

First Unitarian Society Board of Trustees Minutes

Date and Time: June 13, 2018 6:30 – 9:00 pm

Location: FUS, Gaebler Living Room

Attendees:

Trustees:

- Joe Kremer, President (Governance Committee)
- Chip Quade, Secretary
- Maureen Friend (Personnel Committee)
- March Schweitzer (Finance Committee)
- Dorit Bergen
- Mike Lienau
- John McGevna

Youth Advisors:

- Henry Hill-Gorman

Clergy and Staff:

- Michael Schuler
 - Kelly Crocker
 - Monica Nolan
-

Unable to attend: Youth Advisor Alison Cotter

Materials: Previous month's minutes, Staff update, Communications plan, Solar timeline

Current Vision of Ministry:

- Within us, enhance opportunities for spiritual, intellectual, and personal growth
 - Among us, nurture members in all stages of life and commit to build deeper connections
 - Beyond us, embody our UU principles in the larger community as we engage in outreach, service, advocacy, and activism
-

Six-month Board Focal Points:

- Governance during the interim period
 - Communication
 - Radical hospitality
-

Opening reading

From Michael.

Check-ins

Consent agenda

Minutes of the May meeting were approved by consent.

Agenda review and correction

No changes to the agenda.

Committee and task force updates

Sanctuary update

The Dane Sanctuary Coalition has three committees. Dorit Bergen is on the Community Resources team, which deals with volunteers in the broadest sense. A donation in support of software for

volunteer signups has been received. (The donated system, at a cost of about \$500, might be something we would want to look at in the future, if we ever want to move away from our current Volunteer Scheduling system.)

FUS is about to start compiling a detailed notebook, like The Road Home has. Ian Shay will work on this with Arden Rice. At some point, we'd like staff involvement because staff know a lot of the details.

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Quad Cities went about this the opposite of the way that we did. They became a sanctuary congregation and now would like to create a coalition. They've expressed an interest in learning from us.

The Young African Leaders Initiative (<https://yali.state.gov/>) is a program for up and coming leaders. They're hosting an upcoming panel on immigration, and Dorit Bergen will serve as a panelist. So this is an example of how FUS's good work spreads.

Several individuals, including Tim Cordon of FUS and Jeff Spitzer-Resnick of CSS, are planning a program for July 22nd at FUS. A volunteer attorney with the Community Immigration Law Center will participate. They run a program and are in need of volunteers.

An article in today's Capital Times today mentions a James Reeb fundraiser to support the installation of a shower and some other changes, so that they can be a host congregation.

Sustainability

Monica provided a draft timeline to help the Board, staff, and task force get onto the same page about the vision. We had approached the Foundation to see if they're willing to be a part of the co-op. The Foundation is willing to hear us out on this issue.

Personnel

Molly Kelly's final day was today.

Staff Update Q&A

We're in better shape with respect to our Annual Campaign goal than we were at this time last year, in terms of both the number of pledges and the total pledged amount. Pledges will continue to come in during the fall – we typically receive about 800 pledges and we've had 599 as of June 3rd.

Staff presented the Lay Ministry Fiscal Year-End Report, with details about the number and type of contacts during the last year. It is believed that some members of the congregation are unclear about what the Lay Ministry Team is, or what it does.

Board Administration

Preparing for new Board members – Status of Board member orientation materials

Materials are under development. We're not clear about how we want to use them. In one on one meetings? Or, in a meeting for all new Board members at one time? Or, all Board members at the same time?

Board self-evaluation update

Board members will be contacted, interviews will be scheduled for July, and a report will be delivered in September.

Annual conflict of interest forms for 2018-19

At our leisure, Board members should sign and submit these to Monica.

Should it be the secretary's responsibility to keep documents? Practically speaking, yes. Is this reasonable? Yes.

Update on restrictions on food/beverages for snack breaks

Members of the Board bring snacks and beverages to share at business meetings. Typically, we share the snacks and beverages during a break at the halfway point of a meeting. Occasionally, the beverages have included beer and wine. It has come to the Board's attention that several of our partners in the FUS community expressed concerns about the presence and consumption of alcohol at the Board's business meetings.

