President

Jerry Foster has resigned as board Vice President. He suggests bringing someone in who can provide some new energy. Jennifer is looking into the logistics of this. She asked that members reach out to potential people who might be interested. Please pass suggested names on to John Koertge and David Jackoway. Since the Program Committee organization fell to Jerry, Kate has volunteered to get that process started.

Board Retreat

The board retreat seems to be a hard one to schedule! Jennifer will send out another Doodle poll to try to get this scheduled soon (note: Doodle poll has gone out). Thank you to Mike Hertel for the use of his neighborhood clubhouse last year. Everyone agreed that we would love to have it there again. Mike thought that could be a possibility.

Congregational Meeting

We need to get the congregations approval to reinstate Rueben Benzel as Treasurer and to appoint someone to Jerry Foster's position as board Vice President. The congregational meeting will be held September 24th. We also need to have a vote on expenditures over the budgeted amount for special projects and HVAC. Ray Wilson, Mike Hertel and Rueben Benzel will discuss options. Jennifer suggested making an amendment to the budget and not specifying the projects. Ray proposed asking people to donate to the projects. Mike advised that the total amount for all projects was estimated between \$61-62,000 with \$25,000 being previously approved.

Personnel Manual & Committee

Mike advised that a discussion around this had started about 6 months ago. The personnel manual is 13 years old and needs to be refreshed! Mara Haium-White has drafted a revision. There needs to be a committee put together to review this. Mike felt that Rev Dawn should be involved. John Russell volunteered to be the board liaison for the committee. Mike will send John and Rev Dawn the work that has been done so far. Rev Dawn suggested breaking the manual down into sections with a goal of having it completed in 6-12 months. She also stated that it was important to look at the state requirements for PTO, since this has been an issue in the past.

Adult Religious Education Council

Kate Stephens provided an update stating that John Cornell, Judith Skyles and Mariah Arkins were interested in being on the committee. Sarah Cannon stated that she is willing to take on the leadership role.

Youth Religious Education

Kate Stephens also provided an update on this area. She stated that it will cost \$350-400 to get our current volunteers updated. Rev Dawn suggested putting a line item under RE for background check expenses. She also advised that her moving expenses were less than estimated and that money could be moved from that expense line to cover the cost of the background checks. Kate voiced her concern as to how the issue with the background checks happened in the first place. Mike suggested that there be a record from a 3rd party doing the checks and that record then be reviewed by the RE council. The record could be in the form of a spreadsheet with dates on when the background checks occurred. Mike informed the board that in the past, they had been told everything was in order. Sarah Cannon stated that we need a revision of the safe congregation handbook, and that policy is that every member is in covenant with every youth involved.

Potential Religious Education Building Tenant

Mike Hertel provided an update on this process stating that they have a potential tenant who would like to start renting in October. Currently, they have submitted a proposal. Mike stated there are a couple issues to work out, including the financial liability of the prospective tenant (verifying that they can pay their rent) and a licensure issue – taking a closer look at any violations they have had in the past. Another concern is that they have yet to file their 2022 tax return. Mike has met with Sarah Cannon, Rev Dawn Cooley, Rueben Benzel and Jennifer Gatz. John Russell volunteered to investigate the licensure issue with the state. The space they will be renting includes the entire 2nd floor of the RE building, the Commons building, as well as restrooms and a storage area. Mike stated that they are working through logistics.

Endowment Fund

Rueben stated that the Finance Committee would be updating the wording around the charter. They have this slated for next month and will put articles on Slack.

Transfer of Retirement Tasks/Responsibilities

Rueben advised that managing retirement transfers has previously fallen to the Treasurer and Mara Haium-White handles processing the payroll. Rueben suggested that Mara take on the responsibility of retirement transfers and that the Finance Committee had agreed to this. John Russell voiced a concern regarding the oversight of Mara, but Rev Dawn assured that the Finance Committee and the Treasurer provide oversight. There were no objections to this plan. Rueben also brought up the Finance Committee policies and if these should be reviewed as well. Discussion will continue at the next board meeting.

Reports & Approval

Jennifer stated that Rev Dawn's contract needed to be approved. A portion of the allowance would be advocated for housing (52.3%). Dawn advised that if her salary changes, the housing allowance would not. Total housing allowance for the year would be \$45,000.

Board Vote

Mike Hertel moved to approve, and none opposed.

Financial Report

Rueben Benzel led this discussion. He advised that next month we should see the building and moving expenses. YTD, we have \$40,000 pledged out of the budgeted \$293,000. He is keeping track of comparisons year to year as well as month to month. Budget categories have been updated on the operating statements. We spent nearly \$25,000 on projects. Insurance premium was paid in July.

Board Vote

Motion to approve the board meeting minutes from July – passed unanimously.

John Russell suggested voting on the approval of future meeting minutes in Slack and everyone agreed it was a good idea.

RE Director Report

Sarah Cannon reported that she had been spending time focusing on the background checks and communications with families. She submitted some curricular options which are being reviewed by the RE council. These include the OWL program among others.

Interim Minister Report

Rev Dawn Cooley advised that she has had substantial interactions with at least 50 members of the congregation. She has been warmly welcomed and is excited to be here! She stated that the Start Up workshop would run Sept 22nd & 23rd. Rev David Pyle will lead the workshop. She feels the workshop is important due to the loss of personnel. We need to be sure we understand roles and responsibilities going forward. She will send us more information when she receives it.

Sharon Chrust stated that Sarah's contract would need to be revised, since she has taken on the role of Lifespan Director. She questioned whether Sarah's involvement in board meetings would be regular. Rev Dawn advised that she and Sarah would work this out. Sharon also voiced her concern regarding the UUI website and that it needed work! Rev Dawn informed us that a consultant had been hired and revisions were being made.

Meeting Adjourned