

Town Hall Gathering

On September 10, 2023 at 12:30 in the sanctuary and over Zoom, the church board of trustees will sponsor a discussion about a special congregational meeting to consider a vote to release restricted funds, which is scheduled to take place at a on Sunday, September 24th at 12:30 p.m.

Attached are the materials for that special meeting, which we will discuss but not vote upon at the town hall gathering.

Agenda – Special Congregational Meeting
 First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin
 Sunday, September, 24, 2023, 12:30 pm – 1:30pm in the Sanctuary and on
 Zoom: <https://zoom.us/my/firstuuaustin>, Password is 512452

	Pp.	Min	Time
1. Welcome and Call to Order, Vic Cornell		10	12:30
a. Unison Reading of Covenant and Lighting of Chalice			
b. Adopt Consent Agenda			
• Rules of Procedure			
c. Adopt Agenda			
2. Congregational to Withdraw \$106,887 from the Restricted Savings Fund to Cover the Construction Loan Note for 2024		20	12:40
3. Joys/Concerns/Intentions		10	1:00
4. Closing Reading and Extinguish Chalice		5	1:10
5. Adjourn			1:15

A COVENANT OF HEALTHY RELATIONS

As a religious community, we promise:

To Welcome and Serve

- By being intentionally hospitable to all people of good will
- By being present with one another through life's transitions
- By encouraging the spiritual growth of people of all ages

To Nurture and Protect

- By communicating with one another directly in a spirit of compassion and good will
- By speaking when silence would inhibit progress
- By disagreeing from a place of curiosity and respect
- By interrupting hurtful interactions when we witness them
- By expressing our appreciation to each other

To Sustain and Build

- By affirming our gratitude with generous gifts of time, talent and money for our beloved community
- By honoring our commitments to ourselves and one another for the sake of our own integrity and that of our congregation
- By forgiving ourselves and others when we fall short of expectations, showing good humor and the optimism required for moving forward

Thus do we covenant with one another

Approved at congregation meeting May 5, 2013

First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin Congregational Meeting Rules of Procedure

1. Order of Business

The order of business will follow the meeting notice unless the order of business is changed by a majority vote.

2. Means of Voting

Unless specified otherwise in advance, members may attend meetings in person or remotely. As long as a quorum is present (ten percent of voting members of the congregation), voice votes, or a show of hands, including through digital means, will be used, unless the bylaws specify otherwise. Two or more people shall be designated as vote counters by the chair at the outset of the meeting in the event that a vote count is needed. All matters will be determined by the number of votes cast by members present and voting, as long as there is a quorum, unless the meeting notice allows absentee voting.

3. Presentation of Items

A Board Member or the appropriate Committee Chair will move the action items as distributed in the meeting notice.

4. Amendments

No one may offer an amendment until there has been at least ten minutes of debate on the main question as moved, unless no one else wants to speak to the main question or it is a clarifying amendment. Anyone making an amendment must submit it in writing before it is discussed. Assistance will be provided as needed.

5. Time limits

These time limits will apply to all the business of the meeting. If no one objects, the Chair may grant minor extensions. Time limits may be extended by a two-thirds vote.

- a. No one may speak on any motion for more than two minutes or more than once as long as anyone else is waiting to speak, except that persons with special information may answer questions with the Chair's permission.
- b. No item will be discussed in the meeting for more than 30 minutes. Discussion time will be divided equally by alternating between speakers at who identify as pro and con. Discussion may also include points of clarification or amendments.
- c. No one may call the previous question if there are persons both pro and con waiting to speak and the time for discussion is not over. If the Chair sees no speakers for the con position, then the Chair may call for a vote.
- d. All speakers who are in person must speak using a microphone.

6. Budget Motions

Anyone making a motion concerning the budget must submit it to the Chair in writing and must provide for reduction in specific categories equal to any increase in spending in the motion. A simple majority vote is required to adopt motions concerning the budget.

7. Items Not in the Meeting Notice

Items of a substantial nature which are not in the meeting notice shall not be considered. Committees with items of substantial importance must have the item prepared far enough in advance for inclusion in the meeting notice.

8. Amending the Rules of Procedure

These rules of procedure will be adopted by a majority vote and may be changed during the meeting by a simple majority.

9. Adjournment

The meeting will adjourn no later than two hours or at such time as a quorum is no longer present after the Chair has called the meeting to order. The meeting may be extended in 15-minute increments by a simple majority vote for as much as one additional hour.

