

Minutes

Board of Trustees: July 20, 2022

First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Rob Schwartz, President (2024); Heather Masterson (2023); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2023); Amy DeChicchis (2024); Bob Mitchell (2024); Kate Snow, Secretary (2023); Bob Mitchell (2024); Christine Milcarek (2025); Nicholas Izzo (2025)

Board Members Absent: Raeann Olander (2025)

Ex Officio Member, absent: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Linda Fleming, Lynne Porterfield; Ann Van Cott; Ann Stunden; Sue Oerkvitz; Jim Pashek

1. **Call to Order (7:01) (Rob)**
2. **Opening Words (Kate).** Wendell Barry. “Our Real Work”
3. **Welcoming Guests (Rob)**
4. **Announcements (Rob)**
 - a. The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, Aug 17, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. Rob will not be here, but Raeann will lead the meeting.
5. **Consent Agenda (Rob) (Documents)**
 - a. June 15, 2022 Board meeting minutes. Motion to approve by Nick, seconded by Heather. Approved.
 - b. Heather will put together for approval in August the minutes of the executive session in which Board officers were elected.
 - c. General Assembly Report. (Kyle)
 - d. Solar Panel Fund-Raising Project update. (Heather). Pashek: They will be ready to start in September.
6. **Discuss proposal to install air treatment system in the Sanctuary (Kyle). (Document)**
 - a. Today’s purpose is discussion of the issue. We want all board members to be up to date on information that we have.
 - b. Rob: The document references attachments, but it’s not clear where they are. Kyle: The spreadsheet data are contained in the appendix.
 - c. Bob: The spreadsheet is quite valuable. We should look into how effective our current system is in reducing large particle concentrations. Kyle will send the spreadsheet to the Board.
 - d. Nick: Is there date on how effective will a new system be? Milcarek: There is data from other facilities addressing that, e.g., Heinz Hall.
 - e. Bob: MERV rating testing is standardized. Has the proposed technology been tested in that way? What would be the MERV equivalence?
 - f. Heather. Do we have information on other installations from Secure Air (Craig, consultant)? Kyle will reach out to Craig.
 - g. Kyle: We are waiting on a person to come back from vacation to give us a quote.

- h. Nick: The main focus is the Sanctuary, but it will possibly address other rooms, such as the Undercroft. Could we consider portable units for some of the smaller rooms? (We have purchased some portable HEPA filter units, for areas like the Rev. Kate's and Erica's offices and the business office.)
 - i. Heather. Installation is \$20-30,000. Are there ongoing maintenance costs we can know about? Jim: The filters do get replaced, but less frequently than our current system. We hope to get the cost information, and he will share them.
 - j. Bob: Do they quote a MERV equivalent? (Jim: Highest is usually MERV16; MERV13-16 is not usually used for commercial systems). Jim: The consultant indicated that the system is equivalent to a MERV 13. From reviewing the spreadsheet it appears the system we have effectively reduces large particles. The system we are considering causes small particles to clump into large ones, so understanding how well and how quickly the current system reduces large particles provides insight into how well the new system would reduce the small particles that likely carry the virus.
 - k. Sue: She appreciates listening to the discussion.
 - l. Ann Van Cott. She wants to echo some items in the memo, and Rev. Kate's email. Our priority is to protect the health of members, staff, and families. The proposal improves the situation. The proposed system does improve the air, it does not adversely affect the current system, and it is affordable. We have to do this, along with masking, vaccines, and distancing. We need to act quickly or we will lose members.
 - m. Rob, Kyle: We will need an estimated implementation time and pass it on to the congregation.
 - n. Kyle: We should also see what our current HVAC system can do, to how much we need to supplement.
7. **Quarterly Treasurer's Report and Minutes of July Finance Committee meeting (Kyle) (7:29). (Document)**
- a. Our finances are in a reasonable place. We are tracking the budget very well, so we still have to be careful with our spending.
 - b. Solar fundraiser: This has effectively reached its goal. (some of which are pledges which may stretch over a couple of years), to about \$34,000. The actual amount collected is closer to \$23,000.
 - c. The Finance Committee also discussed the air filtration system, noting that there would be funds available, assuming it is approved and the cost is in the range of current information.
 - d. Finance Committee underwent a prioritization exercise. Addressing declining member numbers and revenue are high on that list.
 - e. Heather: Legacy/planned giving. She notes that the Finance Committee may have some resources/expertise for the Stewardship Committee for planned giving.
8. **Discuss draft IT Team position description (Kyle). (Document).**
- a. There is no-one who is officially responsible for maintaining the software and hardware of our IT system. They are looking at 2-4 people to take on the duties. This is explicitly framed not to be a committee, so it is looser and more flexible. Right now only Claus is maintaining things. Social media account activities are

