

Board Motions Passed May, 2020–April, 2021

May, 2020

Martin Schmidt raised some funds for the sign project, and in March, 2019, the Board agreed to cover the difference, up to a cap, from endowment funds. Additional costs for installation and fees came to \$4,278, which was not on the initial invoice (which covered the cost of fabrication only). Asking the congregation for donations to cover these additional costs seems not such a good idea during the pandemic, and since the sign is already up. Claus suggested that the necessary funds could come from the Simons Future Fund, which is for capital expenses. Motion to approve \$4,278 from the Simons Future Fund to cover additional costs for the new exterior sign. Moved by Martin Schmidt. Seconded by Scott Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

June, 2020

Approval of revised Finance Committee charter to establish the role and duties of Controller on the committee. Scott Smith moved to approve the revised Finance Committee charter. Kate Snow seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Controller position description in order to clarify the roles of Treasurer (a Board member) and Controller (volunteer staff position reporting to the minister). The Treasurer is responsible for financial oversight, the Controller for day-to-day financial management. Both the Treasurer and Controller are check signatories. Amended Section 2 of position description: “The Treasurer and the Controller shall work cooperatively on the budget.” Add Item 15: “Controller will serve as a member of the Finance committee.” Motion by Scott Smith to approve the position description as amended. Seconded by Kyle Gracey. Motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Claus Makowka to Controller position. Motion to approve by Kyle Gracey. Seconded by Kate Snow. Motion carried unanimously.

Appointment of Kyle Gracey, Treasurer, to Investment Committee. This committee is responsible for managing investment decisions. Its charter requires that a Board member serve as a committee member. Motion by Scott Smith. Seconded by Sam Hens-Greco. Motion carried with one abstention (Kyle Gracey).

The congregation is entitled to appoint up to 5 delegates (in addition to minister and LRED) to the virtual UU General Assembly, June 24– 28. Two notices had been placed in the weekly email blast inviting volunteers to contact Lynne Porterfield. Only Kyle Gracey had responded. Motion by Scott Smith to approve Kyle Gracey, Ebe Emmons, and Lynne Porterfield as delegates. Seconded by Heather Masterson. Motion carried unanimously.

Currently the church building is closed at least until August 31. Rev. Connie noted that there is a tension between the longing to be together and the safety of doing so. She recommended extending the closure until at least December 31. The UUA is recommending that congregations plan for closure through May, 2021. We could also state that we are not taking rentals through May, 2021. Sam Hens-Greco suggested that criteria be developed as to when the building can open for different activities. Scott Smith moved to extend the building closure at least through

December 31 and to not accept rental reservations from outside groups until further notice. Seconded by Lynne Porterfield. Motion carried, 4 in favor and 3 against, with one abstention.

July, 2020

Request for ordination from Jessica Halperin. Jessica Halperin had emailed Rev. Connie asking whether First U would be willing to ordain her as a minister, if possible by September. Under congregational polity, congregations have the ultimate authority to decide who to ordain. However, Rev. Connie noted that the UUA does not recommend ordaining someone who has not been fellowshipped. Such an ordination would be recognized only by our church and would not be transferable to another UU congregation. Motion by Sam Hens-Greco that the Board consider ordaining Jessica Halperin pending an interview with her. Seconded by Lynne Porterfield. In favor: 7, opposed 1. Motion carries.

Rev. Connie requested approval of a proposal for the Minister's Benevolence Fund, which includes setting up a checking account controlled solely by the Minister. Added to the proposal: that disbursements and documentation will be given to the Treasurer. Any disbursements to church employees must be recorded through payroll. Recipients will sign for disbursements of cash and gift cards. Motion to approve the proposal by Scott Smith; seconded by Ebe Emmons. Carried unanimously.

August, 2020

Ratification of 7/28/20 e-mail vote to appoint Ministerial Search Committee negotiation team. Kyle Gracey 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 Smith, Second by Kate Snow. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of additional \$1,000 for the Ministerial Search Committee 2020 Budget. Kyle Gracey 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 Gracey, second by Eleanor Mayfield. Motion carried unanimously.

September, 2020

Revision of Church ByLaws. Motion to present the Bylaws to the congregation. Motion by Scott Smith. Seconded by Kyle Gracey. Motion carried unanimously.

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 Emmons. Second by Kyle Gracey. Motion carried unanimously.

October, 2020

Approval of Draft Settled Minister Agreement to be 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 Smith; seconded by Kyle Gracey. Approved unanimously.

Extension of church building closure. Rev. Connie recommended extending the closure through the program year, 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, which is in line with the UUA's standing recommendation; 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 Smith, seconded by Kyle Gracey. Motion carried unanimously.

