

Unitarian Universalist Church of Urbana Champaign
309 W Green Street, Urbana, Illinois

Board of Trustees Business Meeting Minutes
August 24, 2021 (6:30-8:30 pm)
via Zoom

In attendance: David Gross, Jody Hanger, Becky Densmore, Jerry Frye, Penné Beckett, Florence Caplow (left meeting after Chief of Staff update), Brian McDermott, Lan Richart, Jennifer Ellis, Mick McEnroe (guest)

Meeting called to order at 6:34 pm

Chalice lighting/Ministerial Offering: Rev. Caplow presented a listening exercise about adaptive leadership, "There is a Love" sung by Austin Cody from last Sunday's service

The agenda for the evening was finalized with no changes.

Consent Agenda

- The Board received reports from the Associate Minister, the final report from the Interim Director of Religious Education, the report from the Director of Congregational Administration, and the Director of Facilities
- The Board received the approved minutes from the 6/22/21 BOT Business meeting from Jody Hanger
- The Board received minutes from the 7/27/21 BOT Business meeting from Jody Hanger
- The Board received the updated and revised (as of August 2021) UUCUC Employee Handbook.

Consent agenda was accepted unanimously without revision.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW/UPDATE:

- Chief of Staff/Lead Minister Update for August 2021 - Rev. Florence Caplow
 - several new staff members, Rose St. Clair, Adrienne Summerlot for RE, Benjamin Hanson (Choir Director); three positions currently open (two assistants and AV Tech); there are some good candidates for AV Tech
 - Karen Bush has emerged at a staff meeting as a great candidate for ministerial coverage during Rev. Caplow's leave after some worry and not much help from UUA (UUA moving slowly, only remote help available). She is a retired UCC campus minister - willing to be ½ time through December. She is a Universalist at heart! She is heart centered, pastoral care a strength - understands the importance of holding congregation together. She will lead one service a month, Sally will cover two (because she is ¾ time), and Worship Committee or other will do the fourth. Gross spoke with Rev. Bush as well and says "we hit a grand slam with her."
 - Rev. Bush will not be Chief of Staff; Kathleen Holden is willing to step in as supervisor; staff and Rev. Caplow felt that it would be better to have someone who understands the church culture and policies
 - McDermott asked if ½ time will cover all the duties of lead minister? Densmore said that social justice work will not be covered by Bush; she will be Rev. Fritsche's supervisor and come to Board meetings.
 - Frye asked how Rev. Bush will support congregation - Rev. Caplow responded that she will support from the pulpit and participation in fellowship hour, shared congregational life, pastoral care with Sally.
 - Richart asked when she is scheduled to preach? Rev. Caplow will recommend September 19th. Densmore suggested maybe an introductory message from Rev. Bush?
 - McDermott asked if all were aware of Shonor's position on the COVID vaccine - Rev. Caplow assured BOT that Personnel is highly involved. If Shonor leaves a cleaning service may have to be called in; vaccination and COVID will be topic of discussion with Tim and Shonor in September

- Oral Report on Monthly Financials June and July 2021 - Lan Richart
 - Pledge income for the end of the year was \$450,503 - about 98% of what was anticipated, and about 95% of what was pledged this year.
 - Operational expenses were 101% of what was budgeted - credit card expenses paid early made end of the year expenses extra big
 - Amazing that the church donated over \$59,000 to social action causes through special offerings and shared offerings; \$4423 to partner churches.
 - The Finance Committee will meet next month to talk about reserves and make recommendations for use.

OLD BUSINESS

- **Action/Discussion:** Church Governance Task Force and Charge

McDermott has written a charge for the task force and is willing to lead for this year to get it started. Idea is to match what we have on paper to how the church is operating now; written documentation for the past is lacking sometimes. McDermott may need help with identifying who is going to be on the task force. Some actions for the task force include: making sure the staff has authority to make decisions within their job description; looking at successful churches in the area (e.g. Bloomington, IN) for their relationships between staff and board. Final step would be to recommend reorganization of UUCUC Operations Manual. Densmore asked that Hanger be involved as Clerk; Hanger agreed. McDermott to check with Kathleen Holden about Brian Franklin's availability to be involved.

MOTION: Based upon action steps included in the 2020 - 2025 Strategic Plan, the Board of Trustees supports the establishment of a Church Governance Task Force to carry out the activities as outlined in the Task Force Charge.

