

First Unitarian Society Board of Trustees Minutes

Date and Time: October 17, 2018 6:30 – 8:30 pm

Location: Gabler Living Room

Attendees:

Trustees:

- Joe Kremer, President (Governance Committee)
- Terri Pepper, President-Elect
- Megan James, Secretary (Personnel Committee)
- Dorit Bergen
- Mike Lienau
- John McGevna
- March Schweitzer (Finance Committee)

Youth Advisors:

- Jenna Grade

Clergy and Staff:

- Doug Wadkins, Interim Minister
- Monica Nolan, Executive Director

Absent:

- Sarah Bennett, Youth Advisor
 - Kelly Crocker, Minister of Congregational Life
-

Materials:

- September, 2018 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
 - Staff Updates
-

Current Vision of Ministry – We will...

- Increase opportunities for exposure to the rich diversity of human experiences, beliefs, and identities within our FUS community and in the larger world.
 - Build and nurture deeper connections among our members in all our work.
 - Live our UU principles within our larger community.
-

Opening Reading

Reading from *Goodbye to Tolerance* by Denise Levertov, courtesy of Mike

Board Member Check-ins

Last Meetings Minutes

Approved

Pension Plan Document

The current pension plan document that guides how we function with the UUA was last updated in 2014. There has been a small modification to the document as a result of adding the FICA offset for our ministers based on previous conversations.

We didn't have FICA offset previously when calculating pension, it was just salary and housing. Defining that we are going to exclude FICA as a portion of compensation. It is what is in the contract with Doug and Kelly is in agreement.

- Motion to approve the language in the UUA Employer Participation Agreement by Dorit. Mike seconded the motion.
- Vote: 7-0, motion passed

Committee Check-ins

- Governance Committee – no update but they have a meeting set up
- Finance Committee – no update
- Personnel Committee
 - Introductory meeting since new members
 - Worked through charter
 - Review of past accomplishments and priorities
 - Brainstormed projects for this year
 - Providing updating employment agreements and compensation review
 - Continuing to improve the Staff onboarding process
- Monica – transition is set for her leave
 - Leslie will be monitoring her Inbox

Staff Updates

How to Enhance the Connection Between Board and Staff - Doug

- There is a sense of tension at times between Staff and Board
- Suggested that we set up a time to get Staff and Board to get together and have a deeper conversation together to build a better rapport between the Board and Staff
- The Board would get a chance to hear what the Staff feels is important
- Strongly recommended that we schedule it during the day instead of asking the Staff to come in on their off hours
 - 4pm would be a good time
- Suggestion to do a small social first as a get-to-know-you
 - Have something to subject or topic to lead the conversation
- Reinstate the practice to have Board Members at Staff meetings
 - Monica will start a sign up for that
- Possibly bring back the practice of having a Staff come to part of a Board meeting and have a discussion of the vision of ministry, objective, goals, and the outcomes of the goals from the previous year

Process for selecting members of the Minister Search Task Force - Doug

- Questions are already being asked, so this is a review so that the Board has the information and knows what to expect and how to answer questions
- In general the Ministerial search processes starts the last year of the transition processes
- The recommended processes from the UUA has the Board engage the entire Congregation (generally by email)

- Ask the question: What three members of the Congregation would you trust to guide the processes of searching for a new minister.
 - The Board would engage the Congregation in differ way, possibly table with an iPad where they can vote
 - Let them know they can email it
 - They can tell a Board Member if they choose to
- The Board compiles a list and out of that list you put together a grouping of people who got the most votes.
- From that list you put together a balanced (based on demographics, skill set, temperament, ect.)
 - A group of 8 is a good number of members
 - Speak to those at the top of the list that were voted and ask them if they are willing to be on this task force
- The group is brought to the Congregation to be approved
 - If it isn't approved, then the group is reworked
- Has worked with other Congregations that attempted to do it their own way and it failed, but when they used this processes it was remarkably better
- The group needs to be in place the summer before the search would begin
 - Early next year, around February, there will be a conversation around if we are going to be ready to start the search
 - Extending the interim process to 3 years may be needed
 - More often Congregations are finding that a third year leads to a more successful search leading to longer tenure
 - Will give an update and thoughts on where things stand in February if feels that we are ready after 6 month evaluation period
- Use the UUA Transition Handbook for a timeline

Discuss Parish Meeting Outcomes

- The transition task force will be compiling the information
- In the small groups, some people went off topic and wanted to discuss other things, maybe in the future have some time for open discussion so that the Congregation can have their thoughts heard
- Overall seemed to be good group discussions
- For next meeting, we should work on getting more youth and 20's – 30's demographics to come
- Moving forward, no one will be able to schedule a room for other meetings during the parish meeting
- Suggested that we share the year's parish meeting dates more frequently and earlier

Policy Governance

- Discussion on the training and how we can better implement and follow
- Continue to better define what the role of the Board versus what is the responsibility of the Staff
- We need to stay mindful of policy

Staffing

- Dorit raised a concern about the amount of work that has been assigned to the Staff during other Staff's absence or when other Staff leave
 - For example, if there is no coffee on a Sunday, the Staff feel like they need to take care of it
 - Need to make it known that it's ok for the Staff to tell their supervisors that they have too much to take on more
- Doug: In this Congregation, the level of Staff anxiety and struggle is noticeable
 - Based on experience with other Congregations and looking at their Staffing structures, there is a justification for the anxiety
 - Need to find an empowering way to increase the sense of responsibility and be more honest of how that comes about with the Congregation
 - The budget forces the Staff to cover more than they can possibly cover and each year have to do more because another Staff position is eliminated
 - You are not going to get the same level of support from the Staff if you continue to decrease the budget
 - Need to be more transparent around the budget and its effects
- Discussion about letting the Staff know that as a Board that we have their back, if there are no volunteers to make coffee, ushers, etc, then we don't expect Staff to have to do it
 - Also working with the Staff so that they don't feel that they have to step up and fill those gaps
- Part of the job of the Board is not to jump too quickly to solve the problem, instead examine are we really at the heart of the problem and perpetuates the cycle

Closing Reading

Mike, a quote by Thomas Merton

Agenda Items for Future Meetings

- Continued discussion on Policy Governance
 - Training for the Board