

Minutes

Board of Trustees: January 19, 2022, 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); Rob Schwartz (2024); Amy DeChicchis (2024); Bob Mitchell (2024)

Board Members Absent: none.

Ex Officio Members: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Kirk Striebich, Peggy Parsons

1. **Call to Order (7:01) (Heather)**
2. **Opening Words (Heather)** from “The Call of Our Faith”
3. **Welcoming Guests (Heather)**
4. **Announcements (Lee)**
 - a. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, February 16, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.
 - b. Start-up Retreat, Part 2 (Lee)
 - i. Saturday, January 22, 2022, 10:00am to 4:00 pm. (Leadership 10am-12:00pm, BOT 1:00pm-4:00pm)
 - ii. Sunday, January 23, 2022. Worship
5. **Consent Agenda (Heather) (Documents)**
 - a. December 19, 2021 Board meeting minutes. Motion to approve as corrected, by Heather, seconded by Sam. Approved unanimously.
 - b. Annual Budget Drive Committee Report.
 - c. Music Endowment Committee 2021 Report
 - d. Social Justice Endowment Committee 2021 Report
 - e. Nominating Committee Report
6. **Safety Committee Report/Discussion (Rob, Kirk Striebich) (Document)**
 - a. He is aware of two non-profit security grants available. Neither requires matching funds, but one of them has a lot of requirements that we are not able to fulfill. The Stewardship Committee can help with grant-writing.
<https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security>
 - b. What’s next: Complete items on vulnerability list about a third of which have been completed since 2018; prepare for grant writing, as there is not much lead time between the announcement and the submission deadline; work on a procedure flip book, tabs of which are specific to our church and others that share commonality with what law enforcement requires from organizations like ours; work on emergency safety procedures and publish it; work on developing emergency training awareness for active shooter; prepare active security program for in-person services; continue to send training tips to minister and Board; draft

members for the team, etc. Other churches are already ahead of us, so we need to catch up.

- c. We had a visit in 2018 from Pittsburgh Department of Homeland Security, who did a complete walk-through and gave us a list. We are planning a follow-up walk-through.
 - d. Rev Kate: Should we have more training from law enforcement about how to be in reaction mode in an emergency? Are fire drills for Sunday services recommended and planned? Yes. They have worked with Erica about this. Practices for staff will include have a script in hand and being prepared for roles.
 - e. Heather: For getting new members on the committee: The Safety Committee is a board committee, and we can help and support where needed. Kirk: It would be great to get members with medical backgrounds or law enforcement.
 - f. Rob: Maybe members of the Reopening Committee can cross-join to help.
 - g. Rev. Kate: Pittsburgh police do not have adequate training in de-escalation and for those with mental health issues, so we need to be careful about calling them in for such a situation, so we may need to also have someone on the committee with mental health experience.
7. **Personnel Manual (Kate Snow)**
- a. VOTE: Revise current Personnel Manual language on page 6, “~~The Board has sole authority to hire Church staff members,~~” to “The Minister takes the lead in the selection, hiring, supervision, and discharge of all paid staff,” in order to bring it in line with the Governance Manual Section 2, page 6. Motion by Kate, second by Kyle. Motion carried unanimously.
8. **VOTE: Communications Committee and Stewardship Committee (Heather)**
- a. Appointment of members to Marketing and Communications Committee (Michael Safran, Maria Lauro, Mark Whittaker, and Nancy Latimer) and Stewardship Committee (Ebe Emmons, Jean Schmidt, Jennifer Layman, Scott Smith, Lynn Porterfield, Ward Kelsey, Al Schwartz, Maria Lauro, Eleanor Mayfield). This fills out the committees. Motion by Heather, second by Sam, Motion carried unanimously.
9. **End of Year Finance Update (Kyle) (Documents)**
- a. January Finance Committee meeting minutes in folder.
 - b. End-of-Year financial reports. Basically, we actually came out OK and more or less where we thought we were going to be, and a little bit better than budgeted, which still includes a net loss. These numbers are not final, but are very close. We have a net loss of \$37,000. The 2022 budget should make up for that loss.
10. **VOTE: Approval of solar panel project (Kyle) (e-mail document)**
- a. Approve the 'Solar Installation Agreement' provided by Envinity, using the 'Cash Purchase with Envinity internal Financing' option; authorize up to \$100,000 for the project; and authorize the Treasurer, in consultation with the Finance and Investment Committees, to select the most appropriate sources of funding for the project. We do have considerable money available for capital expenditures, so this will not leave us without available funds for other projects. The Stewardship Committee will be asked to create a capital campaign to raise funds and contribute to the cost of the project. Motion by Kyle, second by Sam, Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Discussion.
 - i. Rob: Longevity of the Mason wing. This was discussed in the Finance Committee and at the budget meeting in December. Building and Grounds has evaluated the roof, and it should last as long as the solar panels.
 - ii. Bob: What about raising money via Stewardship? It would be nice to get buy-in from the congregation. From the e-mail, Kyle suggested that the new proposal is much less, so there is less need for a capital campaign. And, a campaign would take time. There is also the potential for a fundraising campaign for the Minister's installation, that would compete. Sam would also like congregation to have buy in. He does not recommend holding up the project for this.