Resource: [2021 Church Governance Taskforce charge](#)

McDermott moved to accept the motion as drafted; Frye seconded. Vote was unanimous; motion to establish Church Governance Task Force with Brian McDermott as leader for the church year 2021-22.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Action/Discussion:** [Medical Leave Strategy](#)
 - BoT Actions
 - Communications Update and Discussion: Jennifer Ellis, Becky Densmore
 - Ellis made up an initial ideas to share with Rev. Caplow and had good discussion about possibilities with her. Rev. Caplow wanted some time to think about them - some ideas include delivery of fresh organic fruits and veggies (1-2 times/week), books in her areas of interest. She is concerned about privacy and safety, so maybe point people to deliver items. Care Corp to handle initial communication, but nothing until after Labor day. Other ideas suggested by the Board included gardening assistance, cat food, taking out the garbage. Densmore thinks there should be an eNews announcement balancing help and being clear about her stepping away completely. McDermott talked with Jenny Hunt - COSM - about ways to buffer her from congregation.
 - (a) Discussion: Planned ministerial coverage and support through the medical leave
 - Densmore wants to get article next out next week - maybe include info from Ellis about how to help Florence
 - Medical Leave Agreement Discussion
 - Richart - necessary to include personal expenses while she's on leave? Densmore said that Florence wanted it taken out; Dave Sharpe (Personnel) said leave it in; Frye agreed

with Richart that it is extraneous. Densmore will strike the language from the agreement. Ellis wanted to check language in letter to congregation about how long Rev. Caplow will be gone - is it clear that it will be until January 2022? Densmore iterated that this agreement will not be widely shared. McDermott and Frye said to strike language about sick leave of 10 days becoming available in January. Ellis says to leave in for clarity; it was decided to leave in even though it is a little redundant; McDermott says she could use the sick time when she is applying for LTD (Per conversation with UUA) if necessary.

- McDermott asked if Rev. Caplow would be eligible for COBRA when on LTD? (If the time comes) If she's not with us (she would no longer be employed by the church if she goes on LTD), then she is eligible - would the church want to cover those payments? McDermott and Frye agree that no decision needs to be made now; wait to see what we can do to be fiscally responsible to congregation. Language regarding payment of COBRA premiums was struck from the agreement.

MOTION: The BoT accepts the Personnel Committee's medical leave recommendation proposal as amended and directs immediate execution of actions as delineated, while expressing its great sadness for the circumstances that dictate the necessity to do so.

Resource: [APPROVED Recommendations for Medical Leave.pdf](#)

Gross moved to accept the motion as written; Hanger seconds. No additional discussion; the vote to accept the amended Medical Leave Recommendation was unanimous.

- Staffing Plan: Discussion - Becky Densmore
 - UUA was very nebulous about help; the Ministerial Leave Task Force will come up with ministerial agreement for Karen Bush; Holden doesn't want to be called Chief of Staff as she is volunteering and will not be on the BOT. Gross on Karen Bush - gem of a choice, has said yes to an offer she hasn't seen; will start on 9/7 calendar is open for rest of year; Rev. Bush's salary will be based on half of a \$92,600 yearly salary; don't need to do budget rearranging tonight; Densmore to draft a letter of engagement
 - Ellis asked about how to make sure weave in continuity and alignment with staff - who are decision makers? Densmore - document details this purposefully. McDermott asked if Kathleen Holden is on board with Staff Facilitator role? Densmore replied that she seems very committed.
 - McDermott asked what happens on January 4 if Rev. Caplow is unable to return. Gross replied that there was no discussion with Bush for after December; would have to apply to the UUA for an interim.
 - McDermott asked about Rev. Bush managing ministry during COVID - all on Zoom now, but things might change; Gross replied that Rev. Caplow met with her for 4 hours but does not know all the details.
 - Ellis asked to what extent has staff been made aware, have they reviewed the plan? Rev. Caplow held leadership team meeting with their concerns, and COSM (Shared Ministry) and Worship, staff will begin to set goals before she leaves using strategic plan;
 - Ellis - is Rev. Bush vaccinated (yes - fully)
 - Richart asked how the BOT will get feedback as we go and where to tweak; Densmore said that Rev. Bush will be at BOT meetings also Kathleen Holden will let us know, also Gross has agreed to be the Personnel Committee Liaison.

MOTION: The BoT approves the recommended staffing plan to cover and support the duties and responsibilities of the UUCUC's Lead Minister and Chief of Staff through her extended medical leave and directs staff to begin executing on Monday, August 29, 2021.