November, 2020

E-mail votes since October meeting, for the record. All these votes were unanimous, as they are required to be.

- a. Approval of up to \$3,500 for replacement of the garden shed (10/30)
- b. Appointment of delegates to Pittsburgh Cluster Assembly (11/6): Barbara Litt, Chris Michaels, Lynne Porterfield, Becky Studer.
- c. Withdrawal of congregational covenant vote at 11/15 Special Congregational Meeting (11/11). Scott Smith moved to ratify the e-mail votes. Ebe Emmons seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

December, 2020

E-mail votes since November meeting, for the record. On Dec. 4 the Board voted unanimously by email to increase the lower bound of the salary range for the new settled minister. Motion to ratify the email vote. Moved by Scott Smith. Seconded by Kyle Gracey. Carried unanimously.

The Board voted to confirm Lee Carnes to fill the Board seat vacated by Julie Downs. Motion by Scott, seconded by Kate. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of draft 2021 Budget. Kyle Gracey is still projecting income of about \$493,000 and costs of about \$544,000 for 2021, resulting in a deficit of about \$50,000 that will be covered in part by the 2019 surplus as well as by de-obligating some reserve funds. No cuts in programs, salaries, or benefits are being proposed, but there will be no increases either. Motion to approve the 2021 budget by Kyle Gracey, seconded by Eleanor. Motion carried unanimously.

January, 2021

Other than approval of the December, 2020, minutes, no motions were passed.

February, 2021

Ratification of e-mail votes taken in January.

- 1) Motion to confirm Julie Downs to serve on the Board of Trustees in the seat vacated by Ebe Emmons as of February 1, 2021; term to end in 2022. Passed unanimously.
 - 2) Motion to confirm Heather Cunningham to fill the seat on the Nominating Committee vacated by Michael Safran, term ending in 2022. Passed unanimously.
- Motion to ratify both votes by Lynne Porterfield, seconded by Kyle Gracey. Carried unanimously, with one abstention.

Board Vice President to replace Ebe Emmons. Heather Masterson is willing to fill that role for the remainder of the year. Scott Smith moved to approve Heather Masterson as Vice President through June 30, 2021; seconded by Kate Snow. Carried unanimously, with one abstention.

Creation of Planned Giving Committee. At its February meeting the Board expressed support for creating a Planned Giving Committee. Kyle Gracey therefore drafted a committee charter, using governance document guidelines. He ran the draft by the Finance Committee, which made no edits. The charter states that the committee's purpose is to design policies around, solicit, and secure planned gifts to improve the church's revenue. It includes a standard definition of planned giving and makes clear that this aspect of giving is separate from the annual budget drive. The committee will report to the Board and will exist in perpetuity unless the Board alters or eliminates it. The Minister is an ex-officio member of the committee. There would also be a Board liaison to the committee. The committee would report during the Annual Congregational Meeting. The Nominating Committee could propose members of the committee, on which the Board would vote. Alternatively, the Board could nominate and vote on members of the committee. The committee may have less than the suggested seven members, perhaps as few as three to begin with. There is no apparent reason for coordination between annual budget drive and the Planned Giving Committee. No term limits for service on the committee were proposed at this point. Kyle Gracey moved to approve the Committee charter. Seconded by Sam Hens-Greco. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget allocation to cover Morewood Doors cost overrun. In 2019 we contracted for renovations and safety improvements to the Morewood Avenue entrance doors. There was a substantial cost overrun because a subcontractor billed the contractor, and the bill was paid before it was determined that the amount billed was in excess of the estimate. Several people have tried to recover the funds, but since the money has already been paid the request for reimbursement has not been successful. This has brought about some process changes in the Finance Committee, increasing policies and procedures for how invoices and other financial transactions are approved to avoid similar experiences in the future. Some monies need to be moved/approved to pay for this cost overrun. This can come from endowments for capital projects, which will not affect the annual budget. Kyle Gracey moved to approve the transfer of \$8,032.35, to cover the cost overrun. Scott Smith seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Rev Connie requested that the Board convene a Special Congregational Meeting to approve the draft congregational covenant. She suggested scheduling the meeting for Sunday, March 21, at 12:00 noon. The covenant language was initially part of the Bylaws ratification vote in November, but was pulled when questions were raised about the place of the covenant in congregational life and the process of creating it. Now it is being brought back to the congregation, with additional background information. A task force made up of members of the Worship Committee and Transition Team determined that they were not interested in changing the wording of the covenant, but in bringing it forward to the congregation for a vote. An informational Q&A meeting will be held on Sunday, March 14, at 3:00 p.m. Task force members will participate in the discussion at both the Q&A session and the congregational meeting a week later. Claus Makowka will be asked to set up an online vote. Scott Smith moved to call a Special Congregational Meeting on March 21 at 12:00 noon for the purpose of voting on whether or not to adopt the proposed covenant. Kate Snow seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

