

## MINUTES

### Board of Trustees: June 16, 2021, Virtual Meeting First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

**Board Members Attending:** Scott Smith, President (2021); Lynne Porterfield (2021); Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary (2021); Julie Downs (2022); Lee Carnes (2022); Sam Hens-Greco (2022); Kate Snow (2023); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023)

**Board Members Absent:** Heather Masterson, Vice President (2023)

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

**Others:** Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

**Visitors:** Incoming Board members Rob Schwartz (2024) and Bob Mitchell (2024). Peggy Parsons.

1. **Call to Order (7:03) (Scott)** Scott called the meeting to order.
2. **Opening Words (provided by Lynne Porterfield)** Mary Oliver, excerpt from her poem “Hallelujah” via First Light Meditation.
3. **Welcoming guests (Scott)**
4. **Announcements (Scott)**
  - a. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.
  - b. Thanks for sending thank-yous to the ministerial search and contract negotiation teams. It was appreciated.
  - c. Special thanks to Lee Carnes for taking the lead in organizing the appreciation event for Rev. Connie, who stated that she thought it was lovely. Lee added his thank you for the “group effort.”
5. **Consent agenda (Scott) (handouts)**
  - a. Draft minutes
    - i. Motion by Scott, seconded by Kate, to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2021, Board meeting. Approved with 7 yes votes, one abstention.
    - ii. Minutes of May Finance Committee meeting, Investment Committee first quarter investment report (accepted, no vote).
6. **Ratification of email votes**
  - a. A June 5 email vote authorized Scott Smith to sign an agreement with Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority to replace the church-owned portion of the water line should it be deemed to be a lead line when they dig up the street.
  - b. Ratification of email vote moved by Scott, seconded by Kyle. Approved unanimously.
7. **Building and Grounds Committee (Sam)**
  - a. Update from Martin Schmidt regarding the wall on Morewood: We have agreed with the neighbor to split the cost. Our share is ~\$3,000, and work will start in 3–4 weeks. The neighbor, Nancy Seifert, has made arrangements for the stone masons to take care of this.

- b. Geothermal HVAC system: Martin Schmidt, Bob Mitchell, Gordon Hargreaves, and Sam Hens-Greco met to discuss contacting Iams Engineering, which designed the geothermal HVAC system, and Century Mechanical, the company that built and installed the system. It's not clear that there has been maintenance or if we have authorized a maintenance contract for 2020–21. There has been maintenance on an emergency basis. Bob shared that he had a phone call with Jonathan Iams about ventilation in conjunction with reopening. His company lost a lot of records in September 2018 due to a computer virus. Jonathan Iams appeared to be willing to meet again discuss ventilation, and specifically air exchange rates, in different parts of the building. We would also like to talk to him about getting a copy of an operations manual for the HVAC system. Bob is working with Mary Schinhofen to get drawings and other materials related to the HVAC system that Ray had in his possession. He also said that Jonathan Iams had reported that the system was designed to meet pre-Covid CDC standards. Peggy Parsons said it is important that all rooms that will be used when the church building reopens meet the current CDC ventilation standard.
- c. Installation of welcome desk. The new desk has been installed and paid for. Sam will reach out to Chris Michaels, who donated the desk as a memorial to her husband, Dick, and to Rev. Kate to discuss having a ceremony to formally “install” the desk.
- d. Rain garden. That project has been terminated because of a potential conflict with the underground wells for the geothermal system. Sam will reach out to Jane McLeod, who donated the funds for the rain garden, about her preferences for reallocating the money.
- e. Sam is trying to set up another meeting with Building and Grounds in the next 30–60 days.

**8. Investment Report (Kyle) (handout)**

The committee met for the second time this year. The church's investments have recovered their value since the market drop in early 2020. The committee has been looking into moving more investments into socially responsible funds. The current total value of all endowment funds is about \$3,000,000; however, most of these funds have substantial restrictions on how the money can be spent. We have money for capital projects both through capital-specific funds in our endowment, and through capital accounts in our operating budget.

