

Minutes
Board of Trustees: December 20, 2023
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Raeann Olander, President (2025); Brian Junker, Vice-President (2026); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2026); Nicholas Izzo, Secretary (2025); Rob Schwartz, (2024); Bob Mitchell (2024); Jean Schmidt (2026); Christine Milcarek (2025).

Absent Members: Amy DeChicchis (2024)

Ex Officio Member: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Visitors: none

Call to Order (Raeann) (7:00) (Hybrid meeting)

1. **Opening Words (Rob)** ChatGPT words for Unitarians
2. **Welcoming Guests (Raeann)**
3. **Announcements (Brian)**
 - a. The next regularly-scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, January 7, 2024 from 7-9:00pm.
 - b. Opening Words for January: Brian
 - c. Committee Reports due in January: Stewardship, Finance, Personnel, Program Endowments, VIM.
 - d. EECM Shelter Meal hosted by Board (January 7)
4. **Consent Agenda (Raeann) (Documents)**
 - a. Draft minutes from November 15 board meeting. Motion to accept with edits by Brian, Second by Chris. Motion carries unanimously.
 - b. Minister's Report. (Document)
 - i. "FAA" stands for "For All Ages".
 - ii. Coverage while Cicely is on leave. The form for getting on MailChimp has caused some problems for some people who have tried to get on to get the newsletter. They should check their Spam folder. Kyle would be happy to take a look at it. Kate and Kyle will zoom to resolve this.
 - iii. Kate will be attending a zoom meeting tomorrow through the Governor's Office about houses of worship safety issues.
 - c. Treasurer's Report (document)
 - i. It was very useful and enlightening.
 - ii. EECM meals account. There is an account for funding this, but has been in deficit and fundraising for it is mostly inactive.
 - d. Committee reports: Stewardship, COSM, Finance, Safety. (documents)
 - i. Safety. The ushers need to be retrained. Chris did a review of safety protocols and couldn't find the flashlights and vests.
 - ii. The spending on the grant has to be wrapped up by the end of the calendar year. Let Kyle know of anything that is needed.

- e. LRED Report (document)
 - f. Board responsibilities.
5. **Budget for 2024: Discussion and vote to approve (Kyle)**
- a. He will use some retained earnings to reduce this past budget (2023). We cannot do that a lot for the 2024 budget, as we need reserves for cash flow.
 - b. Budgeted COLA is 1% in the budget, which is less than actual inflation (2.8%). If the numbers look better in January, he may propose an increase in the budgeted cost of living allowance.
 - c. The alternate budget with a better COLA would increase a budget deficit of about \$7000.
 - d. Brian: It would be helpful to have past year's budget lined up with the proposed budget. Kyle: There is a tab in the file with all of the years' budgets.
 - e. Brian: A low COLA may have an adverse impact on staff morale. Rev Kate: She thinks the staff does need to hear from the Board about the lower COLA and what the plan is to improve that.
 - f. Motion to approve the proposed budget by Kyle, Second by Jean. Motion 1 in favor, 7 opposed.
 - g. Motion to approve the alternative budget, with a 2.8% COLA increase, with a deficit of \$6000. Rob moved, Bob seconded. Brian proposed an amendment to the motion to include a mandate to the Board to report to the congregation and seek additional pledges to balance that increase. Motion by Brian, second by Chris. Rob accepts it as a friendly amendment. Six in favor. 2 opposed. Motion carries.
6. Personnel Manual Discussion and vote to approve (Amy/Rev. Kate) (document)
- a. Motion to approve by Chris, second by Brian. Motion carried unanimously.
7. Update and feedback to COSM (Committee on Shared Ministry) (Kyle/Bob/Rob/Raeann/Jean/Rev Kate). (Document).
- a. Feedback for current ministry assessment. Rob: Let's focus on the strategic plan and increasing membership and diversity. (VIM is doing discernment). Rev. Kate proposed using the assessment tool from the UUA. Are we comfortable with their working with this tool? There is general Board support. Rob will take this to Mary Denison and COSM
8. Update to COSM Charter (tentative) (Rev. Kate) (document)
- a. Rev. Kate. This charter needs to be in alignment with her employment letter of agreement. This needs to include a feedback loop. Kyle moved to approve the COSM charter as presented . Jean second. Motion carries unanimously.
9. Building a Culture of Inclusion Workshop. (Jean) (document)
- a. 41 individuals participated in at least one session
 - b. Denice and Jean facilitated.
 - c. She thinks the workshop achieved a critical mass for shifting our culture of inclusion.
10. Review Marketing and Communications charter (Rob) Tabled
11. Discussion: Preparing for Board Assessment (Kyle)

- a. This will be done every year. The UUA will help us with this. Rev. Kate recommends reaching out to Sunshine at UUA in January. Rob will do that, and include Kyle in the conversation.
12. Discuss updates to Treasurer and Controller position descriptions (Kyle) Tabled to January.
13. Board statement on activities aligning with principles and values of the church (Brian)
 - a. There have been some recent events to cause people to think about activities and events under our roof, and our need to follow and abide by the principles of the church and the UUA. Brian will draft a short statement for those who want to use the church. He will provide this in January. He will suggest how it will be used by the church.
14. Suggestions for Future Business (All)
 - a. Chris: While at a Methodist church in Allison Park, she saw a poster up for a Martin Luther King Day of Service. Is this something we could do? Chris will present a proposal, but maybe for 2025. We have done a Day of Service in the past on the Pittsburgh Marathon weekend (May), since it is impossible for many to get to the church.
15. Appreciations and Aspirations (All)
16. **Adjourn** (Raeann) (9:04)

Respectfully submitted,

Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: January 17, 2024

Nick Izzo, Secretary