not included in this, as they are under the Communications and Marketing Committee.

- b. Bob: How would this support communications? Kyle: This team could help set up distribution groups, or help design on-line forms.
 - c. Heather. What is the staff link to this? Kyle: This can be added. They would be interacting with Rita, Rev. Kate, and Cicely.
 - d. Rob: Where do you see this fit into the structure of the church? Kyle: Rev. Kate might help with this status, and we can wait on her response. Kyle will contact her.
 - e. Chris: This seems like it should be a staff position: What is our virus protection? When do we update the hardware and software? This did not work well as a small group activity for her in the past. Kyle: We don't have the money to hire a staff person for this.
 - f. Kyle will provide a finalized version for next month.
9. **2022-23 Board Goals Tracker (Rob) (Document)**
- a. These are the goals generated in the retreat. It would be very helpful for a board member to be a champion for each of the goals.
 - b. High priority: IT Rob. Nick will help him with this.
 - c. New and retaining members: Amy and Kyle will to be involved with this.
 - d. Strategic plan in place in 2023. Bob. This is typically a VIM issue. Kyle will support this.
 - e. Clear leadership pipeline. Heather. Raeann.
 - f. Insuring positive Board experience. Rob.
 - g. GA issues. Chris. Rob will work with her.
 - h. Congregation is aware of Board actions, visibility. Kate is frustrated, because we put so much information out. Nick will help.
 - i. The plan is to revisit this Goals Tracker every month.
 - j. Rev Kate expects to be directly involved in some of these issues. We need to make sure what issues she is most interested in.
10. **Board Liaisons**
- a. Building. Nick will work with them. (Martin Schmidt is contact.)
 - b. Grounds (Garden) Committee. Nick will check it out. Jack Phillips might be the contact.
 - c. VIM. Bob, for now. With Kyle helping with strategic planning.
 - d. The rest of the document is filled in.
 - e. Heather. Are we maintaining the Ombudsperson position? Kyle: we should ask Ebe as to her interest in continuing. It should probably not be a Board member. Heather will ask Ebe.
 - f. Should HCC (Healthy Congregations) be continuing?
11. **Board's Annual Cycle of Assessment, Discernment, and Planning actions (Bob) (Document)**
- a. Bob: Assessment would be in July and August, going over the last year, and it would be presented to the Board in September. In November we would move into discernment. January a discernment plan would be developed. Then in February and March the cottage meetings would occur. April there will be a draft of the new strategic plan, which would be presented to the Congregation at the Annual

Meeting in May. The Board would approve in June. The Board would call for assessment of Minister or Church on alternate years.

- b. Heather. Does the Committee on Shared Ministries (COSM) match what we have organized before? We will tweak this.
 - c. Kyle had raised some questions over e-mail. They will discuss these off-line.
 - d. Rob: There must also be input from staff and committees to contribute to the plan.
12. **8th Principle Update (Kate)** Update. She is a member of the 8th Principle working group. The group is reaching out to different committees of the church to see if they want a presentation. They are also putting together video testimonials. If anyone on the Board has any questions about the 8th principle, she would be glad to discuss. Kate will reach out to Wilburn Hayden and Pat Trudeau (Canada experience).
- a. Rob suggested reviewing last Sunday's service by Caron Carnahan, which addresses this. Kyle concurs.
13. **Appreciations and Aspirations (All)**
14. **Adjourn (Rob) (8:53)**

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: August 24, 2022

Kate Snow, Secretary