

Minutes
Board of Trustees: January 17, 2024
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); Christine Milcarek (2025); Amy DeChicchis (2024)

Absent Members: Jean Schmidt (2026)

Ex Officio Member: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Louie Portella

Call to Order (Raeann) (7:00) (Zoom)

1. **Opening Words (Brian)** Excerpts from Eric Heller’s “The Disinherited Mind” and Shosan Jack Hobner’s, “Then confidential confession of a monk”
2. **Welcoming Guests (Raeann)**
3. **Announcements (Brian)**
 - a. Welcome Arthur Notaro as recording secretary
 - b. Next Board meeting: Wed., Feb 21, 2024
 - c. February Opening Words: Amy
 - d. Committee reports due in Feb: Finance, Investment
4. **Consent Agenda (Raeann) (Documents)**
 - a. Draft minutes from December 20 board meeting. Motion to accept (with edits) by Rob Schwartz. Motion carries unanimously.
Kyle made a clarification that while there is an EECM meals account it is not funded from the budget but people can donate to it for reimbursement for others who buy food for the meal at the men’s shelter. The account has had a deficit for years and church volunteers typically donate the food, themselves.
 - b. Minister’s Report. (Document) No discussion
 - c. Treasurer’s Report (Document) No discussion
 - d. Committee reports: Stewardship, Finance, Personnel, Program Endowments, VIM Finance, Safety. (documents)
 - i. Stewardship Committee needs members. Board liaison will contact Nominating committee.
 - ii. Finance : No discussion
 - iii. Personnel Nothing at the moment. Break after handbook passage.
 - iv. Program endowments Nothing at the moment.
 - v. VIM (Vision, Identity, Mission) Bob to locate within consent folder.
 - e. Board Priorities update
5. **Annual Financial Reports (Kyle)**

- a. Ended 2023 with sizable deficit, though less than quoted in December. There was more off year giving than budgeted. Still at 98.81% of pledge payments. Gifts are other contributions not in fulfillment of a pledge that weren't placed in the plate.
 - b. Stewardship committee: will have less work to do with new rollover system.
 - c. New income and expense tracking will be helpful
 - d. 99% of budget in terms of income is good for a budget in general.
 - e. Musical staff spending was higher than budgeted.
 - f. Over budget on electricity costs, due to delay of solar panel install. This amount made up about half the deficit. Lost about 21k rather than projecting to lose \$3,100k.
 - g. Worked with Kris Rust, Ellen Gozion, Erica to make sure they are utilizing funds well.
 - h. 2023 spent down from cash account 128k, due to capital project expenditures. Liability side also reduced 104k, not as dramatic as may appear. This year we enter with a deficit and budgeted for a 2024 deficit.
 - i. Upcoming capital campaign will help cover deficit items for the building and grounds.
- 6. Reimagining the Annual Meeting (Raeann, Rev Kate, Jean)**
- a. Raeann -Intro, idea of an auction night before,
 - b. Kate - annual meeting as a community building event, Sunday evening with a potluck dinner with childcare, celebration and affirmation of volunteers and members transitioning into the meeting.
 - c. Kyle - not worried about budget impact
 - d. Kate - non alcohol event,
 - e. Raeann - 5 pm dinner, 4 pm checking, meeting 6-630 pm
 - f. Rob - meal on the table,
 - g. Brian - is there a committee that will plan it? Does it need creation?
 - h. Kate - no social group exists, pitch idea and volunteers
 - i. Time gap helps with clean up ability
 - j. Talent auction and annual meeting together would be too much at once
 - k. Raeann and Kate to discuss approach
- 7. Discussion on Nominating Committee/Leadership Pipeline/Calendar (Raeann)**
- a. Avoid presidents day weekend, Sunday Feb 10th
 - b. Snacks on boards to learn about the board
 - c. Separate event from coffee hour
 - d. Rob asked - nominating committee for more positions than the board
 - e. Christine - Valentines day social idea was the past approach
- 8. Report to Congregation regarding Budget (Brian)**
- a. Dec. meeting accepted budget with 2.8% increase in staff wages along with a deficit, congregation asked to help fund the 2.8% increase
 - b. Brian trying to reconcile what he heard, Rob S and Kyle, discuss to rephrase to say the increase was agreed to aspirationally as a cost of living increase Nick agrees internal discussion doesn't matter much, Board is aware there was a deficit last year, 2023 year, no deficit within 2022 (surplus year,) which is why COLA was approved for 2023.
 - c. Kate - distribute through Breeze, but continue open discussion of money and finance as a good thing,
 - d. Brian to be at church this Sunday as well as Raeann, Kate fine with either of next two sundays
 - e. Kyle shared financial information
- 9. Review Marketing and Communications charter (Rob)**

- a. No discussion
10. **Discuss updates to Treasurer and Controller position descriptions (Kyle)**
- a. Tabled until February due to time
11. **Discuss Marketing and Communications Team Charter (Rob)**
- a. Charter was written about being a board committee,
 - b. Bob Mitchell - charter mentions an annual plan, could it be rephrased as a rolling plan rather than annual?
 - c. Does board need to approve? No per Kyle, will report to the minister
12. **Review Council of Communities charter (Rev. Kate)**
- a. Discussion of comments on the draft, Rev Kate will take those suggestions and revise. Members eager to get going!
13. **Draft Statement on use of Church building in alignment with our principles and values (Brian)**
- a. Discussion ensues, 3 use groups: groups org by congreg, rentals, groups or activities which we allow to use for free.
 - b. Excessive reliance upon events coordinator
 - c. Bob - suggestion to restart FORUM, how do potentially controversial speakers go through the approval process?
 - d. Kate suggests statement needs broad sharing with the congregation
14. **COSM (Committee on Shared Ministry) Congregational Assessment Process (Rob)**
- a. The proposal was presented and the Board approved of the approach.
15. **Suggestions for Future Business (All)**
- a. Kyle Gracey - feels like calendaring part of conversation should come back, nominations should be dealt with throughout the year to plan it out better
 - b. Bob - VIM and COSM need to work together more closely
 - c. Rob - date of June board meeting? Can we change that date, due to absence of Rob and Raeann
16. **Appreciations and Aspirations (All)**
17. **Adjourn (Raeann) (Time)**

Respectfully submitted,
Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: February 21, 2024
Nick Izzo, Secretary