

MINUTES

Board of Trustees: August 19, 2020, Virtual Meeting First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Scott Smith, President (2021); Lynne Porterfield (2021); Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary (2021); Ebe Emmons, Vice-President (2022); Sam Hens-Greco (2022); Heather Masterson (2023); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023); Kate Snow (2023)

Board Members Absent: Julie Downs (2022)

Ex Officio Members: Rev. Constance Grant, Interim Minister

Visitors: Audrey Masalehdan, Claus Makowka

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

1. **Call to Order (7:01) (Scott)** Scott called the meeting to order.
2. **Opening Words (Sam).** From Fred Rogers.
3. **Welcoming Guests (Scott)** Audrey Masalehdan, Claus Makowka
4. **Announcements (Scott)**
 - a. Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop: Saturday/Sunday, October 24-25, 2020 (hosted by the Ministerial Search Committee)
 - b. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on September 16, 2020.
5. **Consent Agenda (Scott) (handouts)**
 - a. Approval of July 15, 2020 meeting minutes. Moved by Ebe. Seconded by Lynne. Approved as modified.
 - b. Preliminary 2021 Budget (document) (Kyle).
 - c. Investment Committee July meeting minutes (Kyle)
 - d. Finance Committee meeting minutes (Kyle)
6. **Pledge Drive Committee update (Audrey).** The Committee's first meeting is tomorrow night. Heather, as Board liaison, will help, as will Ebe and Kyle. Commitment Sunday will be on September 27. Next year, of the current committee members, only Maria Lauro will remain on the committee; Audrey, Betty Duquesnoy, and Ward Kelsey are retiring. The Board needs to establish a system for appointing new committee members, with staggered terms. As a separate issue, the Board needs to establish a planned giving committee.
7. **Q and A on proposed revisions to church Bylaws (document) (Ebe, Eleanor, Claus)** The Board will vote on the Bylaws revisions at the September meeting. There were several questions about the quorum and the minimum percentage vote that should be required to call a settled minister. Another proposal is to change the Board term to begin on July 1, rather than immediately after the Annual Congregational Meeting. The revised Bylaws establish a time lag (45 days) between when a new member signs the register and when they can vote, but do not specify that a new member must have made a gift or pledge before they can vote. However, a stipulation has been added that to remain on the membership roll, a member must have made a financial contribution of record (i.e., a contribution associated with the member by name) during the previous year. The Board President and Minister may grant waivers of this requirement.

- 8. Ratification of 7/28/20 e-mail vote to appoint Ministerial Search Committee negotiation team (Scott).** Kyle has advised us that under Pennsylvania state law, a Board vote that occurs by email needs to be unanimous. Motion to ratify the members of the Ministerial Search Negotiation Team. Motion by Scott, Second by Kate. Motion carried unanimously.
- 9. Approval of additional \$1,000 for the Ministerial Search Committee 2020 Budget. (Kyle)** Kyle said that, while the committee's budget for 2021 has not been established yet, it will most likely be reduced by \$1,000. Motion by Kyle, second by Eleanor. Motion carried unanimously.
- 10. Safety Committee.** It was noted that Kirk Striebich is currently the sole member of the safety committee. It was suggested that safety might become a function of the Building and Grounds Committee. Connie said that safety issues could be divided into the safety of the building and grounds themselves and the safety of people within the building and grounds.
- 11. Minister's Report (Connie) (7:55)**
 - a. 1-year interim progress appraisal. The 6-month interim progress reports have been posted to Dropbox. Both Connie and the Board now need to focus on how the interim process is going after 1 year. After each party completes the questionnaire, we will meet to discuss where we are. Scott said that he would send out a Doodle poll to try to schedule a Board meeting for early September to work on the 1-year progress appraisal.
 - b. Update on church membership. In response to a series of questions that Kyle had posed about new-member recruitment, Connie said that the minister has responsibility (delegated to the Membership Team) for tracking church visitors and recruiting new members. Improved systems to use Breeze to track and YouTube and the website to capture membership data are actively being developed. This is an ongoing process with continual room for improvement. Activities such as the RUaUU orientation toward membership and direct contact by the membership and engagement teams and the minister are critical factors in "converting" visitors into new members. Connie noted that of the 8 new members who had joined earlier this month, all had made pledges before joining, already had existing pledges, or were granted waivers.
- 12. Plans/procedures for Jessica Halperin interview (Scott, Lynne, Connie).** Connie said that she had spoken to Jessica on Monday. Jessica wants to proceed with her request for ordination. The congregation has the authority to ordain her, but the ordination would be recognized only by our congregation; it would not be transferrable to other UU congregations or recognized by the UUA. The Board will need to settle on the criteria it will use to recommend ordination. Jessica will be the guest speaker on Sunday, August 23, on the topic "Back to School Sunday: Being Brave and Taking Risks." Lynne reported that the Board's interview with Jessica is scheduled for Sunday, August 30, from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. Rev. Connie will be present at the interview. The Board will meet after the interview (date and time to be determined) to discuss next steps. Lynne will contact Jessica to confirm the interview date and time and will coordinate the interview questions.
- 13. PPP Loan/grant (Sam).** Sam said that he believes the Board, not the Finance Committee or the Treasurer, should decide whether the church should apply for forgiveness of the PPP loan. He said that the fundamental question should be "Did we really need this money? If not, should the church keep it or return it to the government?"

Kyle said that our bank has not yet released the application forms for loan forgiveness and the timeframe for applying for loan forgiveness is not yet known. He noted that the time period for expending the loan had been extended from 8 to 24 weeks and that this period has

not yet concluded. The loan funds are intended to cover payroll and utility costs. Although pledges have generally been tracking with expectations, there was a notable drop in pledge income in July compared with July of 2019, and we do not know how pledge income will hold up for the remainder of 2020. Sam asked when we will be able to say whether we needed the loan funds. Kyle said that this should be clearer by the end of the year.

14. Appreciation & Aspirations (All).

15. Adjourn (9:18) (Scott)

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary
(To be) Approved by the Board: _____
Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary
