

Minutes

Board of Trustees: August 17, 2022

First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

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

Board Members Absent: Rob Schwartz, President (2024)

Ex Officio Member: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Karen Burns Rutigliano (Social Justice, PIIN), Peggy Parsons, Sue Oerkvitz

1. **Call to Order (Raeann)**
2. **Opening Words (Amy).** From A Chosen Faith, the book we give to newcomers.
3. **Welcoming Guests (Raeann)**
4. **Announcements (Raeann)**
 - a. The next regularly-scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, September 21, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.
5. **Consent Agenda (Raeann) (Documents)**
 - a. Vote: Executive Session minutes. Motion to approve by Nick, seconded by Bob. Approved unanimously.
 - b. Vote: July 20, 2022 Board meeting minutes. Bob has a few corrections to send. Minutes are tabled.
 - c. Minister's Report
 - d. LRED Report
 - e. Buildings Report
 - f. Grounds Report
 - g. Marketing and Communications Report
 - h. Stewardship Report
 - i. August Finance Committee meeting notes
 - j. 2022-23 Board Goals Tracker
6. Proposal to install air treatment system in Sanctuary (Kyle). (Document, e-mail)
 - a. Kyle: The board compiled several questions, and the Taskforce addressed as many as they could two weeks ago (document). We have been able to answer a few questions from studies and articles about this system, but we need to be aware these are on the company website, so might not be impartial. We don't have quotes on cost of materials and installation or a timeframe. Heather: She thinks it odd that we don't have more specific information from the company.
 - b. Bob: (Document) Summary of review of three papers about the SecureAire APC Particle Reduction product. First, a reminder that there are two components: moving the air and filtering the air. Our first thought was to upgrade our system to MERV 13, which would remove smaller particles from the air, but it would put too much pressure on our system. Another option would be to use a system that

pulls smaller particles together to form larger particles that are more easily removed. There are some weaknesses in the papers, including the St. Mary's Hospital study. The sanctuary is much larger and the air exchange is much less frequent, about 1 per hour, than most of the cases described in the papers (an elevator and an operating room). The authors of the papers have conflicts of interest, as they are all officers and investors in SecureAire, the company that makes this product. The conclusion is that we don't have a sufficient basis to make a decision. We have been told that a prototype will be brought in to see if it will fit with our unit. We could ask to keep it for a while to test with our system. We want to move forward, but we need to make sure that whatever we choose works, so that people do not think they are safe when they are not.

- c. Sense of the Board:
 - i. Nick. Has it been decided which unit will be used for the testing? They would like to test in the Undercroft system, as there only two heat pumps service the Undercroft, so we might be able to see significant results there.
 - ii. Kyle. He supports the path forward of testing. He is very nervous about installing something with very little background/history.
 - iii. Rev. Kate. She affirms Kyle's statement that the people want to come back, but shouldn't have a false sense of safety. The Board should issue a statement about where they are with this process.
 - iv. Heather. She wants to make sure we are responding to the congregation.
 - v. Peggy. We need to keep looking at upcoming problems and address them, and be persistent. There was an article in The Times that while the future will not be apocalyptic, estimated deaths from Covid will continue to be between 100,000 and 250,000 per year for the foreseeable future. Average deaths from the flu are 35,000, and a bad flu season can be 60,000. Nothing will be 100%, or even 80%, so we are going to have to adjust expectations, so 50% reduction may be a reasonable goal.
 - vi. Sue. She really appreciates that the Board is grappling with this.
 - vii. Kyle. It appears the Board is in favor of proceeding with the proposed testing plan.
 - viii. Kyle. A letter to be addressed to the congregation. Bob, Kyle, and Kate S will draft it for the board's review.
7. Discuss need for vaccination confirmation and contact tracing at church events like SongSpace (Kate Snow)
 - a. At the Early Mays concert, which was much larger than usual, it took 8 people to review vaccination cards and contact info, which was quite onerous. In discussing with Rob, they thought both steps might be unnecessary. All people must wear masks.
 - b. Rev. Kate. She needs updating on whether we are following our protocols, and whether they are necessary. She agrees the policy needs to be reviewed and changes made, if warranted.
 - c. Kyle. Right now we are only requiring any type of mask; maybe we should require N95 or KN95.
 - d. Peggy. The point of the CDC notice is about contact tracing, not notification; they are two different things, and ours is actually about notification.