The members of the Board of Trustees resolve that:

FUS has always allowed the responsible use of alcohol by adults at various congregational functions. In particular, the Board has followed established best practice of ensuring that, if alcohol is available during a Board meeting break, and minors are present, the alcohol is closely supervised at all times.

We respect each member's choice to drink alcohol served at social occasions, member recognition events, fundraisers, and other parish-sponsored functions.

However, the Board of Trustees strives to create an open and inclusive environment for our meetings, which will continue to include youth representatives. Toward this goal, we have decided not to bring alcoholic beverages to our Board business meetings.

The Board discussed whether to update the policy manual with a statement to this effect. Maybe append this to our Board Covenant (a section of the policy manual)? The policy manual describes our governance system. Perhaps a statement on this topic might not rise to the level of being in a policy manual.

We are choosing to document this resolution by including it in the minutes of this meeting, and we expect it to remain in our institutional memory.

Do we need a communication plan for disseminating a message about this? We don't need a message to the congregation at large. Send this out to selected individuals? For the most part, no – only if it persists as an issue, and it seems to have died down.

Did we ever respond to Deb and Lynda? Yes, Joe responded several months ago. As a follow-up, Joe could send a message to Lynda, Deb, and Leslie along the lines of: "When this originally came up, we suspended our practice of sharing alcoholic beverages at meetings. Having taken some time to reflect, here's where we are now and we'd like to share this with you."

Do we need a Board orientation guide, and would this be an appropriate part of a Board orientation guide?

UUA resources: Board training

The UUA has published some material at:

www.uua.org/management/board-training

March has taken a look. Some of it is very interesting. Certain parts would be useful for us as a Board. Whether it's useful for new Board members is a different story. It might be more appropriate for those who've been on the Board for a while. **There could be value in Board members getting together to talk about this.**

The UU University Governance Track Participant Booklet, by Unity Consulting. 32 pages. Might be worth reviewing. Nine principles of policy-based governance for congregations. It delves into "What kind of Board do you think you are?" A visioning board? Executive Leadership?

Unity Consulting is not always consistent with Dan Hotchkiss and his model of governance. Also, Dan H has updated his book – there's a revised edition. The web site contains a short video from Dan H – "I want to give some better idea of what policy-based governance is." He may be shifting his idea of how this works. **We might want to get the latest edition of his book.**

The Board should learn to ask good questions. How do we find the questions that we should be posing to people?

Some upcoming opportunities: A workshop at GA. The revised edition of the Dan Hotchkiss book. The training materials. How do we craft an approach to how we want to incorporate this into our work? We suspect that Doug will be working through this material too, and may want to talk with us about it.

Adding a second Board meeting?

A couple of things point toward the need for more than one two-hour Board meeting per month. In her meeting with us, Sharon Dittmar indicated that one two-hour meeting per month would be the norm for a congregation much smaller than ours. Also, we almost always run long and we sometimes don't reach conclusions on our discussion topics.

At the same time, we're not clear exactly what we want to be doing with an additional meeting per month. We note the tension between wanting a low investment of time and a high degree of clarity on the issues. And we're not clear about what kind of Board we are. A visioning board? An executive leadership board?

Some other questions and opinions that came up during the discussion:

- If we add another meeting each month, who should be in attendance?
- Would we create an agenda? Or be free-flowing?
- Should we start with a really good question?
- Why do we need more time? Specifically what would we like to gain?
- How come we don't feel like we can delegate to the staff?
- Should we visit Unity Temple to see how they handle their Board meetings? Should we attend one of their visioning sessions?
- What do other congregations do?
- What would Doug and our governance committee say about how we're currently having meetings?
- Do we need to delegate more work to task forces?
- At GA, can we get together with representatives from Unity Temple and learn from them?
- We need some dedicated time for *not* working on operations stuff.

