

# Minutes

## Board of Trustees: November 17, 2021, Virtual Meeting

### First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

**Board Members Attending:** Julie Downs (2022); Lee Carnes, Vice President (2022); Sam Hens-Greco (2022); Heather Masterson, President (2023); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023); Kate Snow, Secretary (2023); Bob Mitchell (2024); Rob Schwartz (2024), Amy DeChicchis (2024)

**Board Members Absent:** none

**Ex Officio Members:** Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

**Others:** Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

**Visitors:** none

1. **Call to Order (7:01) (Heather)**
2. **Opening Words (Kyle).** In anticipation of Thanksgiving words attributed to the Sioux people.
3. **Welcoming Guests (Heather)**—no guests
4. **Announcements (Heather)**
  - a. Annual Budget meeting, Sunday, December 15, 12:00 pm via Zoom
  - b. UUA Workshop: “Compass: Navigating the Paths of Liberation Together” December 11 and 12.
  - c. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.
  - d. Start-up Retreat. Rev. Sunshine will facilitate.
    - i. Saturday, January 8, 2022, 12:00pm-4:00pm; Board of Trustees (BOT) 1:00pm-1:30pm. Congregation 2:00pm-4:00pm.
    - ii. Saturday, January 22, 2022, 10:00am to 4:00 pm. (Leadership 10am-12:00pm, BOT 1:00pm-4:00pm)
    - iii. Sunday, January 23, 2022. Worship co-led by Reverends Sunshine and Walker
  - e. Rev. Dr. Kate Walker’s Installation: Sunday, May15, 2022
  - f. Annual Meeting Sunday, May 22, 2022
5. **Consent Agenda (Heather) (handouts).**
  - a. October 20, 2021 Board meeting minutes. Motion to approved as amended, by Heather, seconded by Rob. Approved unanimously.
  - b. Minutes of the November Finance Committee meeting.
  - c. 3rd Quarter Investment Report
  - d. Annual Budget Drive Committee Report. We are where we typically are at this time. There is still additional work to be done.
  - e. Building and Grounds Committee Report
  - f. Minister’s Report
6. **Ratification of e-mail vote: “Food for indoor gatherings” (handout). (Heather)** Move by Heather, second by Kyle. Motion carries unanimously.

7. **Report on November 6 Pittsburgh Cluster Assembly (Heather).** Held virtually on November 6. Keynote speaker was Paula Cole Jones. The theme was on the proposed 8<sup>th</sup> principle: dismantling systemic racism and oppression. We had 5 delegates at the business meeting. There was a vote that the Cluster congregations could enter into a period of study and discernment of the 8<sup>th</sup> principle and vote as a cluster to adopt or reject at the meeting in 2022. This does not obligate or commit individual congregations. The Racial Justice Task Force may adopt this as part of their mission statement.
8. **Status of the VIM (Vision, Identity, Mission) discernment process in relation to climate justice as a possible unifying theme (Bob).** VIM team met on October 28. They are looking for champions for the different justice areas within the church, including facilitation of discerning the interests of the church on climate justice. They are formulating possible open questions. Those who are champions of particular interests could create videos to be shown at Sunday morning services, as a way to draw out individuals in the church who are interested in justice issues, specifically as it relates to intersectionality. Meetings will be set up in January and February. Lee attended as Board liaison.
9. **Update on 2022 Budget (Kyle) (Handout)** We are getting close to a final version of the budget. Some changes from last month: mostly minor. The biggest change was an increase in Rita's salary to better match her job description and years of service, which is partially offset by a decrease in our medical insurance costs for her. It is still a balanced budget. Rob: Does Marketing and Communication have a budget? Kyle: The marketing budget is listed under Public Relations, and Kyle is open to receiving any changes from what it was this year. Heather: She will talk with Kyle about some budget help for funding development and canvas expenses in light of the new fund raising focus.
10. **Update on financing options for solar panels (Kyle) Handout.** Jim Pashek provided information on some of our options for financing. Kyle's document outlines some sources for funding in-house. Our current capital funds could almost cover this entirely without impacting operations. Some of the loans have very low rates, as low as 1%, so if we were approved for a low-interest loan, we could actually earn more from the money in interest than what we would be paying for the loan. The solar panels would also save us on electricity cost.
  - a. Rev Kate: She is curious if there might be grants available. Kyle isn't aware of any. We don't qualify for tax credits.
  - b. Sam: He favors the congregation having some "skin in the game" (partial funding as a capital campaign); maybe in conjunction with other funding. He volunteers to help with that.
  - c. Bob: He supports the idea of fundraising and grants, and less from the capital funds.
  - d. Lee: What was the last capital campaign, and what did we learn from it? The last big one was 1998-2000 Garden Lobby. The success centered on a goal of accessibility to the church.
  - e. Amy: She would like to have a named fund raiser, perhaps honoring Ray Schinhofen, who was initially involved in starting the green sanctuary movement; perhaps the Ray Schinhofen Memorial Solar Panels.
  - f. Rob: He also likes the idea of people having some skin in the game, but perhaps wait until we have people back in the building.