March, 2021

Following the Q&A session regarding the Special Congregational Meeting on the proposed covenant, a vote was taken to withdraw the covenant. Motion by Eleanor Mayfield: Motion that (a) the proposed congregational covenant be withdrawn and (b) the Special Congregational Meeting scheduled for Sunday, March 21, to vote on adopting the covenant be canceled. Seconded by Heather Masterson. Motion carried 5-4.

Extension of church building closure until September. Kyle Gracey moved to empower the Safe Reopening Task Force to prepare a recommendation to the Board with what reopening might look like, with potential timelines, procedures, and protocols for each activity, e.g., Sunday services and event rentals, to occur. They are to make a progress report at the April Board meeting. Seconded by Lynne Porterfield. Motion carried unanimously.

Proposed Bylaws amendment re: voting procedures at congregational meetings. Motion by Eleanor Mayfield: Amend Article IV, Section 6, of the Bylaws to read: “At the discretion of the Board of Trustees, as announced in advance of any Congregational Meeting, Members may vote by secure online ballot, absentee ballot, or proxy. Voting procedures will be explained in the meeting notice. A Member may hold up to two (2) proxies at a given Congregational Meeting.” Seconded by Kyle Gracey. Motion carried unanimously. This change must be approved by the congregation at the Annual Congregational Meeting in May.

Motion by Kyle Gracey to apply for loan forgiveness. Seconded by Eleanor Mayfield. With Kyle Gracey’s agreement, Scott Smith proposed and so moved the following amendment: “The First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh will pay back in full the Federal Paycheck Protection (PPP) loan it received in 2020, using funds reserved for that purpose. This amount will include both the principle (\$71,200) and any interest accrued on the loan to date.” Seconded by Sam Hens Greco. A lengthy discussion ensued. Vote on the amendment: 7 in favor, 1 against, 1 abstention. Amendment carried. Because the amendment was proposed with the agreement of the mover of the original motion, its approval superseded a vote on the original motion. The loan will be repaid.

April, 2021

The Board voted to accept all appointees to the Endowment Committees and to the Annual Budget Drive Committee, as presented by the Nominating Committee:

Endowment Committees

Music: Cory Layman

Social Justice: Delia Parks

Children & Youth: Jamie Kunning

Campus Ministry: On hiatus

Annual Budget Drive Committee

Madeline Darnell

Eleanor Mayfield

Lynne Porterfield

Al Schwartz

Scott Smith
Ward Kelsey, continuing through 2021
Maria Lauro, continuing through 2021
Heather Masterson, Board liaison
Kyle Gracey, Board Treasurer

Motion by Scott Smith to approve the nominees; seconded by Kyle Gracey. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board voted to correct a typographical error in the recently approved Bylaws: In Article IX, Section 3, "as specified in Article IV, Section 3" should be corrected to read "as specified in Article IV, Section 4." This correction will be presented to the congregation for a vote as an amendment to the Bylaws at the Annual Congregational Meeting on May 23. Motion by Eleanor Mayfield, seconded by Scott Smith, to approve the amendment. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board authorized the creation of a Reimagining Fund Raising Task Force, based on a proposal presented by Board President Scott Smith. Scott Smith and Board Vice President Heather Masterson will co-convene the task force. The minister will also be invited to engage with the task force. Motion by Scott Smith, seconded by Sam Hens-Greco. Motion passed unanimously.

Following a recommendation from our Safe Reopening Task force and guidance from the UUA, in consideration of the mission and the values of our church, and with safety and inclusivity our primary goals, we plan to extend closure of the church building and grounds through August, 2021. If the current situation changes, including such factors as vaccination rate and sustained and significant reduction of the spread of disease, this date may be adjusted. The Board requested that the Safe Reopening Task Force prepare a report, prior to the May Board meeting, that answers the following questions:

- What objective and subjective criteria do you think would need to be achieved for at least a limited (e.g., adults only) resumption of services?
- What types of church-sponsored activities, on church grounds and off, indoors and outside, do you think would be feasible prior to the resumption of at least limited in-person services? What objective and subjective criteria do you think would need to be achieved for these to occur?

Motion by Scott Smith, seconded by Kyle Gracey. Motion passed unanimously.