

Minutes
Board of Trustees: June 18, 2025
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending (End of Board Term): Brian Junker, President (2026); Jim Pashek, Vice President (2027) Kyle Gracey (2026), Treasurer (2025); Nicholas Izzo, Secretary (2025); Raeann Olander (2025); Jean Schmidt (2026); Christine Milcarek (2025); Richard Dum (2027) *Lucinda Beattie (2028), Deborah McGuire (2028),*

Absent Members: Maria Lauro (2027)

Ex Officio Member: Rev Kate Walker

Others: Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Neal Binstock, Sue Oerkvitz, Mev Vakiener, Casey Taylor

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

1. **Opening Words (Brian)** *The Dreams*, by Peter **Mulvey**... recording from a Soundspace Event
2. **Welcoming Guests (Brian)**
3. **Announcements (Jim)**
 - a. Board Retreat: June 28 at church (9 am to 3 pm)
 - b. Next Board meeting: Wed., July 16, 2025 (zoom meeting)
 - c. July Opening Words: Maria
 - d. Committee reports due in July; Capital Campaign, Finance, Personnel, VIM
4. **Consent Agenda (Brian) (Documents)**
 - a. Minutes from May board meeting. Motion to accept (with edits) by Jim moves, Motion carries with all in favor. Unanimous approval.
 - b. Minister's Report.

Kate reviews from ministry on the road in Baltimore - UUA headline is to be boldly religious. One is religion is not a bystander, but also the current political attacks on religion are underway, so we need to be strategic rather than reactionary. Kyle notes his comments do not require discussion.
 - c. LRED Report ?

No comments
 - d. Treasurer's Report and Finance Committee

No comments.
 - e. Committee reports:
 - i. COSM

Jean noted Kyle confirmed there was a ministerial assessment recently, in 2023.
 - ii. Finance

No comments

- iii. Safety
No comments
- iv. Progress toward Strategic Plan
Report will come in July.

5. Discussion and Vote on Acceptance of COSM assessment of Rev Kate (Jim Reitz)

Jim noted briefly the survey sent out contains 3 basic questions: 1. What do you think Rev Kate does well? 2. Can you suggest any ways in which she can improve 3. Are there any other comments you would like to pass on to the COSM committee

The first question had great feedback. Most comments to 2 say that Rev Kate needs to be more careful about the use of her time, appears to be too much on her plate. 3. Thank you to the search committee for bringing Rev Kate to us. Brian mentions it is worth for future surveys to track demographics of the respondents to see if they match the overall church.

Jim mentions he stood at rear of church for 4 consecutive Sundays and passed out surveys so all demographics had the chance to respond.

Brian cautioned that the quoted responses seemed biased towards positive. Jim noted that COSM would take that into advisement in future.

Jean thanks Jim and Sue for the report and Jims comments on assessments. Jean says she understands. Jim mentions the survey was much more manageable.

Kate responds to Jeans comment, this was probably the best experience of an assessment so far. There aren't many models.

Jean moves to accept COSM assessment. All in favor for unanimous approval.

6. Vote: Schedule of assessments (Jean)

Kyle commented they are happy to move in this direction, uncertain of whether or not this is an improvement.

Proposes advancement of Strategic Plan in 2025-2026 rather than more VIM discernment.

Proposes a look back of past 3 years at end, 2027-2028 to decide if additional changes or tweaks need to be made.

Jean comments not a good time to change this as update is being presented at the retreat.

Kate likes what Kyle is saying. She notes sabbatical invites deeper concern for the congregation.

Jean points out the goal of the sub group meeting with Jim Reitz, etc was to coordinate activities. She points out

Jim P mentions targeted discernment hasn't been determined for the coming year. Jim wonders if we need to reflect onto the calendar what is already occurring. (Add column G.)

Brian likes the idea of an explicit evaluation of the schedule at end. Richard sees this as an aspirational plan. The Board can alter the plan at any time as desired.

Jim mentions instead of assessing Rev Kate or the board every other year, what about a gap year. That is what COSM is for. In time the charter will have to be amended. It says we have to do the assessment every other year.