- e. Sue. She certainly appreciates knowing if someone was positive at an event. She sings with a choir that has a process that seems to work well. She is happy to discuss their process further.
 - f. Bob: The idea is to maintain layers of protection.
8. Quarterly Investment Report (Kyle) (Documents) The committee is starting to invest the Genszler bequest and rebalancing other funds. The market was down, so there are decreases as of the end of June, as compared to the end of March. Our investment balance is healthy. The Simon Future Fund, which is where the money would come from for the air system we are discussing and the balance for the solar system (above the funds donated for the capital campaign), is down a bit, but there is still enough money for both needs.
 9. Vote: Increase Instrumentalist/Guest Artist budget by \$2768.82, with increase coming from Goldsmith Concert Fund (Kyle).
 - a. This brings us back to pre-COVID levels. This is outside of the budget for this year. If there is a budget surplus, that can be used instead the concert fund. The fund is not limited to “concerts.” We have to watch that we do not overshoot this amount for the rest of the budget year. Kate Snow said it seems that this will just bring us up to the present. What about the rest of the year? Rev. Kate, Kyle, and Kris are going to meet to discuss that. Motion by Kyle; seconded by Kate. Motion carried unanimously.
 10. Draft IT Team position description (Kyle). (Document)
 - a. This is to help Claus with what he is doing. This is a security issue. The number needed is 2-3 people. It specifies who on the staff they would be working with (Erica, Rita, Cicely, Rev. Kate). The team reports to the minister. Rev. Kate recommends that this be reviewed in a few months for additional tweaking. This is more like a charter, and Rev. Kate could tweak it. Please put forward names of potential members. This is passed over to Rev. Kate. No motion needed.
 11. Vote: Resolution to add Claus Makowka to Fidelity Account Kyle.
 - a. We need to have more people than just Ward Kelsey to move funds. Motion to approve by Kyle; second by Bob. Motion carried unanimously
 12. Board roles and responsibilities for committees (Nick). Nick and Rob updated things and will meet with Rev. Kate about her role.
 13. Vote: Discuss Share the Plate (STP) changes (Karen Burns Rutigliano, Rev. Kate) (Document). They are proposing a weekly STP, with one charity or organization per month (total of 12) with six internal groups and six for external charities nominated and voted on by the congregation. This would be shared at 50% for the charities and 50% to the operating fund. Karen had experience with doing this type of collection for 15 years at Morristown Unitarian Fellowship in Morristown, NJ, where it was successful and increased both STP and the regular church collection. This is in line our values in reaching out beyond the walls.
 - a. Kyle. The Finance Committee has discussed this, and the monthly proposal is workable. They see a potential problem as plate cash is factored in the budget; this plan would cause the general operating fund money to decrease. They would like a much earlier review period (not 3 years, but 6 months, initially). Rev. Kate clarified that monitoring the cash inflow would be ongoing, but suggested an overall review in 3 years. 2019 plate collection was \$7000, but much lower during

the pandemic. Current numbers for the year may be as much as \$4-5000. Unless there is a substantial increase in the plate collection, there would be less funding for the operating budget. Rev. Kate will make sure there is a review at least every six months.

- b. Nick: When we first started doing this (once a month), our plate cash did increase. He is not sure if that applies here when it's weekly. In the past the recipients were chosen by the Social Justice committee, not the whole congregation. (Rev. Kate is hoping to re-establish a Social Justice committee. There will be a representative from the recipient organization on the first Sunday of each month.)
 - c. Heather. When will this go into effect? Rev. Kate: Immediately (September).
 - d. Kyle will monitor this in order to inform next year's budget.
 - e. Motion to accept; Moved by Nick. Second by Christine. Motion 7 in favor.
14. Vote: LED lighting upgrade (Bob) (Document).
- a. Savings should be substantial. There are significant upfront costs, but should be recovered in 5-10 years. There will be a rebate, and there has been talk about using this as a catalyst for the Environmental Justice partnership to pay it forward. This aligns with our commitment to the 7th principle. Current proposal would include replacing and relocating fixtures in the Undercroft (would exclude current LEDs). This does not include motion sensors, but we can look into that further. It will take a few months before the vendor can do the project. The Building Committee unanimously supports this proposal.
 - b. Kyle: Our electric bill is substantial, so it would be good to free up some of that money. There are capital-restricted funds that are available.
 - c. Nick. This aligns with our principles, and we need to make sure that folks, including the artists, whose work will be in the Undercroft and who often have friends come to see their work, are aware of this, as it will be both energy efficient and more aesthetically pleasing.
 - d. Heather. With drawdown of these capital-restricted funds, is there a way we can do planned repayment to the funds by using some of the savings? Kyle was much in favor of this.
 - e. Motion is to accept the proposal by Bob. Second by Christine. Approved unanimously.
15. Discuss environmental justice plans (Bob) (Document)
- a. There are currently five members of the committee: Sonia Wellington, Audrey Masalehdan, Becky Studer, Jim Marino, and Bob
 - b. June. Allegheny Solar Fest. At least seven people from the church went.
 - c. October kickoff. Invite all to a Zoom which will feature Kim Diana Connolly of Amherst UU Church about the environmental justice actions in the Buffalo area and what can actually be done.
 - d. Joy in Action Workshop to discuss what we are going to do; what needs to be done. How to find joy in climate action.
 - e. Sunday Service "soon" that addresses that message.
 - f. Near-term: Environmental Voter Project. They work with a database of those who are active in environmental issues but do not vote.
 - g. Solar project. How do we publicize this? Working with the communication and marketing committee.

- h. Connecting with other UU churches and Summer Institute. He is talking with East Suburban, North Hills. East Suburban will have an environmental justice panel on October 2. Erica is looking at environmental justice issues for the RE curriculum.
- i. Kyle: He would like the team to check in with the Board every 3 months. It would help to see how these activities align with what the three areas of action that congregation approved. Funding: Talk with Kyle for budget discussion.

16. Appreciations and Aspirations (All)

17. Adjourn (Raeann) (9:01)

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: September 21, 2022

Kate Snow, Secretary