

## September 2019 Meeting Minutes:

### Unity Church Unitarian: Meeting of the Board of Trustees September 14 , 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, Jackie Smith, Justin Cummins, Nancy Evert

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

**Guests:** Joan Carver

Jennifer Tong called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

An opening reading was offered by Jennifer Tong

A journaling prompt was offered by K.P.:

- Jesus's teachings were appr. 85% about money. Think about a moment where money was a formative experience for you.
- How are you formed by the fact that the creator will provide for all creatures as stated in the Bible?

#### **Monitoring Reports – ET report**

##### Policy II.E. Financial Condition:

***Ruth Kirkland moved to accept the Executive Team report as in compliance with policy II. E. The Financial Condition here refers specifically to the July financial reports. The motion passed unanimously.***

(Discussion: Our assets and liabilities are decreasing, as pledges are being paid and our debt is decreasing. We don't know yet when the Carrier donation is coming in. No drawdown has been taken yet.)

##### Policy II.E. Internal Controls:

***Justin Cummins moved to accept the Executive Team report as in compliance with policy II. E. Internal Controls. The motion passed unanimously.***

(Discussion: Barbara introduced the 26-page internal controls document (such as reviews, checks and balances, methods and procedures) instituted by an organization to

- a) conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner,
- b) safeguard its assets and resources,
- c) deter and detect errors, fraud, and theft,
- d) ensure accuracy and completeness of its accounting data,
- e) produce reliable and timely financial and management information, and
- f) ensure adherence to its policies and plans.

She pulled random documents and checks, tested them and confirmed that everything is done according to procedures and policies.

This internal testing was done also in preparation for the full audit which is being budgeted for next year in anticipation of the transition and the calling of a new senior minister. It will also boost confidence in donors that Unity has fiscal integrity. This is part of a succession plan and testing internal controls is being built into the annual monitoring schedule.)

### 2019-2020 Budget:

(Discussion: Some issues that were discussed:

- We will know much more about pledge projections when the Pledge Drive starts in October.
- In anticipation of the transition and upon review of expenses, the ET is taking a closer look at several areas for better alignment within the budget. Ideas include:
  - Eliminating the RE waiver. Scholarships will still be available to families in need.
  - Considering the possibility of choir fees
  - Looking at the timing of various initiatives
  - Incorporating the endowment drawdown back into the budget

Barbara is reaching out to Keith Kron at the UUA about setting the salary of the interim minister. K.P. and Lisa will be paid at 100% NACBA salary for associate ministers. A full audit is being planned for 2020 at \$12,000.)

### Ends Strategic Priorities:

(Discussion: The ET used some time at their retreat to write out interpretations of the new Ends. Several aspects were discussed:

- There is a change in the worship service: The Hymn of Affirmation has been eliminated, instead our music minister Ahmed Anzaldua will teach an a capella piece to the congregation.
- RE curriculum changes are happening around multiculturalism and racial justice.
- More than 100 members of the congregation have signed up for Chalice Circles and Karen Hering is creating the packets which include contributions from a diverse background of writers.
- As one of the new programs at Unity, there will be a gathering of 20 COA families as part of the UU Families Initiative's family covenant workshop to create rituals of faith formation.
- Another new initiative is a group of Teaching Associates who will facilitate faith formation in the congregation which goes beyond the UU elevator speech. Some of the intergenerational workshops will happen on Wellspring Wednesdays and in the chapel service.)

### **Break**

### **Prophetic Leadership – Subcommittee Reports**

#### Update on the Transition – Transition Subcommittee:

(Discussion: Patricia Conboy and Lia Rivamonte will be the co-chairs for the Celebration Task Force. More to come.)

Update on New Board Candidates – Board Capacity Subcommittee:

(Discussion: Joan Carver is joining us to be part of the conversation on new board members. Joan sat in on the interviews of the 11 candidates who applied.

John Steiner Manning gave a short review of the priorities that the board was looking for. Some of the aspects were: people of color, younger people and gender diverse people. Other priorities were: financial acumen, experience with continuity, direct communication skills and experience with change in management. Here are the recommendations for new board members: Alex Askew, Louise Livesay-Al, and Jennifer Tong)

***Nancy Evert moved to accept the new slate of Board candidates. The motion passed unanimously.***

Policy II.B. Update on Staff/Volunteer Survey Results – Evaluation Subcommittee:

***Jackie Smith moved to accept the Staff/Volunteer results as in compliance with Unity policy II. B. (Staff Treatment) The motion passed unanimously.***

(Discussion: Most respondents of the staff/volunteer survey were very positive and felt that Unity was in compliance with their policy of being an inclusive church and their values.

Only 7 members of the staff answered the staff survey out of 21. A follow-up meeting took place with Clover Earl and Rob Eller-Isaacs. Maybe in the future, the Board will require staff to fill out the survey and take steps to encourage it more directly.)

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.***

(Discussion: The Executive Team has been considering a variety of short- and long-term options for the duplex. For reasons of security, insurance liability and cash flow, we cannot leave it vacant. We asked for the expert advice of Alisa Lein and Matt Brown, church members who are professionals in property management and housing & renovation, respectively. With their help, a list of repairs and needed improvements has been created.

Given the improvements that were made to the upper unit a year ago before Kathryn Jay and family moved in, that unit is nearly ready to rent at market rate. The ET engaged a local property manager who has listed the unit, is showing the space and handling the application, screening and leasing process. There is hope that there will be tenants by October 1, which will provide cash flow for improvements to the lower unit and ongoing expenses. The ET will continue to discern options for the lower unit and for future use of this space.)

Policy II.B. Staff Changes: No staff changes

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

Approval of August 2019 Meeting Minutes:

***Justin Cummins moved to accept the August 2019 Meeting Minutes. The motions passed unanimously.***

## Team Dynamics Debrief:

(Discussion: Justin Cummins felt the gathering was a success and really good. He was missing that there was very little facilitation in our break-out session and no minutes were taken. The Board did not feel included as much as other areas of ministry. K.P. says that Team Dynamics will address the complexity with the Board in the future. The Beloved Community Staff Team will be confronted with this question. The Team Dynamics contract will be determined soon as we have spent a certain number of hours with them. The Board has to wait for next steps.

The “house of multiculturalism”, where race is the doorway, will be at the center of the work of the Unity’s ministry teams. The “iceberg” metaphor will be integrated into the RE curriculum this church year. Most board members thought the workshop was powerful and transformative.)

Jennifer Tong offered a closing reading.

Jennifer Tong adjourned the meeting at 12:20 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Jill van Koolwijk, secretary.*