

Minutes
Board of Trustees: November 15, 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); Amy DeChicchis (2024); Bob Mitchell (2024); Jean Schmidt (2026); Christine Milcarek (2025).

Absent Members: None.

Ex Officio Member: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary

Visitors: none

Call to Order (Raeann) (7:00)

1. **Opening Words (Raeann) Joy Harjo. Muscogee (Creek) Nation. “Perhaps the World Ends Here”.**
2. **Welcoming Guests (Raeann)**
3. **Announcements (Brian)**
 - a. The next regularly-scheduled Board meeting will be on Wednesday, December 20, 2023 (Hybrid). Starting at 6:00 with a potluck, then a meeting 7-9:00pm.
 - b. Opening Words for November: Rob
 - c. Committee Reports due in December: Stewardship, COSM, Finance, Safety.
 - d. Congregational Budget Meeting will be Sunday Dec 3 @ 12:30 PM, Virtual on Zoom. There is a conflict with the Quilters’ show opening. Kate will send the zoom link.
4. **Consent Agenda (Raeann) (Documents)**
 - a. Draft minutes from October 18 board meeting. Motion to accept with correction by Brian, Second by Bob. Motion carries unanimously.
 - b. Minister’s Report. (Document).
 - i. About services going long. No official complaints, but we will keep an eye on it.
 - c. Committee reports: Stewardship, Building, Finance, Investments. (documents)
 - d. LRED. (document). The bank credit card is an issue. The finance committee is aware of it.
 - e. Board responsibilities.
5. Confirmation of email vote to make Nick Izzo a delegate to the Greater Pittsburgh UU Cluster meeting. Movement to confirm by Raeann. Second by Brian. Carried unanimously.
6. Stewardship update (Jean) (document)
 - a. Al Schwartz has created the information provided on the Budget drive analysis.
 - b. Trends in pledges: those pledge units increasing their pledge has increased substantially, 75% have increased.
 - c. New pledges: There is an increase in number and in total dollars.

- d. The number who stop or reduce pledging has been decreased over the past three years. There is no trend in dollars for that group, but the sample size is small.
 - e. We have reversed the trend of losing pledging units. Could be the roll-over model or coming back from COVID.
 - f. Pledge fulfillment. Some variation.
 - g. Overall impact. No longer losing pledging units.
 - h. Pledges not paid at all: 34 pledges without a payment for 2023 so far. A majority will pay in December with expected 8-12 who will not make a payment.
 - i. Calling Reverend Kate may have also influenced improvements in pledging.
7. Review, discuss, vote on revised personnel manual (Amy) (7:32)
- a. The committee has been working on this for over a year. They have done a thoughtful job. Members: Mary Denison, Bill Schuetz, Jane MacLeod, Sue Oerkvitz.
 - b. Be prepared to vote on this at the December Board meeting.
 - c. The committee is advisory to the minister so revised versions do not need to go back to the Personnel Committee.
 - d. All comments should be in by December 3rd.
8. Schedule of building/capital projects (Nick) (Document)
- a. There is an overall list of projects, funding, and progress.
 - b. The Board doesn't need to be micromanaging the details.
 - c. Brian: It's great to have this information for when congregation members ask. What about the projects that are not building projects? The board needs to be informed, but not necessarily involved. A priority listing and expected sources of funds would help.
 - d. Bob: It would be good to have this as priorities and timelines.
 - e. Kate: there should be a staff person at the table as this is generated.
9. Security and Access to building (Kate)
- a. People have had trouble getting into the building. Dan has installed a lock box in the garden. Kate, Rita, and Stuart have the code.
 - b. Bob: The Ellsworth door was not closing fully. Nick: That has been noted by the Building Committee and they are looking at scheduling the repair. They can put up a sign to pull the door closed for now.
 - c. Ongoing Security Team. Kirk Striebeck will be stepping down. The team is not functioning very well at this time. It is a Board committee. Rev Kate would like to keep Kirk on as an advisor. This team only looks at building security, not IT security. It will be nice if he can provide a summary of where we are and what our needs are.
10. Role of our community in Israel-Palestine conflict (Kate) (Document)
- a. She would like thoughts from the Board members.
 - b. Brian: We did deny a group to meet in the building. He thinks we should permit any group that acts consistent with our values. However, the group could have generated a security issue.
 - c. Brian: Someone requested that we and other churches make a public display of support for Israel (flags). How do we respond to issues.
 - d. Bob: We are trying to institute the Forum. Can we create a space for controversial subjects?

- e. Kate: This is not a closed conversation.
11. Quarterly Investment report (Kyle) Documents
- a. In general, we (staff and volunteers) are stretched very thin. This will not change until the new year.
 - b. 3rd quarter. We are OK; Investments are down a bit. Overall the investment income is above budget.
 - c. Jean: Why are the NAVs highlighted? Kyle thinks this is leftover formatting without meaning but will look into why.
12. Draft Budget update/Finance Committee update. (Kyle) (Document)
- a. We have a good sense of where our pledging is, which is a little bit above our target to balance the budget.
 - b. He could push the cost 3.2% cost of living increase for staff to match inflation.
 - c. He included some funding for some items in the budget.
 - d. Otherwise, minimal changes from last month.
 - e. Nick: The Board votes after the December report to the congregation. The congregation is shown a “near-final” version in order to have input into the process. Kyle will produce a final version after that meeting for the Dec 20 Board meeting.
13. Update on Feedback to COSM past process (tentative) (Kyle) Deferred to December.
14. Future Business Suggestions (All)
- a. Brian suggested that we add this as a standing item to the agendas.
 - b. Nick: The end of the year comes with people cycling off committees, in particular the endowment committees. The board liaison should contact the Nominating Committee to ask for names to fill vacancies.
 - c. Jean: Debrief of Building a Culture of Inclusion Workshop had been dropped. We should bring it up in future meeting.
 - d. Jean: With the Sunday Forum coming back, does the Board need to give a charge to the Forum.
 - e. Bob: We need to extend the discussion on volunteers that Jean had started.
15. Appreciations and aspirations (All)
16. **Adjourn** (Raeann) (9:04)

Respectfully submitted,
Kurt Summersgill, Recording Secretary
Approved by the Board: December 20, 2023
Nick Izzo, Secretary