We are going to hold off on a decision about this until we can gather more information and reflect further.

July 18 Board meeting – a social gathering at FUS – what start time?

5:30. Invite family? No, they'll view it as a burden.

Joe will circulate a sign-up sheet. If you can estimate the number of brats, burgers, and dogs you'd be interested in, that'll give Joe a target for shopping. Monica and Kelly will be there.

Board goals for 2018-19

As part of the Strategic Planning process, the Board and the executive leadership developed Visions of Ministry and Visions of Organizational Health. For each vision item, the Board generated "outcomes." For each outcome, the staff generated goals. The Board also intended to generate goals.

The net result was too many outcomes. Feedback from the staff was: "What are we going to do with all of these? What are the priorities? When we don't know what the Board meant by a particular outcome, what should we do? This is overwhelming."

It would have been nice to hone the outcomes to a manageable number. Also, some of the proposed Board goals were more about operations than about potential Board-level work.

With the draft Board Goals for 2018-19: March and Dorit will review them and pull out the items that look like Board-level items that we – the Board – really want to work on in the coming year. We are not expecting any specific number of items to come out of this review – it might be five. Or more. Or less. Who knows?

Ideas for how we could improve the process going forward:

- Maybe with our Second Monthly Board Meeting we could have honed the outcomes into something more manageable. And then we could have done our Board goals.
- What about a combined Board and Staff meeting, where we get to have a conversation about proposed outcomes? We could all look at the plan together, and where necessary, the Board could provide clarification along the lines of “This is what we mean by X, and this is why it’s important.”
- It might have been useful to have our discussion about “who we are and how we work together” before creating the goals.

Entrant Fees for FUS Fundraisers

Under this heading, we discussed several topics. The stated topic was: Some members of our congregation can’t afford tickets to some of our events. Should we find a way to offer discounted or no-cost tickets to members of the congregation sometimes? The Board is conflicted about *whether* to do this, and *how* to do this. One option would be to offer half-price or free tickets to people who volunteer a certain number of hours toward the event.

From this we shifted gears to: Volunteers feel like they’re not getting enough support from leadership, and would like to feel that they’re getting more support. We heard this specifically from the Cabaret team. We’re unclear about how to interpret this.

More broadly, we are unclear whether this is a Board-level policy discussion. Yes, Cabaret is our biggest fundraiser. However, we don’t want to get into a position where the Board makes decisions about individual programs and whether they’re working well. Even if Board members have opinions about programs, it’s not clear that these opinions should generate a Board agenda item.

Some possible action items:

- To determine whether there is an issue arising from Cabaret that needs to be addressed, we should get hold of the notes from the Cabaret team’s debriefing meeting and review them for issues that we need to consider.
- If members of the Cabaret team are saying that we, as a Board, are not supporting them, we want to see what they mean. We want to stay away from evaluating individual programs, but we can pose the question: “We heard that you felt that something was lacking from leadership. What does that mean? We really want to support you and other teams in the future. Do you have feedback for us?”
- When the time is right, let’s come back to the question about whether volunteers get free admission to certain events.
- It is possible that we have a role within the FUS community of being visible, generating enthusiasm, and generating goodwill? What do WE think our responsibilities are, in terms of supporting volunteers? We should explore these questions.

Update on creating a policy for donor-restricted funds/initiatives that fall outside of the budget process

This wasn’t meant to be a topic for this meeting. Proposals will go to the finance committee.

Closing words

For Retirement

by John O'Donohue

This is where your life has arrived,
After all the years of effort and toil;
Look back with graciousness and thanks
On all your great and quiet achievements.

You stand on the shore of new invitation
To open your life to what is left undone;
Let your heart enjoy a different rhythm
When drawn to the wonder of other horizons.

Have the courage for a new approach to time;
Allow it to slow until you find freedom
To draw alongside the mystery you hold
And befriend your own beauty of soul.

Now is the time to enjoy your heart's desire,
To live the dreams you've waited for,
To awaken the depths beyond your work
And enter into your infinite source.