ARTICLE XIV: CHURCH SAVINGS AND ENDOWMENT FUNDS

Section 1: Savings Fund (formerly Memorial Savings Fund)

At the end of each fiscal year, operating funds in excess of two months budgeted expenses for the next fiscal year shall be transferred into the church Savings Fund. Funds may be withdrawn according to two rules:

1. A maximum of five and one half (5.5) percent of the Savings Fund as valued on September 30 of each year may be made available to the operating fund for the subsequent fiscal year.
2. Any other expenditures from the Savings Fund may be made only after approval by a two- thirds vote of the members present and voting at a regular or called congregational meeting. The value of the Savings Fund may not be reduced through withdrawals permitted by Section 1.B to less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000).

2014 Capital Campaign for Building Expansions and Renovations and Loan History

Capital Campaign

- Congregational priorities for expansions and renovations were set through a series of facilitated sessions with congregation members held before the campaign began (Chris Jimmerson was one of the facilitators).
- The campaign began in 2014 with contract assistance from Klote and Associates.
 - People were asked to make a total pledge that could be paid in contributions spread out over 6 years, i.e., through 2019 or 2020, depending upon when they scheduled their contributions to begin. Thus, contributions to the campaign ended mainly in 2020.
 - Canvassers were given training and support. Visits for the asks were made in person and included making the ask for pledges for the 2015 operating budget at the same time.
- The original budget for the capital improvements was \$6,000,000.
- The campaign actually raised \$3,070,000.
 - The church calculated an attrition rate when budgeting for what would be possible for the capital improvements given the amount raised, knowing some folks would end up not being able to fully pay out their pledges. However, new contributions from new members who joined after the initial campaign ended up offsetting this attrition rate.
- Given the actual amount raised, budgeting for the capital improvements was based upon the priorities established in the sessions mentioned above.
 - Highest priorities that we were able to put into the capital improvements budget included:
 - Renovating and expanding the sanctuary,
 - Renovating the gallery,
 - New sanctuary restrooms,
 - Some minimal improvements to Howson Hall,
 - A new, larger kitchen, equipment, and storage area.
 - Other priorities that had to be eliminated from the capital improvements budget included:
 - Increased parking,
 - New/enlarged meeting spaces, including for the forum and Paradox Players,
 - A new entryway for the church,
 - New playgrounds and landscaping,
 - Renovations to the RE Wing.

- To my knowledge, Capital Campaign funds were only spent on the capital campaign and subsequent capital improvements (including the unexpected expenses outlined below), and interest paid on the loan detailed below.

Construction Loan

- Because the contributions toward the capital campaign pledges were spread over six years, the church always knew that a “bridge loan” would be needed to cover construction costs that would be incurred before all capital campaign contributions would be received.
- Because of unexpected events that came up during design and construction, the church incurred greater costs than had been estimated. These unexpected events included (to my memory – Brian Moore would know more details):
 - A hurricane struck Houston, driving materials costs up across the state and delaying construction in some cases;
 - The City of Austin unexpectedly required the church to install a sprinkler system throughout the building rather than just in the areas being renovated;
 - The larger sprinkler system required the installation of a new water main running down Grover Avenue from 49th street, the costs of which the church was required to pay;
 - The exterior walls of the RE wing were discovered to be buckling, which created an unexpected need to construct new walls to shore them up;
 - The building of these new walls resulted in the need for asbestos abatement;
 - Several unexpected needs related to HVAC systems were discovered;
 - Brian Moore can detail any other unexpected items that were discovered during construction.
- The building committee estimated a total loan in the amount of \$1,400,000 would be needed.
- The congregation approved taking the loan at a special meeting held on October 31, 2018. At the meeting, Rev. Meg Barnhouse noted that the note on the loan could be paid through current and future capital campaign funds through sometime in 2023, after which, the note would have to come out of the operating budget if we did not retire the loan sooner. This was also noted in the budget narrative at each subsequent fall pre-congregational and congregational meetings.
- The actual total loan ended up being \$1,368,725.68 and was originated on December 19, 2017.
- The current balance on the loan is about \$1,010,000.

- The current interest rate on the loan is 4.5%, which we negotiated down from 5.3% during the pandemic.
- The bank has the right to reset the interest rate on August 19, 2026.
- The maturity date on the loan is December 19, 2038.