**9. Giant Eagle Card Audit (Kyle).**

About 2 months ago the Finance Committee noticed a discrepancy between the number of cards on hand and what was showing on the books. He and Claus Makowka have done an audit, helped by the minister and staff. The audit has established that we are short about \$2,000 worth of cards. This seems to be due to a lack of proper accounting; there is no evidence that any cards were stolen. The discrepancy appears to date back to before the closure of the church building due to the pandemic. The amount of the discrepancy will have to be written off, as there is no other mechanism for closing the accounting gap. Going forward, we will have to track card sales more accurately. Some new procedures will be instituted once we go back to “in-person” card sales. Periodic audits will be done to catch any new discrepancies earlier.

**10. Ministerial Transition Team (Julie)**

The team would like to request funds for a welcome event (which may be held either in person or via Zoom, depending on where we are with reopening the building) and a welcome basket (about \$150). Funds left over from the ministerial search (\$1545.89) would normally be returned as unallocated. Scott proposed that the team come back to the Board with a specific proposal and dollar amount. Julie agreed to report back with this information by the

July Board meeting. The tentative date for the welcome event is August 8, the first Sunday on which Rev. Kate will be delivering a sermon. The service will probably be live-streamed, but it might be possible to hold the welcome gathering outside after the service.

#### **11. Reimagining Fundraising Task Force update (Scott)**

The task force will hold its first meeting on Tuesday, June 22. Members: Kyle Gracey, Heather Masterson, Lynne Porterfield, Scott, Ward Kelsey, Maria Lauro, Al Schwartz, Randy Weinberg.

#### **12. Final Interim Ministry Report (Scott).**

This is in process. It will be an update of the prior two reports, and there are just a couple questions that need to be expanded upon. Connie will also be filling out a 2-year report, and there will be a discussion to compare the two.

#### **13. Debrief Annual Congregational Meeting (Scott, Eleanor)**

Scott wanted to thank everyone. The vote on the Bylaw amendments went smoothly. The slates of candidates were approved. We need to get another person trained on Election Buddy in addition to Claus Makowka. The vote count was time consuming. In the future, we should invite people to chat while waiting for the voting results to be announced.

#### **14. Minister's Report (Connie) (handout)**

- a. Worship service leaders and topics have been scheduled through July. At Rev. Kate's request, Connie has coordinated the service schedule through Labor Day.
- b. The Membership Team is planning a gathering in the fall to welcome new members and provide the opportunity for them to meet each other and Rev. Kate.
- c. The Zoom social gathering after services will continue through the summer, coordinated by Nancy Latimer and a couple other people.
- d. Rev. Connie is coordinating Share the Plate through the fall.
- e. Erica is taking vacation time in July. She is also coordinating Zoom sessions for kids and families while she is away. She is preparing to offer the Our Whole Lives sexuality education program in the fall; due to the sensitivity of the program content, this group needs to meet in person. Erica is also culling the library to eliminate some obsolete books and make space for more timely works.
- f. The Minister's Benevolence Fund will be transferred to Rev. Kate.
- g. Connie will be working remotely from June 24–30 and on vacation in July. She will be available via phone, email, or text for emergencies and pastoral care. Martin Schmidt is arranging for the work that Rev. Kate has requested (in the Minister's office, on the floor of the Minister's bathroom, and on the surface of the pulpit) to be done in July.
- h. Credentials of GA delegates. Kyle, Claus, and Lynne have already been approved as delegates. Ebe Emmons has also expressed an interest in serving as a delegate. Vote to approve Ebe as a GA delegate. Motion by Kyle, second by Julie. Motion carried unanimously.
- i. Thanks to everybody for the Appreciation event. This has not been the year that any of us expected. All-in-all, however, it's been a pretty good year.

**10. Board transition.** There will be a meeting of the new Board in early July. Heather will send a poll out to set up a meeting to elect next year's officers.

#### **11. Appreciations and Aspirations (All)**

**12. Adjourn (Scott) (8:12)**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary  
Approved by the Board: July 21, 2021  
Eleanor Mayfield, Secretary

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