- g. Heather: We need a sense of the time line. Kyle: The longer we wait, the estimated costs may change. The funding sources may be different. Otherwise, there are no major risks to waiting.
  - h. Rob: Is there a reason to wait to apply for a low-interest loan? No.
  - i. Rob: Initial motion that the Board support the recommendation to purchase and install solar panels. This is support of the idea, and to move forward with coordination. This will include applying for the low-interest loan. Heather second. Discussion: First: is to direct the Finance Committee to apply for the loan. Second: directing the Stewardship committee to put together a fundraising plan, in coordination with Building and Grounds and the Finance Committee. Lee: wants to make sure that the congregation is fully informed. Bob: also wants the congregation on board. Kyle: For congregational input, this idea should go into the newsletter. This could also be presented at the upcoming budget meeting. The motion is modified for the Board to proceed with investigating funding, getting congregational input/buy-in, and applying for the loan. Motion by Kyle. Second by Bob. Motion carries unanimously.
11. **Addition of Archived Charters Folder In Charters Folder (Kate)** As the charters are revised, the old versions will go into the Archived Folder, so they can remain in SharePoint and are accessible.
  12. **Ideas/suggestions for additional members of the Marketing and Communications and Stewardship committees. (Rob, Heather) (8:21)**
    - a. Marketing and Communications. They need one additional member. Currently Mark and Nancy. Several names were suggested.
    - b. Stewardship (9 members on the committee). There are three open slots to consider in January. Several names were suggested.
    - c. Rob and Heather will discuss contacting these people.
  13. **Update by Reopening Implementation Working Group regarding in-person services (RIWG) (8:34). (Kyle, Bob, Kate, Julie)** In-person services: They are developing a series of recommendations, to be ready for the next board meeting. Bob: He expresses a note of caution, with increasing infection rates. Rob: His experience with the Bach Choir, and the knowledge that some churches, including North Hills UU, are meeting in person, suggests to him that meeting in person for us is possible, even within the evidence-based constraints. We need to consider the emotional aspect of coming together, as long as we are vaccinated and masked. He would love for us to have a Christmas service. Amy: We will have to learn to live with this, because it will be with us. Rev Kate: She is hearing a lot of frustration from people. She is in discussions with the tech team with being able to go “multi-platform,” so we can get to everyone. This may happen in January. Kyle: We can save vaccination status in Breeze. Rev. Kate: Christmas Eve service is pretty well in place as pre-recorded.
  14. **Thanksgiving gratitude (All)**
  15. **Adjourn (Heather) (9:00)**

Respectfully submitted,  
 Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary  
 Approved by the Board: December 15, 2021  
 Kate Snow, Secretary