Jean is not sure of Kyle's uncertainty of the schedule.

Kyle mentions not worth going into here.

Final comments: Brian postpones vote, suggests add a column G for annual update of the strategic plan. Add a line to say review schedule during 27-28.

7. Capital Campaign Update (Jim)

Jim asks Kyle to review the status. \$1,080,000 pledged, \$218,000 received, 112 pledge units (around 60%.)

8. Vote: Approval of Sabbatical Leave for Rev Kate (Brian)

Kyle mentions need to review finding the money and there would be a letter to approve. He noted that \$7,900 is in the Sabbatical Reserve which will probably be sufficient. Richard also was curious how this could work. Kate mentions Stephanie could cover the gap. Richard compares it is like hiring an adjunct to do the job of the professor. Brian mentions that one of more people could organize this, may be best to have a committee. Brian asks for a bulleted outline. Kate mentions the BOT members cover different aspects of the Ministers staff management duties. Christine mentions other duties that also may require cover. Nick asks if motion of sabbatical and financial aspects would be approved separately at a later time as details are clarified. Yes, that will be the case.

Brian makes a motion to move approve the sabbatical leave for Rev Kate. Motion is unanimously approval.

9. Vote: Leadership Training Plan (Raeann)

Raeann notes it has been difficult to recruit leaders. UUA has a leader lab training process. She reviewed the overall process. Richard clarified it is \$30/person/class. If live then it is paid per person. If using recordings it is paid per group.

Kyle thinks it will not automatically attract new participants. Notes there is 164\$ left of budget for this year to help. Who will be responsible for implementation?

Raeann doesnt know yet who will be responsible, but will think about it.

Brian thinks another liaison position could apply. We can pick from the survey respondees. Brian senses we have a hard time to reach all members of the congregation.

No vote was held on this plan, as it needs more work and will be discussed at the board retreat.

10. Assistant Treasurer position (discussion/vote) (Kyle)

- a. Kyle shares his screen with an updated description of the Treasurer position. The proposal is unchanged from prior duties, shaving about $\frac{1}{3}$ of duties from the Treasurer. Brian appreciates the explicit motion at the top of proposal. He suggests a lapping term period so two people do not need to be found at the same time.
- b. Nick mentions that a 3 year commitment just asks them to consider that time period.
- c. Brian calls vote, all in favor with unanimous approval.
- d. Jean clarifies Lee Carnes is aware.

11. Board Retreat Planning (Brian/Jim)

- A. Nick brings up schedule for board retreat planning. Brian raises: will any attend remotely? Arthur will consider.
- C. Jim clarifies that may be helpful to update the board on the capital campaign.
- D. Kyle mentions to clarify the cycle we operate on and to discuss this at the July board meeting to review and approve.
- E. Jean clarifies a lot of work needs to be done to approve the strategic plan as well before July. BJ will work with Jean to help.

12. Future Business (All)

- A. Officer Elections
- B. Strategic Plan
- C. Assessment Schedule
- D. Progress toward Strategic Plan
- E. Composting Proposal
- F. Behavioral Covenant

13. Acknowledgements and Appreciation (All)

- A.) Brian acknowledges 3 folks leaving board: Raeann very much appreciate leader training. Nick - feel sorry for Maria to take over after you, and thank you for the job as secretary. Chris - quiet but when you do something it does get done.
- B.) Kate - extends gratitude to all 3 departing members and thank you for your community.
- C.) Nick - thanks to his class of board members, Chris for diving into the safety committee with Bob. Raeann appreciated your ability to be the president! Kyle - appreciate your detail orientation!
- D.) Jean says thank you to all departing board members for your efforts.
- E.) Raeann says thank you to everyone and will see everyone around! Thank you to Jim for being Vice President!
- F.) Richard thanks all outgoing board members for all the behind the scenes work! Thank you to Jim for stepping up so he didnt have to!
- G.) Kyle thanks off going board members!
- H.) Brian thanks everyone and adjourns the meeting!

14. Adjourn (Brian) (8:55)

Respectfully submitted,
Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: July 16, 2025

Maria Lauro
Secretary of the Board