

Minutes

Board of Trustees: May 18, 2022

First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Heather Masterson, President (2023); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023); Amy DeChicchis (2024); Bob Mitchell (2024); Julie Downs (2022) Kate Snow, Secretary (2023); Rob Schwartz (2024)

Board Members Absent: Lee Carnes, Vice President (2022); Sam Hens-Greco (2022).

Ex Officio Member: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Visitors: none.

1. **Call to Order (7:01) (Heather)**
2. **Opening Words** (Kate Snow). Wendell Berry: “The Peace of Wild Things”
3. **Welcoming Guests (Heather)**
4. **Announcements (Heather)**
 - a. Annual Congregational Meeting, Sunday, May 22, 12:45 p.m.
 - b. Board Planning Retreat for 22/23 year: Sat, June 11; Times TBD
 - c. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, June 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.
 - d. There is the opportunity for Board members to serve as ushers for more visibility. (Rob)
5. **Consent Agenda (Heather) (Documents)**
 - a. April 20, 2022 Board meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Heather, seconded by Julie. Approved 6 in favor, 1 abstention.
 - b. Minister’s Report. Rob mentions that it’s hard to enforce keeping the number under 75, though there doesn’t seem to be more than that, and he feels that the ropes in the sanctuary tend to bunch people more together than necessary.
 - c. LRED Report. Bob is concerned that Erica is doing all of the work herself. She is scheduled for some time off in the summer and she has reached to Kyle and Rev. Kate to use some endowment funds for some help with an assistant, though this will be temporary and not be a new staff position.
6. **VOTE: Ratification of e-mail vote May 4: Approval of amendments to the Environmental Justice proposal. (Heather).** Moved by Heather, seconded by Bob. Motion carried unanimously.
7. **Discussion of Nominating Committee about its process and delayed nominations (Kate Snow).** It seems that the Committee may not have the same sense of their responsibility as we do, and the Committee is not as focused on nominations other than that of the Board and Nominating Committee (e.g. Endowment Committees). After they were provided the Trustee Description that was created, they wondered if there were a job description for the Nominating Committee. They may need to write their own job descriptions to put some focus on other nominations as well, and present it to the Board. It might be good to meet with the members of the new Nominating Committee after the

election to outline our understanding of the relationship between the Board and the Committee and discuss the expectations of each. We need to ask them to fill the vacant positions on the Endowment Committees right away. Julie will check with the committee before her term ends. Bob said that though the Committee had a tough time getting folks to say yes for this year, they do have more in the pipeline now for the future. Rev. Kate noted that many churches both in the denomination and without are expressing the same sense of tiredness and burnout, so our church is not exceptional.

8. Logistics for Sunday, May 22 Annual Congregational Meeting (Heather) (document)

- a. The congregation has been notified.
- b. We have some helpers for the meeting. Claus Makowka has been working with Kyle to set up the electronic and paper voting. Kyle has created a voting procedures document that will be sent to the Congregation on Friday (May 20). Most voting will be done electronically, but this year there will be a paper ballot option for those who attend in person and don't want to vote electronically. There will be a run-through Thursday night (May 19) with Nancy Latimer, who will run the Zoom meeting, and members of the tech team, Paul Cunningham and Will Snavely, to make sure the system is in place. We will then be set up for future hybrid meetings.
- c. Amy will help check people in. Rob will select and read the opening words while Rev. Kate lights the chalice. Kurt will be there to take minutes.
- d. After the service, people are encouraged to go into the Garden while the Sanctuary is set up for the meeting. Karen Litzinger is coordinating a Khasi Hills service and afterwards there will be a dance exhibition in the Garden. Check-in could start at noon. We will plan to pass out note cards for people to put their questions down. But we will also take questions from the floor.
- e. The congregation was supposed to get the names of all three Board nominees, but only one was confirmed by the notice deadline (14 days ahead of the election). We now do have three nominees. On the ballot, there will be an option to permit the Board to appoint the other two candidates which were identified too late for notification.
- f. Kate will modify the absentee ballot to become the paper ballot, and that will accommodate the issue of the two additional names for appointment by the Board with the Congregation's approval. Fifty ballots will be printed.

9. Quarterly Treasurer's Report and minutes of May Finance Committee meeting (Kyle) (7:45) (documents)

- a. Overall, things are pretty good. Since this was delayed from last month, it now includes April, as well, so it's more like a third of the year report. We are ahead on pledges. Expenses are running just a little over budget, but not as much as the pledge increase, so our net income is higher than was planned. The balance sheet is looking healthy.

10. VOTE: Allocate \$4000 to a Lifespan Religious Education Director Sabbatical Reserve, with the funds coming from net operating income (Kyle)

- a. Motion by Kyle, second by Kate Snow. Motion carries unanimously.

11. VOTE: Director of Vocal Music budget. (Kyle)

- a. Vote to increase the Director of Vocal Music budget from \$5272.74 to \$10,714 (more like a pre-pandemic amount). The increase will come from excess net income. If not enough excess net income remains at the end of the year, the balance of funds will come from the Goldsmith Concert Funds Dividends. Motion by Kyle. Seconded by Kate Snow. Motion carries unanimously.

12. Vote. Investment Committee

- a. Directing the Investment Committee to invest the \$50,000 bequest from the Estate of Phyllis Genszler to create the Genszler Memorial Fund, which is unrestricted, and to be used for expenses as determined from time-to-time by the Board. Motion by Kyle. Second by Rob. Motion carries unanimously.

13. Management of IT hardware and software (Kyle). Informational. (8:01)

- a. Claus has been taking on the role of the IT manager, as well as being the Comptroller. He knew it had to be done, and he had the knowledge. It is wonderful that he did it, and we owe him a ton, however, he is the only person doing it, so we need a backup if he is unavailable. He would also really like some help. He indicates that he can do this for another year. We probably need a position description, which would be best for him to create with help from others. We also need to decide if it should be one person or a committee. Claus indicates there was an IT Committee at one time, but it fell out of use several years ago. Rev. Kate and Rita need access to the file of passwords, as does the Communications Committee. Rev. Kate will contact him about that. Kyle will discuss with him what kind of support and people he needs and to work with him to write a description.

14. Discussion of process for choosing delegates to UU meetings (Rev. Kate) (document)

- a. Who should be responsible? Her experience is that the Board appoints delegates or is at least informed. Another issue is the cost, and what we can provide for them. Rob suggested a zoom session providing information on the role of delegates. There needs to be guidance for what to do in the case of last-minute decisions to participate. This is especially true for local meetings. Should this be a Board Policy or can it just be a procedure document? The sense is that a procedure document could be put together. Rev. Kate will write up a procedure doc for the June meeting. This will be the first year that GA is multi-platform, and there is a strong move to make GA every other year.
- b. Approval by consensus for Kyle Gracey and Jean Schmidt to be delegates to General Assembly this year.

15. Appreciations and Aspirations (All)

16. Adjourn (Heather) (8:40)

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: June 15, 2022

Kate Snow, Secretary