

## MINUTES

### Board of Trustees: October 21, 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); Heather Masterson (2023); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023); Kate Snow (2023)

**Board Members Absent:** Julie Downs (2022); Sam Hens-Greco (2022)

**Ex Officio Members:** Rev. Constance Grant, Interim Minister

**Visitors:** Claus Makowka

**Others:** Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

1. **Call to Order (7:01) (Scott)** Scott called the meeting to order.
2. **Opening Words (Eleanor)** Two readings: “Stay together and stick together”; “Grace meets us where we are”
3. **Welcoming Guests (Scott)**
4. **Announcements (Scott)**
  - a. Beyond Categorical Thinking workshop: Saturday, October 24, morning and afternoon; Sunday sermon Oct 25, 2020.
  - b. Bylaws Q&A meeting: Sunday, Nov 8, 12:00-1:00 p.m.
  - c. Bylaws approval meeting: Sunday, Nov 15, 12:00-2:00 p.m.
  - d. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on November 18, 2020.
  - e. Scott reported that Julie Downs has resigned from the Board.
5. **Consent Agenda (Scott) (handouts)**
  - a. Approval of September 16, 2020, meeting minutes. Moved by Ebe. Seconded by Kyle. Approved unanimously.
  - b. Finance Committee October meeting minutes.
6. **Walk-through of voting process for Special Congregational Meeting to approve revised Bylaws (Claus).** We will vote using Election Buddy, the same system that was used at the Annual Congregational Meeting in May. Ballots in Election Buddy are secret; the system reports who voted and vote totals, but not how any individual voted. However, the voting process will be more complicated this time than it was in May.
  - a. Because amendments from the floor are allowed, a final ballot of all the questions to be voted on cannot be prepared in advance. For this reason, absentee ballots are not a viable option; instead, members unable to attend the meeting and vote for themselves may appoint a proxy representative to vote on their behalf.
  - b. The Election Buddy system has technical limitations. Voting members will need to have access to a device (computer, phone, or tablet) that allows them to connect to the Zoom meeting, access email during the meeting to receive ballots, and use a web browser to connect to the Election Buddy website to vote. Using two devices – one to connect to the Zoom meeting and a second one to access email and connect to the Election Buddy website to vote – is permissible and may be the easier option.

- c. The system will not allow more than one vote to be sent from one device. For this reason, two voting members in the same household, or a voting member who is also voting as a proxy representative, will need to use two different devices to vote.
  - d. Each ballot will be a separate “election” (thus, there will be multiple “elections” during the meeting). Each “election” will be open for about 10 minutes, after which the ballots will automatically be counted.
  - e. Scott will moderate the meeting. Ebe and Eleanor will shepherd most of the content. Connie will ask Nancy Latimer to help with the technical aspects of the Zoom meeting. Kyle agreed to be parliamentarian.
  - f. Documents relating to the Bylaws revisions will be posted on the church website. Questions about the revisions can be sent to a dedicated email address (BylawsQuestions@first-unitarian-pgh.org); all questions and answers will be posted on the website. In addition, a Q&A session will be held on Sunday, November 8 from 12:00-1:00 pm.
  - g. Claus estimated that the total cost to use Election Buddy at the 11/15 meeting will be about \$60.
- 7. Interim Ministry Appraisal Meeting (Scott).** Scott had sent the Board’s document to Rev. Connie; Connie has not reviewed the Board’s appraisal and will generate her document independently. Scott will send a Doodle Poll to set a date for the Board and Connie to meet. This is mostly about the congregation’s interim process, planning for the coming year and setting a course for the church; it is not an evaluation of the interim minister, but is concerned with how we are doing as a congregation during this interim period. We will aim for a two-hour meeting to be held in early November.
- 8. New Ellsworth Ave. Bike Lanes Proposal (Scott)** This initiative, which was considered a couple years ago, is coming up again. Sam is our main liaison with the various organizations with an interest in the initiative, and he attended a recent meeting. Other churches and businesses are also concerned about the proposal. We would like to retain our on-street parking, while still supporting biking. Scott said that so far there has only been an informational meeting, and no firm proposal has yet been put forward.
- 9. Ministerial Search Committee: Approval of Settled Minister Agreement (Scott) (handout).**
- a. The committee is tabulating the results from the cottage meetings. They will be making a video virtual tour of the church building, adhering to the limit of no more than 10 people in the building during filming.
  - b. Draft ministerial agreement. This is used as a basis for negotiation, including negotiation of salary. Rev. Connie has reviewed and commented on the draft agreement, and it was sent for review by the UUA, which had no comment. Once a final agreement is negotiated with the settled minister, the Board will need to vote to approve it. Motion to approve the draft agreement by Scott; seconded by Kyle. Approved unanimously.
- 10. Pledge Drive Committee update (Heather).** To date \$311,300 has been pledged by 103 pledging units. Based on last year’s numbers, there may still be 80 outstanding pledges. Sixteen major donors (\$2,000 or above) from last year have not pledged yet; they are being contacted. No Board help is needed at this point, but Heather will let us know.

