

MEETING MINUTES - First UU Austin Board of Trustees

Meeting

Date	Tuesday, September 19, 2023
Started	6:30 PM
Ended	8:59 PM (CST)
Location	First UU Church of Austin 4700 Grover Ave Austin, TX 78756
Purpose	Regular scheduled meeting
Chaired by	Vic Cornell
Recorder	Gretchen Riehl

Attendance

Present:	Donna Carpenter, Vic Cornell, Suzette Emberton, Russell Holley-Hurt, Joseph Hunt, Chris Jimmerson, Mateo Kresha, Rev. Michelle LaGrave, Evan Mahony they/them, Shannon Posern, Kelly Raley, Dave Riehl, Gretchen Riehl, Nathan Walther
Absent:	Jonalu Johnstone, Jonalu Johnstone, Nesan Lawrence, Sasha Lorenzo, Kelly Stokes, Erin Walter
Invited guests:	Elizabeth Gray

Minutes

1. Coming Back into Covenant

1.1. Chalice Lighting and Opening Words

Suzette is bringing opening & closing readings

Vic read the End is the Beginning by Sofie Sulfan.

Status: Completed

1.2. Reading of Board Covenant

With the Values, Mission and Ends of First UU Austin foremost in mind, we the leadership do covenant to:

- Treat our time together and board commitments as spiritual practice
- Work collaboratively to clarify, assess and further our mission.
- Respect our time together by being focused, prepared and timely.
- Keep confidentiality when it is requested.
- Listen actively, address concerns directly with each other in a timely manner, and encourage others to do the same.
- Presume good faith in all our interactions acknowledging the importance of both intention and impact.
- Conduct ourselves openly, show compassion, respect boundaries, and enjoy each other's good humor in times of agreement and disagreement.
- Publicly support one another's decisions and leadership by speaking with one voice at the end of our deliberations.
- Agree to be called back into covenant.

We read the board covenant together

Status: Completed

1.3. Confirm Timekeeper and Process Evaluator

- Timekeeper = Joseph
- Process Evaluator = Dave

Joseph - timekeeper

David - Process evaluator

Vic announced that he will be leaving for a job in Massachusetts. This is his last meeting.

Status: Completed

1.4. Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda

Consent agenda: Updated Budget & Financials

Agenda and consent agenda were approved. The agenda was added to include a discussion for moving forward without Vic, this Sunday's budget vote and the bylaws change for ministers.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Minutes-2023-08-15-v1.pdf
 - Draft 2024 Budget rolled up SP EDIT.pdf
 - July 2023 Board Financial Report.pdf
-

2. Connecting with our Moral Ownership

2.1. Visitor's Forum

Elizabeth Gray; Reproductive Justice Team

Elizabeth Gray spoke about the Social Justice Reproductive Justice group. She spoke about things that worked well. The mission, Church Center, the freedom to set their own agenda and support from the Side with Love initiative at the UUA. Report attached.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Reproductive justice report 9-19-23.pdf
-

2.2. Recognition of Church Volunteers and Staff

We discussed the cards that were going around. Joseph gets suggestions from staff and also will reach out to the board for suggestions. A few suggestions were made including the teachers as we just had teacher appreciation.

Status: Completed

2.3. Moment with Rev. Chris

There is a COVID outbreak in the church so we are returning to COVID protocols including masks and no hugging.

We have gotten funding for ads on KUT again starting in August. We have seen an increase in new and returning visitors since we restarted them. We have 68 new members in 2023 so far.

Chris heard from John Beurens. He said to tell us good job.

Dave asked about the budget and how it looks related to revenue and expenses.

Status: Completed

2.4. Moment with Rev. Michelle

Non-board transition team is up and running. Michelle has met with them and are getting to know each other and learning their role.

She is putting a lot of effort into supporting the search committee. There is still anxiety but that is understandable given their task. They have the congregational record largely complete and she is reviewing it.

She is working on scenarios to go with the chart Kelly made that is hanging by the board table in Howson Hall.

Her office is much more usable and she is making room for the new. She is also working on cleaning out the library and focusing on books from this century.

Status: Completed

2.4.1. Reflection: History, Systems, Patterns

Michelle led the discussion with her observations. She reflected on our relationship to things and some of our history and former ministers. Discussion ensued regarding the church culture and congregational feelings around these chapters of our history.

Status: Completed

2.5. Response to Vic's resignation

Discussion of Vic's impending departure and our response to it.

There was discussion regarding what the bylaws said and how the nominating committee would be involved. The bylaws wording is:

Board of Trustees vacancies occurring between annual meetings shall be filled by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees after consultation with the Nominating Committee. No person may serve more than six consecutive years without an absence of one year. This six-year term limit applies only to the time spent serving on elected, full terms as officer or other Board member. Time spent finishing out another individual's uncompleted term does not count toward the six- year limit.

We will make an announcement this Sunday during the announcements.

Status: Completed

2.6. Rev. Erin's Mileage Reimbursement Request

The reimbursement was denied as it was not in her contract and we did not reimburse Jonalu for her travel.

Status: Completed

3. Monitoring our Progress

3.1. Discussion of Ends

Discussion around prioritizing ends interpretations?

- Discussion of End 1.4.7

- We provide leadership to and collaborate with the greater Unitarian Universalist community to expand the reach of our movement.
- Discussion of End 1.4.8
- We are generous with time, talent, and treasure to realize our mission.

Note: The monitoring committee and executive leadership have not yet been able to meet to discuss any possible reinterpretations.

Kelly discussed the charge to the monitoring committee, what their work will be this year and how they will move forward. The current process is to review the interpretation one month and the data related to that item the next. The committee will also meet with the ministers prior to their presenting data to the board. They will focus on the ends more than the limitations. Discussion ensued

They are also due to survey the congregation in November but may push that back to January or February due to the pending transitions this fall.

Status: Completed

Documents

- 1.4.8 Ends Interpretation 2022.docx
 - 1.4.7 monitoring report 2022.docx
-

3.2. Monitoring Reports (Ends and/or Executive Limitations)

- Monitoring - 2.4 Financial Conditions
- Monitoring - 2.7 Compensation and Benefits
- Monitoring - End 1.4.6 We partner with other organizations and faith communities to dismantle a culture of white supremacy and other systems of oppression, within ourselves, within our church community, and beyond our walls.

The reports this month focused on 2.4-2.7. Discussion regarding the report ensued. There was also discussion regarding an audit and the best way to do that.

Status: Completed

Documents

- 2.4 Financial Conditions rev09-2023.pdf
 - 2.7 Compensation and Benefits rev 09-2022.pdf
 - 1.4.6 Monitoring Report 2023.pdf
-

3.3. Committee Reports

Status: Completed

3.3.1. Linkage Committee

Communications around co-ministry intentions

Nathan led this discussion. Linkage committee drafted a one pager regarding the thinking around co-lead ministers so we can share this information with the congregation. We will try to present this information before the announcement on October 8. We will frame it around "this is what the board recommends."

Status: Completed

3.3.2. Policy Committee

Dave presented this section. There may be a bylaws change in releasing savings funds and there also may be a bylaws change regarding the move to co-ministers.

Status: Completed

3.3.3. Transitions Committee

Voting proposal

Donna gave an update on their work so far. Kelly has created a detailed poster regarding the scenarios for the ministerial search. They helped Michelle create a non-board transitions team. They will be presenting both the procedures for the election as well as the meaning of the vote. Russell distributed the voting proposal ahead of this meeting. The proposal was for voting procedures where confidentiality is needed while providing for both in person and online voting.

Status: Completed

3.3.4. We Hate My Committee Committee

I don't believe anyone offered to chair

- Nathan Walther
- Russell Holley-Hurt
- Mateo Kresha
- Suzette Emberton

They created a spreadsheet to evaluate possible tools.

Status: Completed

3.4. Saturday's vote on releasing funds from the savings account

Discussion of the vote this coming Sunday.

Discussion regarding how to publicize the vote and the reason for it. Dave also asked for volunteers on Sunday to help with the zoom portion as well as counting the votes. Also need a pulpit announcement.

Status: Completed

4. Learning & Creating the Future

4.1. Board Book Discussion

Book discussion from July was pushed for time. Gretchen is leading discussion.

Governance section of "Widening the Circle"

<https://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/committees/cic/widening/governance>

Gretchen led the discussion of the Governance section of Widening the Circle. Michelle gave an overview of GA.

Opportunities - bring GA more forward in the church, resurrect the connections that David Overton has done; creating sliding scales and subsidizing youth. Need to pay attention to informal governance structures to see where we might be leaving people out.

Doing well - governance is clear and formal; pathways to membership.

Status: Completed

5. Adjourn

5.1. Action Items and Announcements

Let's review the action items from this meeting:

1. Dave will draft language for Shannon on Sunday's vote
2. The linkage committee will draft language on co-lead ministers to distribute to the congregation.
3. Vic will contact nominating committee regarding his departure
4. Vic will contact Erin regarding her reimbursement request

Status: Completed

5.2. Assign Roles for Next Meeting

Assign roles for:

- Readings
- Timekeeper
- Process Evaluator

Evan - book discussion

Joseph - time keeper

Suzette - process evaluator

Status: Completed

5.3. Process Evaluation

Dave reviewed our process. We did well and ended on time.

Status: Completed

5.4. Executive session

The board entered into executive session.

Status: Completed

5.5. Extinguishing the Chalice and Closing Words

Suzette is bringing opening & closing readings

Suzette read the closing words.

Status: Completed
