

MEETING MINUTES - First UU Austin Board of Trustees

Meeting

Date	Tuesday, February 20, 2024
Started	6:30 PM
Ended	8:30 PM (CST)
Location	First Unitarian Universalist Church of Austin, Room 13.
Purpose	Regular scheduled meeting
Chaired by	Gretchen Riehl
Recorder	Dave Riehl

Attendance

Present:	Donna Carpenter, Suzette Emberton, Russell Holley-Hurt, Chris Jimmerson, Pam Knight, Mateo Kresha, Rev. Michelle LaGrave, Nesan Lawrence, Shannon Posern, Dave Riehl, Gretchen Riehl, Tomas Rodriguez, Nathan Walther
Late:	Evan Mahony they/them, Kelly Raley
Regrets:	Sasha Lorenzo, Kelly Stokes

Invited guests: Beki Halpin, Richard Halpin, Representatives of Environmental Non-profit

Meeting documents

- Monitoring committee report – February 2024.pdf

Minutes

1. Coming Back into Covenant

1.1. Chalice Lighting and Opening Words

Kelly Raley agreed to provide the readings

Gretchen read the opening words, provided by Kelly, as Kelly was delayed at the airport returning from a trip.

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.

Status: Completed

1.3. Confirm Timekeeper and Process Evaluator

Nathan Walther agreed to be the timekeeper.

Mateo Kresha agreed to be the process evaluator

Status: Completed

1.4. Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda

Approve the agenda

Approve the consent agenda - minutes of prior meeting.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Minutes-2024-01-16-v1.pdf
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2. Connecting with our Moral Ownership

2.1. Visitor's Forum

I have invited Richard Halpin to present a gift to the congregation to be used for our green sanctuary work. The board will need to accept the gift.

Richard and Beki Halpin, along with two representatives of his environmental non-profit presented a \$1800 check for the Green Sanctuary.

Status: Completed

2.2. Recognition of Church Volunteers and Staff

Discussion of staff and volunteers to be recognized by the board.

Status: Completed

2.3. Moment with Rev. Chris

Rev Chris reported that the Continuing Capital Campaign has collected pledges of \$726k to date. Plans include:

- pay off the remainder of the construction loan mortgage as a top priority
- improve accessibility (if funds available for these others)
- address deferred maintenance
- new main signage
- new playgrounds
- replace flooring, update tables, etc.
- create a "nook" for overflow and possible leasing out

Membership is almost 500.

On February 11, we had 34 visitors.

No financial report this month, but reserves are looking satisfactory.

Does not see a need for a second service now, but maybe early next year.

Talking about a "Hangout with the Ministers" for our online members.

Status: Completed

2.4. Moment with Rev. Michelle

Rev Michelle has spent time working the Installation, Listening Circles, and Transition Committee.

Kelli Stokes is on 6-week partial LOA.

Met with the website team, which is going well.

She will be on 2-week leave in March, and will miss the Board meeting.

Rev Chris plans to be out for the April Board meeting.

Michelle met with the BIPOC group on anti-oppression work with the Congregation.

Status: Completed

2.5. Update from the Board Chair

Upcoming bylaws review

UUA delegate selection process

We are advertising for delegates to General Assembly, which will be virtual this year. Biggest item of business is expected to be the vote on Article 2 (more information on the UUA website). The 8 Principles would be incorporated in the "6 Values". The meeting dates are June 20-23. The Board is highly encouraged to participate.

There was concern about the "Gadfly people" possibly serving as delegates. Our Bylaws do not allow us to bind FUUCA delegates. Also, there is no way to check how they voted. So the best we can do is ensure that our delegates are fully representative of our Congregation.

We discussed the current status of the Bylaws. Since changes to the document have been approved and changed in a piecemeal fashion, there are inconsistencies in format, language, etc., in the document. Also, Joe Milam-Kast pointed out that theoretically in spite of a 90% favorable vote on calling a minister, the Bylaws permit the removal of a minister with a simple majority of a quorum. This could be as little as 5% of the Congregation. While this is unlikely (the meeting would be likely well-attended), that section needs review.

Dave Riehl pointed out that the overhaul of the Bylaws would be a good project for a Policy Committee including a lawyer. Karen Neeley has volunteered for the Board, and is a past Board member with experience shaping the Bylaws. He recommends taking this project up in the next Board term.

Status: Completed

3. Monitoring our Progress

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

Discussion of the new Monitoring report format showed it was well received by all, but especially by Russell and Suzette.

Status: Completed

Documents

- 1.4.4 monitoring Report 02-2024.pdf
 - 1.4.5 monitoring 2-2024.pdf
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3.2. Committee reports

Monitoring committee

Transitions committee

Linkage committee

Policy committee

I hate my committee committee

Evan gave the Monitoring Committee report. They have met with both ministers. They have received 152 responses to the Congregational Survey.

Rev Chris suggested going away from an anonymous survey, and Gretchen agrees. It seems that currently it is hard to generate actionable results and follow-up on given responses is difficult. Associating a name (with privacy) with a given response would screen out non-serious responses and permit detailed follow-up.

The Transitions Committee is setting up the Listening Circles for the upcoming search, Q&A's are on target, and will be published after the vote. Documentation for the committee is ready to go.

Status: Completed

Documents

- Transitions Team Report 2.20.24.docx
 - monitoringcommittee02-24.pdf
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3.3. Ministerial model discussion

Discussion and vote to determine the ministerial model we will use to guide our search for the second minister. The three options are called co-lead minister, called associate minister, or hired assistant minister.

As planned, we discussed the ministerial model to use for our second minister. The "hired" model was rejected out of hand due to the obvious lack of support from the Board and the Congregation at large.

We then discussed the pros and cons of an associate minister versus a co-lead minister. The question was called, and Nathan made the motion to pursue a called co-lead minister. Donna seconded. The vote was unanimous in favor.

Gretchen will write an email tomorrow to announce our decision to the Congregation. This supports our schedule for Feb 25 deadline to begin the nomination cycle for the Search Committee, and the March 18 deadline for nominations to that Committee.

Status: Completed

3.4. Interim minister coverage for August 2024-July2025

Discussion of options for ministerial coverage once Michelle's initial year is completed. This may include adjourning to an executive session.

Rev Michelle has expressed her interest in staying with us for another year as the interim minister supporting the external search. We conducted a private vote by email after the meeting to decide to formally extend an offer to her. Note: this vote was conducted one day after the actual Board meeting and was unanimous to hire her for the additional year.

Gretchen has since extended the offer to Michell, and she accepted in early March. The contract has not yet been finalized, but Gretchen and Michelle are working on it.

Status: Completed

4. Learning & Creating the Future

4.1. Board Book Discussion

Discussion of the next section of Widening the Circle of Concern - Living Our Values in the World. It can be found [here](#).

The book discussion was tabled until our next meeting due to lack of available time.

Status: Completed

5. Adjourn

5.1. Action Items and Announcements

Let's review the action items from this meeting:

Gretchen will write an email to the Board with the results of vote on Michelle's extension. (complete)

Gretchen will continue finalizing the contract with Michelle.

Russell will finalize the FAQ's with input from Rev Chris.

Status: Completed

5.2. Assign Roles for Next Meeting

Assign roles for:

- Readings
- Timekeeper
- Process Evaluator
- Book discussion

Readings: Evan

Timekeeper: Donna

Process Evaluation: Russell

Book Discussion: Evan

Status: Completed

5.3. Process Evaluation

The meeting was satisfactory. With the large amount of important business we finished a little late, even after dropping the Book Discussion.

Status: Completed

5.4. Extinguishing the Chalice and Closing Words

Status: Completed