Resource: [Staffing Plan for Extended Medical Leave Support](#)

Gross moved to accept motion as written; Richart seconded. Vote was unanimous; the recommended staffing plan during Rev. Caplow's medical leave was accepted.

- Discussion: Consulting Minister Next Steps - Becky Densmore
 - Consulting Minister agreement for Rev. Bush needs to be signed by August 29th, 2021 - would it be okay for the BOT to hold a virtual vote to approve agreement? Rev. Bush going on vacation. McDermott suggested that the BOT draft a motion to let Densmore negotiate on the Board's behalf and turn the next study session into a brief business meeting to accept agreement, but also not a problem to wait until the next scheduled business meeting. Densmore and Gross will negotiate on BOT's behalf.

MOTION: The BoT authorizes the Board Chair and Personnel Committee Liaison to negotiate the employment of Rev. Karen Bush and provide the agreement for ratification at the next board meeting.

McDermott moved to accept motion as written; Ellis seconded. No further discussion; vote to allow Densmore and Gross to negotiate Bush's employment agreement was unanimous. The motion carried.

- Discussion: Budget Adjustments
 - Rev. Caplow, Dave Sharpe, Brian Franklin, and Lan Richart looked at budget spreadsheet; with the modifications to the budget passed in June 2021 there could be savings as much as \$13,000. (delay in hiring for some positions because church still closed.) BOT can wait until we have actual numbers to vote on change to budget - will revisit at September business meeting. Gross pointed out that the \$13,000 is under the 5% maximum allowed change for BOT to approve without congregational input; Richart will incorporate changes and BOT will formally approve budget in September

DRAFT Motion: Based upon the budgetary impacts related to staff and staffing, the BoT accepts the personnel budget recommendations as outlined in the recommended budgetary changes spreadsheet and requests the Treasurer to make the noted expense line item changes. ***Motion is tabled until September business meeting.***

Resource: [Recommended Budgetary Changes](#)

GRATITUDE PRACTICE

- Card Shower Recipients
 - Brian Franklin for congregational administration
 - Dave Sharpe and Kathleen Holden from Personnel Committee for the work on the extended medical leave, staffing plan, and budget revisions on BoT request
 - Janet Barrett for her leadership over the summer with the Wellspring themed worship services - absolutely outstanding! Three of 4 wellsprings services had to be reworked within 24 hours of streaming
 - Board's desire is for a commendation and certificate of appreciation plus \$100 gift card

MOTION: The BoT appreciates and values the work of the Worship Committee led by Janet Barrett and is mindful of the challenges that were navigated to ensure delivery of these services. As such the board requests the DCA to purchase Janet Barrett a \$100 gift card using 53110 Trustees Contingency funds.

Beckett moved to accept the motion; Richart seconded with friendly amendments. The vote was unanimous to commend Janet Barrett from the Worship Committee. The motion carried.

NEW ACTION ITEMS

- McDermott will talk with Kathleen Holden and then Brian Franklin about Franklin's inclusion on the Governance Task Force
- Densmore will draft an eNews article for next week regarding ministerial coverage and staffing plan. She will send to Ellis for any additions and refinements.
- Densmore will check Rev. Caplow's letter to the congregation about her medical leave to check if there are any specifications about the length of leave (DONE)
- Gross will communicate the BOT's amendments to the Medical Leave Agreement to the Personnel Committee
- Densmore will communicate via eNews that the first part of the September 14 BOT Study Session will a brief Business Meeting
- McDermott will respond to COVID Task Force and RE about buying a tent - they should proceed although tents may be difficult to purchase right now

OLD BUSINESS

- McDermott to ask Mona Shannon about leadership on the COVID Taskforce
- Hanger to establish database/spreadsheet containing Board motions, possibly working with Brian Franklin (Jody was waiting on Brian to start back FT)

ONGOING/IN PROGRESS ACTIONS

- All Board members will write card shower cards
- Hanger will send out the addresses for card shower recipients
- Work with COSM to conduct a study session together in the fall, and address the issue of the Mediation Committee by end of year.
- Personnel committee also requests a study session in early fall, to collaboratively plan for staffing in future between Chief of Staff, Board and Personnel Committee (Tabled until Spring 2022)
- Look at surplus funds from RE department staff reallocation in September ([Chair Notes: Do we need to consider any savings from here to cover the costs of a Consulting Minister if approved?](#))

All BOT members voted to adjourn the meeting. Meeting was adjourned at 9:12 pm.