

MINUTES

Board of Trustees: January 15, 2020 First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Martin Schmidt, President (2020); Claus Makowka, Treasurer (2020); Lynne Porterfield (2021); Scott Smith, Vice President (2021); Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary (2021); Ebe Emmons (2022); Sam Hens-Greco (2022); Sarah Benson (2020)

Board Members Absent: Julie Downs (2022)

Ex Officio Members: Rev. Constance Grant, Interim Minister

Visitors: Bob Mitchell

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

1. **CALL TO ORDER (7:14) (Martin)** Martin called the meeting to order.
2. **OPENING WORDS (Ebe)** from Anne Lamott.
3. **WELCOMING GUESTS (Martin)**
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS (Martin)**
 - a. Next Board meeting will be on February 19, 2020.
5. **CONSENT AGENDA (Martin) (handouts)**
 - a. Approval of December 18, 2019 meeting minutes. Approved as submitted.
 - b. Finance Committee December meeting minutes
 - c. Report of Building and Grounds 1/8/20 committee meeting. There was a strong opinion among committee members that the Morewood doors should be open on Sundays. Rev. Connie recommended delaying a decision on this until spring. Martin noted that the Safety Committee's recommendation is to keep the Morewood doors locked. The Building and Grounds committee is still need of people willing to step up to lead it.
 - d. Social Justice update (Sarah). PIIN has been responding to a racial incident that occurred in Swissvale in December by holding "one on one's" in the community. The PIIN Core Team is also planning to work on Get out the Vote..
6. **Vision, Identity, Mission (VIM) Update (Bob Mitchell) (7:32)** VIM is a standing committee of the Board that is concerned with discernment, planning, and priorities.
 - a. Annual conversations result in new priorities and a revised 3-year plan
 - b. Priority 1: Develop a strong sense of belonging for all.
 - c. Priority 2. Explore paths for meaningful First Unitarian/Community partnership.
 - d. How can VIM serve its function? schedule Board briefings, orient incoming Board members, participate in the Board retreat?
 - e. Action: Bob will send the updated 2019-2022 Strategic Plan to Rev. Connie for posting on the website.
7. **Governance update (Ebe) (8:21)** Ebe presented a draft revision of the first three Bylaws articles. She requested that Board members read the Bylaws and comment on them. Action: A subcommittee consisting of Connie, Ebe, Claus, and Eleanor will work on revising the Bylaws and will present a revised version for discussion at the February Board meeting.

8. Treasurer

- a. Approval of minister's housing allowance. Claus moved: Resolved, that effective January 1, 2020, a housing allowance of \$2,900/month for the calendar year ending December 31, 2020, is hereby designated, pursuant to section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. Martin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. Approval of position descriptions for Controller and Treasurer. Claus said that, as written, the position of Treasurer is policy focused while that of Controller is operations focused. The Controller would formally report to the minister. Claus said he would like general agreement on these roles so that the position descriptions can be sent to the Nominating Committee.
- c. Brian Ramsey bequest. Claus: Margaret Fuhrman, Brian's widow, requested that the Ramsey bequest to go to the Social Justice Endowment. Claus so moved. Martin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.
- d. Rick Wells bequest. Martin proposed that this bequest go to the Music Endowment. Sam seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

9. Rain garden funding request (Sam) (7:17). The rain garden would be installed right outside the Semple Room. There are potential conflicts with the geothermal pipes (5 feet below the surface) and with the Schoyer Oak. A bid has been received from Stormworks. We are \$6,420 short of the needed funding, even accounting for sweat equity. An additional \$1,875 is available from the Green Sanctuary Committee, leaving a \$4,545 shortfall. The sense of the Board was that it was premature to vote on this. The rain garden plan must be integrated with the replacement of the Ellsworth steps, positioning of the new exterior sign outside the Ellsworth entrance, and repositioning of the walkway between the Morewood and Ellsworth entrances. Action item: Sam will go back to the Committee to discuss coordinating these projects.

10. Date for informal Board dinner. (Martin). Best date was Sunday, Feb. 2 at 5pm at Khalil's on Baum Blvd. We have reservations.

11. Minister's Report (Connie). Document posted.

- a. A Congregational Experience is being planned for Sunday, March 1, from 12:00 -3:00 p.m. The goals are to encourage congregants to share their thoughts and feelings (in about 6 words) on what this congregation is and can be and to generate a congregational covenant that can become part of the Sunday-morning liturgy. Rev. Connie will facilitate. The event is co-sponsored by VIM and the Transition Team. Lunch will be provided. Rev. Connie proposed that the congregational covenant should be ratified by the congregation at the annual meeting.
- b. Share the Plate. The minister is responsible for managing this. She will look for input on the selection of recipients from a group of congregants, which Tony Rutigliano has agreed to chair.
- c. A Racial Justice Team will form, separate from PIIN. Its primary focus will be on the congregation's internal work on racial justice issues.
- d. The Learn Council is working on reframing and reorganizing the church library as a "Library Education and Resources Nook" that may be more useful to and more fully utilized by the congregation.
- e. The next RUaUU Orientation Toward Membership is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 1. About 6 people are already registered.
- f. Marion's Purse Minister's Benevolent Fund. Rev. Connie has spoken with the Treasurer, Finance Committee, Women's Alliance, and Pastoral Care Team about setting up a Minister's Discretionary Fund as a separate account of this name under the church's fiscal sponsorship. The minister would be the account signatory, and this would transfer to successive ministers. Guidelines for the establishment and ongoing operation of the account will be in keeping with the UUA's recommendations for such accounts (which are common in UU and other churches). The Women's Alliance Bequest Committee would decide, as they do now with the Marion's Purse

dedicated fund, whether and how much to contribute financially to the “new” fund. Most of the existing fund’s current balance of \$1,739 has been contributed by the Alliance. Rev. Connie proposed to introduce the “new” account to the congregation at a service on Feb. 16, at which new Pastoral Care Team members will also be introduced. Congregants will be invited to contribute to the account and advised how to do so. Future Christmas Eve offerings might be contributed to this account, as is the practice at many UU and other congregations.

- g. Ministerial search. Nominations to the Ministerial Search Committee will be solicited in the 5th week of January. This committee should broadly reflect the congregation. Two members will be selected by the Board and 5 by nominations from the congregation.

12. Other Business (Martin)

- a. Interim Progress Appraisal. The UUA requires congregations and interim ministers to complete this questionnaire after 6 months, after 12 months, and at the conclusion of the interim ministry. The Board and the minister complete the forms separately. Ebe and Eleanor volunteered to complete a draft version that would then be circulated to the rest of the Board. At the February Board meeting the two questionnaires will be discussed and edited if necessary, with the intention of submitting them to the UUA by the end of the month.

13. Adjournment (9:25)

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Board: 2/19/2020
Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary
