

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia

MINUTES Board of Trustees Meeting, Apr 17, 2024 (approved May 15, 2024)

Attendance Marc Drews (President*)

John Logue (President-Elect*)

Karen Brown (Secretary*)

Deb Matherly (Past President*)

Jeanette Walton (Treasurer*^Z)

Board Members: Regina Moody, Nancie Shillington-Pérez, George Johnson, Rev. Stephen Robinson (Minister**), Ginny Verne (Finance Chair**)

Visitors: Tom Clements (Chair, Personnel Committee)

Absent: Susan Legacy

*Executive Committee, ^ZZoom

Call to order

Marc (President) called the meeting to order at 2:34pm. The meeting was held in-person and Zoom.

Chalice lighting

Rev Stephen lit the chalice, sharing a quote about our collective power which comes, in part, from bringing different viewpoints to the group and being able to disagree.

Covenant and check-in

We will treat each other as we would wish to be treated by listening to the opinions of all members with equal respect and responding in a kind and thoughtful manner.

APPROVALS

Accept the agenda

Karen moved to accept the April 2024 agenda as amended. (seconded, carried)

Approve the minutes

Nancie moved to accept the March minutes as amended by email. (seconded, carried)

Accept the consent agenda

John moved to approve the April 2024 consent agenda (Recent Committee Reports, February Revenues & Expenses Reports, Restricted Funds; and Balance Sheets). (seconded, carried)

UPDATES

From the President

Finance Committee appointment. Marc asked for the minutes to reflect that Bill Martin was appointed to the Finance Committee by email vote. [Note: On Mar 30, 2024, Nancie (LDC Chair) moved, by email, that Bill be appointed to the Finance Committee.]

Communications. Marc asked for ideas on how communications and publicity might be better coordinated and aligned. It was noted that coordination, rather than forming a new committee, would likely be the most effective approach, and the Church Administrator might be the person best positioned to fulfill this role. Ginny said she would like information about the church be made available to visitors on Sunday morning. Marc suggested that the Membership Committee be asked how to address this, perhaps by offering a small information packet to visitors.

Annual Meeting planning. Marc proposed a template for committee chairs to use for completing their annual reports. The June 2nd Sunday service will be devoted to highlighting the work of committees, while the meeting after the service will focus on conducting church business. Marc and Rev Stephen will begin planning the service and seek to involve board members in visible roles during the service.

Treasurer's Report

Jeanette reported that finances are running smoothly, and there is ample flexibility given the \$82,000 undesignated cash reserves.

Minister's report (including staff update)

Rev. Robinson reported that March was a good month. He thanked Ginny for getting the pledge drive started so well. Pledges seem to be on track. He enjoyed having two women's history month service speakers. Bill (Sexton) deserves kudos for his efforts to get the playground ready for Spring, with mulch and edging – and for coping effectively with a fallen tree. There was a glitch in the ADP payroll system which resulted in staff paychecks being delayed over the weekend (3 days). Michele (Bookkeeper) communicated with ADP and staff to ensure staff were aware and to expedite resolution. We have three new potential nursery worker hires, so we can probably stop advertising for that position.

Highlights and Additions to Committee Reports

Personnel Committee (PC) – Tom Clements (Chair) reported that a new nursery worker has completed the baby Red Cross Certification and will be ready to start on Monday. The notice for the DRE job position was advertised on March 25th. Emilia Gunning (Publicity Chair) made a graphic for the ad which was posted on the UCC website, the eblast and the UUA website. The notice will be left up until May 1st. The PC has held off advertising on paid job ad websites because this will likely result in being swamped with applications from people who are not really interested in the position. The PC is forming an interview committee. The Letters of Agreement for staff (LOAs), will be presented to the board by May for approval by June. The PC plans to change the Sexton and Bookkeeper hours a few additional hours per week.

Membership Committee – Karen (Secretary) explained the steps being taken now (mid-April) to update the UCC member list in preparation for the annual meeting, as required by bylaws. Karen recently sent an email to board members with a link to a timeline of tasks. The list of members eligible to vote must be posted two weeks before the meeting. Notice of the meeting, items on the agenda, and nominations need to be emailed to the congregation and posted, as well.

Finance Committee – Ginny (Chair) reported that pledges turned in, so far, represent 75% of the budget and 75% of the pledging units. She explained why she will propose planning a deficit budget this year. Nancie shared her hope that some of the cash reserve can also be set aside for a capital campaign to support renovation of the RE wing.

Denominational Connections Committee – Deb (Chair) reported that three people applied to serve as UCC delegates at the Unitarian Universalist Association General Assembly (GA). The committee recommends these three people to serve as delegates: Karen Brown, Pat Mohr and Deb Matherly. Marc complimented the committee's work to engage the congregation in the upcoming Article 2 issues. Regina noted that the committee is also looking at how the congregation will move forward *after* the GA vote (given its divisiveness). Deb reported that she had recently attended a weekend *Jubilee Anti-Racism Training* hosted by the South Carolina Unitarian Universalist Justice Alliance (SCUJJA). She said several participants wanted to learn more about the upcoming changes to Article 2 and were interested in having a state-wide meeting to discuss it.

Caring Committee – John (Liaison) said Jim Kimbler will be putting together a proposal for the Caring Committee to support online access to Sunday services for people who cannot attend in-person due to infirmity or hospitalization. The proposal will include important guidelines for volunteers – do's and don'ts – and might include a budget request to purchase devices that can be loaned. In the discussion, it was noted that it would be important to consult with the UCC insurance company about how to best manage liability concerns.

Ad hoc Committee on Bylaws – George (Chair) reported that the committee has had several meetings over the last several months. Committee members seem to agree that only minor changes in wording are needed. Regina has conducted a survey of committee chairs to identify any changes needed. A Phase II of the study is recommended.

Archive and History Ad Hoc Committee – Regina (Chair) noted that archives-related items are being stored in Room 7. The next step will be to share information with the congregation in ways that facilitate a sense of meaning and ownership. The 75th Anniversary of UCC will take place next year (UCC was founded in 1950.). One possible theme under consideration is, *Relaying the Promise*.

Building and Grounds Committee – Regina (Liaison) noted that the City of Columbia plans to grind the stumps of the two large trees that were cut down in the sidewalk right-of-way area.

Children and Youth Religious Exploration Committee (CYRE) – Nancie (Liaison) reported that Sunday attendance has grown to the point where the children's class is now being divided into two age groups.

Leadership Development Committee – Nancie (Chair) reported that the committee may have identified someone to chair or co-chair the Technology Services Committee next year.

OLD BUSINESS

Rental Agreement. John moved to approve the revised Rental Agreement (seconded, carried).

Building Use Policy. Concern was expressed about the need for a rental policy which would combine all the essential rental and building-use information in one place. The policy would also serve as an authoritative guide for resolving potentially contentious, controversial, or difficult building-use questions. Marc agreed to appoint an ad hoc committee to develop a policy.

NEW BUSINESS

Lock-up Schedule. There was discussion about the need to remind / confirm with board members that they are responsible to lock up the building on the upcoming Sunday and to have a back-up person available. Also, the kitchen crew needs to know which board member is locking up that day. During the discussion, Rev Stephen texted with Cyndi (Administrator), and said she agreed to email a reminder to the responsible board member each Friday and to add that person's name to the calendar insert in the OOS each week. [Note: Cyndi will also post the list on the kitchen door.] Board members took a few minutes to revise the lock-up schedule.

Appointment of Delegates to the UUA General Assembly. Deb moved that the board appoint Karen Brown, Pat Mohr and Deb Matherly to serve as UUCS delegates to GA. (seconded, carried)

UUCS Wellness Committee. Marc explained that the Mayor of Columbia is aiming to make Columbia a Blue Zone city – Blue Zone is a program to improve wellbeing and health in communities by focusing attention on “positive outlooks, increased movement, nutrition, and strengthening community connections.” Marc proposed that a cross-functional ad hoc committee be formed to learn more and explore how UUCS might participate. Nancie said, for the purpose of furthering discussion, she moved “to create an ad hoc Committee to inspire our members to become more familiar with the Blue Zone findings, connect other UUCS committees to create a welcoming and engaging environment through which we work for positive change in the community” (as proposed by Marc) (seconded). After some initial positive responses, two board members said that they personally felt too tired to take on this project, while two others said their initial response was to feel uneasy about the church being involved with and/or associated with the program. Deb suggested we use the Adult Religious Exploration Committee (ARE) to learn more and gauge interest first. The motion was tabled, and Marc said he would ask the ARE Committee if it might facilitate further congregational exploration.

Extinguish chalice and adjourn

Rev Stephen extinguished the chalice. The meeting was adjourned at 5:29 pm.

The information below is not part of the formal minutes.

Karen Brown (Secretary) emailed “draft1 to president” of minutes to the President on April 18, 2024.

Secretary submitted “draft2 to president” on April 23, 2024.

Secretary submitted “draft1 to board” of draft minutes to Board, Minister, Administrator, Bookkeeper, ARE and Denominational Connections Committee on April 27, 2024.

Secretary submitted “draft2 to board” to Board, Minister, Administrator, Bookkeeper, ARE, PC and DCC on May 10, 2024.

Secretary submitted board-approved final copy to Board, Minister, Administrator, Bookkeeper, ARE, Personnel and DCC on May 20, 2024.