

MINUTES

Board of Trustees: September 16, 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: Jim Reitz

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

1. **Call to Order (7:02) (Scott)** Scott called the meeting to order.
2. **Opening Words (Heather)** From Rev. Luke Stevens-Royer, White Bear, MN, UU Church
3. **Welcoming Guests (Scott)**
4. **Announcements (Scott)**
 - a. UUA Compensation Consultant Meeting: Sat., Sept. 19, 1:00 pm
 - b. Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop: Saturday, October 24, morning and afternoon; Sunday sermon Oct 25, 2020 (hosted by the Ministerial Search Committee)
 - c. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on October 21, 2020.
5. **Consent Agenda (Scott) (handouts)**
 - a. Approval of August 19, 2020, meeting minutes. Moved by Scott. Seconded by Kate. Approved as modified.
 - b. Finance Committee September meeting minutes. (Kyle)
6. **Interim Ministry Appraisal Report (Scott, Ebe).** The plan going forward is to formulate the notes from our September 13 meeting into answers to the questions in the appraisal questionnaire. The Board should be done with its appraisal in 2 to 2.5 weeks. Reverend Connie will also work on her appraisal, and toward the middle of October we will meet to discuss the two appraisal documents.
7. **Pledge Drive Committee update (Heather). (handout)** Over \$50,000 has been pledged so far from the Board and the Annual Pledge Drive Committee. The drive, themed “Keep on Moving Forward,” will officially launch on Sept 27. The committee has been meeting weekly. Board and committee members will call major donors. Since this year we cannot hand out pledge packets in person, each member/friend will receive a personalized e-mail requesting their pledge. The goal is to complete the drive by October 18. On that day we will also celebrate the 200th anniversary of First UU, with a special “crankie” performance at the Sunday service and a streamed concert at 4 p.m by Dr. James Johnson of the Afro-American Music Institute and his Jazz Trio and musicians from the congregation. Concert “tickets” will be free with a completed pledge.
8. **Draft Settled Minister Agreement (7:34) (Scott, Connie, Jim Reitz). (handout)** The Ministerial Search Committee has been working hard to create a true picture of the church, both positive and negative, our community, and our aspirations. The draft agreement is based on an initial draft prepared by the UUA. It spells out not only the salary and benefits that we

can offer but also our expectations for a new settled minister. Board members were asked to send their feedback on the agreement to Jim by email. After receiving feedback from the Board and Connie, the committee will send the draft to our UUA transitions coach, then to Connie again, and then back to the Board for approval at the October 21 Board meeting. The final agreement must be sent to the UUA by mid-November. Everything in red in the draft is something the committee added or changed. Everything in green is an important item that the Board should review. The committee will begin interviewing candidates in January.

- 9. Jessica Halperin ordination request – next steps (Scott, Connie, Lynne).** The Board met on Tuesday, Sept 8 to debrief following our interview with Jessica on August 30. Lynne said that she had talked with Jessica, who at the time was on the road to New Mexico to start her new position there. Jessica advised that she was still interested in pursuing fellowship with the UUA and planned to apply for a waiver of the internship requirement. Jessica is not sure what her path will be, but she had not been aware there would need to be a covenant between her and First UU. Connie said that she had reached out to Jessica via email and was waiting for a call back. Connie said that she thinks Jessica may be moving in another direction, since she is now in New Mexico. Connie also spoke with Keith Kron, the UUA transitions director, who indicated that the current transitional period is the right time to be proceeding with ordination and a covenant with Jessica, if that is what the church wishes to do. The Board agreed to suspend any further action until Connie talks to Jessica and we learn more about her current plans.
- 10. Initial draft of 2021 budget (Kyle).** Kyle presented a short slide show. He said that the draft budget assumes that the church will remain closed until July 2021 and that salaries and benefits (70% of the budget) will be held at 2020 levels. Pledges account for about 77% of the church's income. The draft budget projects a \$41,000 deficit, but that could change as we get more information. Rev. Connie said that the budget for the Settled Minister Search Committee could probably be trimmed as they will be doing most of their work virtually. The budget will be presented to the congregation at the Annual Budget Meeting on Sunday, December 6; Kyle will contact Cicely to put this meeting on the church calendar. The Board must vote to approve the budget in December, for implementation January 1.
- 11. Revision of Church ByLaws (Ebe, Eleanor). (handout)**
 - a. Discussion and vote on approval of proposed revised Bylaws**
 - i. We raised the percentage of those voting in the congregational meeting for calling a minister from 80% to 90%.
 - ii. Kyle had offered a policy about leave of absence for Board members, which has been incorporated.
 - iii. Sam had raised several questions.
 1. Non-discrimination clause. Sam was concerned that this could potentially create problems from a legal standpoint. No proposed change.
 2. Freedom of the pulpit. Rev. Connie explained that this is about the minister's responsibility to preach their truth as they understand it. Sam moved to strike the paragraph. No second was obtained.
 3. Should we require any called minister to be fellowshipped with the UUA? Sam moved to strike the clause stating that a called minister must be fellowshipped and a member of the UUMA. Second by Kyle. 7 in favor, 1 against. The motion

carried. Connie noted that these requirements can still be incorporated into the Settled Minister Agreement.

4. Motion to present the Bylaws to the congregation. Motion by Scott. Seconded by Kyle. Motion carried unanimously.

b. Scheduling of Special Congregational Meetings

- i. Q&A on changes to Bylaws (Sunday, November 8)
- ii. Vote to send bylaws to the congregation to approve changes (Sunday, November 15) Motion by Ebe. Second by Kyle. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Minister's Report (Connie) (8:57) (handout)

- a. She thought her newsletter column explaining the origin of the congregational covenant should be included in the Bylaws revision guide. Eleanor can add this to the bylaws revision guide document.
- b. Upcoming decision about extending church closure. No decision made.
- c. Winchester Thurston School has requested to put up tables on our Ellsworth lawn for student lunches. There was consensus agreement to allow this provided that the school provides us with a waiver of liability and indemnification in the event of a legal claim

13. Appreciation & Aspirations (All).

Each member should send an appreciative e-mail to the Board member next after them alphabetically by last name.

14. Adjourn (9:11) (Scott)

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Board: October 21, 2020
Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary
