



First Unitarian Church of Rochester
Board of Trustees Meeting
Monday, November 15, 2021
6:30 pm via Zoom

Attendance: Ken Buckle, Jon Horne, Barbara Gawinski, Lynn Kinsman, Robert Lyubomirsky, Courtney Miller, Gregory North, Anne Perry, Cathy Reda-Cheplowitz, EJ Santos, Paul Suwijn, Kyle Williams, Rev. Shari Halliday-Quan.

Guests:

Absent:

1. Establish a Quorum and Call Meeting to Order at 6:34 pm — Gregory North
2. Chalice lighting and Centering – Ken Buckle
3. Consent Agenda [*Note: consent agenda includes items that are distributed before the Board meeting and are voted on without discussion. Any Board member can request that an item be removed so that it can be discussed.*]
 - o October 11,2021 Board minutesApproved
4. Looking Ahead – should the Board meet in person, online or both
 - a. Will continue online for now.
 - b. COVID numbers are very high right now and the consensus was we should be cautious.
 - c. Technology challenges when meeting in both modes.
 - d. Future celebration meetings are expected to be in person.
5. Staff Survey Update
 - a. Participation rate is currently about 80%
 - b. Rev. Shari is following up to make sure everyone who wanted to participate did so.
6. Building For Our Future – Next Steps
MOTION: To appoint Kyrill Gill to the Building For Our Future Committee.
Moved: Anne Perry Seconded: Courtney Miller
Motion passed
At the last meeting, the Board created a list of people to contact that is now being followed up with. Expectation: the second Board appointed congregant will be approved in December.
7. Progress on End 4 – Linkage Report
Thanks to Linkage Team: Jon Horne, Barbara Gawinski, Kyle Williams
Rev. Shari reviewed her End #4 interpretation that the Board agreed with previously and noted that she did not do a PowerPoint presentation as she has for previous Ends. The measures that

the Board monitors for End #4 are all items that the Board itself is responsible for. We believe that Social Justice work is an important part of who we are. (see Shari's End #4 document for priorities)

Humility is part of our mission. Taking leadership from organizations that are most affected by the issue. We are good followers. Measures are all things that the BOT gets to monitor – congregational survey, etc. Interviewing community partners is the only way to truly know how we are viewed by the community. This is very difficult, and we may not get to it this year.

Linkage Committee: PowerPoint presentation on Congregational Survey.

End 4:

We act in partnership with others to end racial, social and economic injustice within our own community, in greater Rochester and the world.

Quantitative responses – more congregants said they did not have enough information to answer the questions on End 4 compared to the other Ends. General comments: increased focus on anti-racism over the past year. This is just a beginning. Lack of 'whole church' involvement in Social Justice (SJ) activities. SJ seems to be isolated from the congregation as a whole. Several comments said we're not doing enough SJ. A few comments indicated the individuals thought we were focusing too much on SJ.

How is giving reflective of End 4. At least 75% of donations to outside organizations of our church are related to End 4, depending on how the receiving organizations use the funds.

No good way to quickly identify how many congregants are participating in SJ. Should we add a question on the congregational survey? Number of respondents may be too few. Should we change the timeline of the survey?

Transparency. SJ may be seen as a 'black box'. More information to people about what's going on – congregants want to know. Facebook may have info on activities and people wonder how to get involved. Rev. Shari raised the question of how she can be involved.

There was a discussion of whether the Board needs to know/track the numbers of participants. We could ask what sense people have in our devotion to SJ. 100 people volunteer for Family Promise . . . is that something that our congregants focus on. How can we check the pulse. Some elders feel that they are "too old" to participate.

Demographic section. Points of connection. How can we see the link between engagement versus not knowing enough to answer the question.

It was noted that Family Promise and Schools Partnership both have specific times and goals and that may make it easier for congregants to connect. There needs to be significant outreach to congregants with information on activities, with specific tasks and times.

How do we make priority decisions on where we focus? What's the interaction between SJ

ministries and partnerships with outside organizations? How can we capture the fact that many congregants do SJ with non-UU organizations.

Rev. Shari provided us a good sense of transitions in Social Justice work:

- John Keevert has retired from the role as Chair of SJ.
- SJ Exec looking at what new leadership looks like.
- There was a retreat on Zoom with SJ Exec
- Rev. AJ is the liaison to SJ with Rev. Shari transitioning out
- Does the church provide support to people to live a life aligned with SJ?

BREAK

8. Minister's Report.

a. Staff updates:

- i. Travis Foster joined our team as Lead Sexton on October 28, 2021.
- ii. Samuel Barone-Crowell joined our team as our Custodian on November 7, 2021.
- iii. Maria Hartz joined our team as Youth Ministry Coordinator on November 8, 2021.
- iv. Over the last month, we have had four staff members out with COVID (all recovered) or quarantining because of exposure. With similar instances in our wider congregation and volunteer base, even with strengthened flexibility to work and collaborate remotely, disruptions to activities, recalibrated work plans, and shifting priorities are part of normal operations right now.
- v. Sheila Shuh will be on sabbatical December 6-January 3, again in June, and then again next year.
- vi. Across the board, we are finding that we need to increase our pay rates in order to hire competitively.

b. COVID Update:

- i. At our current rates, we are verifying vaccination at the door for worship and by group leaders for small groups. When rates drop, we can return to the honor system, but at present, this verification is needed for the psychological safety of staff who find ourselves enforcing safety measures that are the responsibility of our wider community--which is to say, please practice asking each other in a clear but kind way to put on your masks.
- ii. (Knowing that this could all change) we plan to continue livestreaming worship through the calendar year. Greater Good will include a low-contact option for those joining online to participate in ritual, Solstice will be outdoors on 12/18 and online 12/21, and Christmas Eve will include family, Rock, and Traditional services with both candlelight services ending with a few minutes of singing (please, god).

c. Interns

We have submitted a grant application to the UUA with First Universalist seeking \$10,000 of funding for teaching congregations who haven't hosted an intern in some

time (or ever) in preparation for a joint ministerial internship for the 2022-2023 church year. I'm currently seeking suggestions for housing options (ideally at no cost to the congregation) that will make this feasible position for a ministerial intern: an in-law apartment or similar lodging with a separate entrance and maximum privacy would be ideal.

9. Treasurer's Quarterly Report – financial statements through September 30.

a. Financial Performance

- i. 1Q YTD Income is running around \$50k less than prior year, while Net Income is around \$70k less. Pledge reminder statements were sent out to the Congregants in November.
- ii. Due to Market performance, 1Q Alesco Investments (Income Endowment & Common Fund) recorded a slight loss (~\$115k). This is a first loss Quarter in over a year. Overall, our long-term investments are doing very well.

b. Church Property Valuation: On 11/1, Church Mutual Insurance Company has increased our Property "Replace by" Value to ~\$13M from ~\$10.7M (explanation cost of Construction Material increase). The renewed policy is only for 1yr (vs. prior ones for 3yr). The valuation will lead to increase in our '22-23 Draw to the Property Maintenance and Improvement Fund from Operational Income & Expense to \$62,334.37 (from \$60,595.50).

c. Board of Trustees approval is required to assure compliance with IRS regulation for Clergy Housing Allowance and to represent an up-to-date 2021 Compensation Allocation for Rev. AJ Van Tine.

MOTION: To approve 2021 Calendar Year Rev. AJ Van Tine compensation of:
\$18,194.92 in Housing Allowance
\$20,701.40 as Salary

Moved: Robert Lyubomirsky

Seconded: Paul Suwijn

Motion Passed

10. Rev. Shari's Evaluation – Executive Session

One of the Board's principal duties is to perform an evaluation of the Senior Minister's performance. This was an opportunity to discuss the written evaluation that the Board completed at the end of October. Note: *During the years when a minister is seeking full fellowship with the UU Minister's Association, evaluation by the Board is part of the process and the written evaluation is submitted to the UUMA.*

Back to session at 8:53 pm

11. Board Self-Evaluation Check-Out. Covered a lot, stayed on topic, stayed within time. Great being part of the team.

12. Adjourn. With no objection, meeting adjourned at 8:58 pm.

APPROVED