**11. Planning for Bylaws meetings (Eleanor).** (handout.) See above. The notification to voting members without email will be mailed on Thursday, October 22, and will be sent to those with email on Sunday. The need for a quorum will be emphasized.

**12. Treasurer's report (Kyle) (handouts)**

- a. 3rd quarter Treasurer's report. Both spending and income are below budget; we are at a loss for the year, but that is what we had budgeted for. We continue to have more expenses than income while the church building remains closed.
- b. PPP loan update. The application period for loan forgiveness/grant is now open. We have up to 10 months to make a decision. Interest on the loan is 1%, which would be forgiven if we apply for and receive loan forgiveness. By January we may know more about the effects of the pandemic on the church's financial situation. Kyle proposed deferring action until one of two things happens: we find ourselves in a dire financial situation, or the deadline is approaching and we need to make a decision.
- c. Investments are roughly back to their pre-pandemic value.
- d. Work continues on developing the 2021 budget, which will be based on the assumption that we will not reach the \$415,000 pledge drive goal. The Ministerial Search Committee's budget has been reduced to \$10,000. Health insurance costs are likely to increase in 2021. The music directors have already received a 1% pay increase. A reserve of \$9,000 is available if needed to cover a budget gap. We can also handle a small loss in the budget for 2021.
- e. Kyle noted that he will be absent for the November Board meeting.

**13. Minister's Report (Connie) (handout)**

- a. Extension of church building closure. Connie recommended extending the closure through the program year (i.e., until June 14, 2021). During that time, necessary gatherings of up to 10 people may occur in the building at the minister's discretion. Motion to extend the building closure to June 14, 2021, in line with the UUA's standing recommendation (<https://www.uua.org/safe/pandemics/gathering-guidance>); the date may be adjusted depending on conditions. Also motion to establish a task force to develop appropriate procedures for regular in-person gatherings once that becomes advisable. Moved by Scott, seconded by Kyle. Motion carried unanimously.
- b. Building re-opening task force. Connie will have some recommendations for congregants who might be invited to join the task force, perhaps 4–6 people with relevant expertise, as well as outside resources. Board members may pass recommendations on to Connie. If possible, the group should be established by the end of 2020. There may be some expenses associated with re-opening the building.
- c. The church building has been mandated to serve as a polling place on November 3. COVID-19 mitigation measures will be in place. Connie will consult with Sam Hans-Greco on safety and security measures.
- d. The UU Central East Region has advised being on guard for possible civil unrest and disturbances during and after the election. We may need to consider adding additional security.
- e. Update on Jessica Halperin ordination request. Connie followed up with her. Jessica has now moved to New Mexico. The Board has put the discussion on hold until we hear back from her about what a covenant with the congregation would look like in relation to

possible ordination. An update on this issue will be included in the weekly email newsletter to keep the congregation informed.

- f. Launch of the redesigned church website had to be delayed for a few days, but should happen next week.

**14. Appreciation & Aspirations (All).**

**15. Adjourn (9:00) (Scott)**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary  
Approved by the Board: November 18, 2020  
Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary

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