11. VOTE: Minor change to bylaws to Bylaws to address members who return to the church after losing membership (Kyle) (e-mail document)

- a. Article 3 Section 4, add to end of paragraph 2: "If a Member is taken to have voluntarily resigned for failure to provide a financial contribution of record during a previous year, but then makes a financial contribution of record during a subsequent year, the Member is not required to re-sign the Membership Register to regain membership."
- b. Motion by Kyle, second by Kate Snow, motion carried unanimously. This Bylaw change would need to be approved by the congregation at the annual meeting.

12. Status and plans for the Environmental Justice initiative (Bob) (documents)

- a. At the Board retreat, there was a discussion on climate action and social justice. There have been several Green Sanctuary meetings in the past few months to address this. Rev. Stephanie has been working on this and is the point person. In November there was a meeting that included both Green Sanctuary and Racial Justice representatives, and there was a sense of intersectionality between the groups. "We need to treat people as we treat the earth, and we need to treat the earth as we treat people." (Barbara Litt) There were about 33 attendees in the session after the Jan 9 service. These were the four general categories that emerged: 1) direct justice actions in frontline communities, 2) public advocacy, 3) minding our own store by monitoring carbon footprints both individually and as a church, and 4) educating ourselves and others. An important issue in the first breakout session was that we seem to have a sense of resignation and lack of agency. The second breakout session addressing the four categories and approaches showed more hope.
- b. Emerging plan: Vote on proposal of initiatives at the annual meeting. How do we get there? Specific projects? What internal resources do we have/need? What external resources can we access? What resources do we need to acquire? It would be good to have cottage conversations to address this. This can also be a way of generating interest and excitement. Board would approve VIM open questions for the February meeting, then have VIM coordinate the cottage sessions. Rev. Kate is looking for more people to help, and to help Rev. Stephanie Gannon.

13. VOTE: Reopening Implementation Working Group (RIWG) update (Kyle) (document)

- a. Is there still a role for this working group and the Safe Reopening Committee? Yes, but with some modifications. It would be more of a Covid policy group to continue providing policy and advisement suggestions to the Board and Rev. Kate, who would have more decision making and logistical authority. Christine Milcarek, Erica Shadowsong, and Peggy Parsons have agreed to work on these issues.
- b. Many of the policies passed earlier are now out of date. The minister has discretion for how services are conducted (e.g., singing, food), as long as they do not collide with the fundamental policies published (e.g., masks, vaccination, physical distance, etc.). The goal now is to have a uniform policy that covers all church activities.
- c. Rentals have been authorized. Lee is concerned about an event in December with 150 people (Cello Fury), without appropriate physical distancing. He is concerned about safety and liability.
- d. HVAC: Bob. Sue Oerkvitz has looked into this with some engineers at other venues. They can look at our systems, and we could use ionization where the air comes into the room. This could cost in the realm of \$20,000 for eight heat pumps and design.
- e. Proposal for the Board's approval of updated guidance for church activities (attached). Kyle moved. Rob seconded. Motion carries 8 in favor. 1 absent.

14. Appreciations and Aspirations

15. Adjourn (Heather) (9:00)

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: February 16, 2022

Kate Snow, Secretary

All church activities that do not involve congregational singing or serving food are authorized, at the Minister's discretion, provided all of the following safety precautions are followed:

1. All attendees and participants must:

- Provide proof of full vaccination, including booster shots or 3rd doses as soon as eligible, either
 - upon each entry to the church, or
 - by electing to have their vaccination status stored by the church in Breeze;
- Provide information for contact tracing, either verified by name through Breeze or upon entry into the church; and
- Wear masks that fully cover both mouth and nose.

2. Seating at all events must support physical distancing. During church services the front pews are reserved for participants in the service.

3. The church's HVAC/ventilation system must be on during church services in the sanctuary.

The following activities are not permitted until explicitly approved by the Board of Trustees:

- Any congregational singing, and
- The presence or serving of food or beverages at any gatherings held in the church.

This policy supersedes any and all **conflicting** prior Board-approved policies relating to church activities during the Covid-19 pandemic.