

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

Board of Trustees Special Session Business Meeting Minutes  
**October 19, 2021 (7:30-8:30 pm)**  
via Zoom

**In attendance:** Penné Beckett, Jody Hanger, Becky Densmore, David Gross, Jennifer Ellis, Brian McDermott, Lan Richart, Jerry Frye, Rev. Karen Bush, Mick McEnroe (guest), Jerry Carden (Buildings and Grounds Chair Emeritus), Wendy Graves (Accessibility Task Force Chair), Tim Voelker (Director of Facilities)

Meeting called to order at 7:30 p.m.

**Discussion/Action:** Church Accessibility - Elevette Repair and Update from Accessibility Task Force

- Elevette Historical Perspective (Jerry Carden - Chair Emeritus, Building and Grounds Advisory Team - BAGAT)
  - Elevette was installed in 1986 for \$12,700 by Inclinor company. Listed as residential elevator; may have never been intended for commercial use
  - metal on the gate in the elevette has gotten bent a number of times, and now the gate is broken and presents a safety issue - someone's foot could go through the bottom of the gate
- Densmore - contacted a welding instructor at Parkland
  - would be a lot of work to repair and the elevette instructor might not like the "jerryrigging"
- Richart asked for opinion about the bid from Kone - seems like a lot of work for the money needed
  - Carden - previous repairs included \$6000 in 2014 and \$1000 in 2015 for a stop switch, so the current bid is consistent for Kone. They want to install a brand-new gate.
  - Beckett- we should be able to get an itemized breakdown of the cost - current bid is not itemized
    - Voelker - has asked several times for breakdown and Kone has not provided
    - was able to have Swinderman fix the phone issue for \$1500 instead of Kone's \$3000
- Graves - everything related to accessibility issues is ridiculously expensive
  - the repairs have to be completed by a certified elevator repairperson
    - she is meeting with someone who works on elevators tomorrow to get another opinion.
  - the elevette is really not accessible - only small scooters and wheelchairs can fit into it.
- Carden - options for companies other than Kone are nonexistent
  - Midstate Elevator in Peoria was used by a former Property Chair TJ and Carole Wilson; also a company in the Quad Cities, but cost prohibitive to have someone travel so far - really need someone more local
- Graves - want something soon to replace elevette, but it will be so hard to replace
- Gross - building is NOT accessible even with working elevette; time to admit it; will vote no on the proposed motion
  - There is now a mobility challenged staff member - not safe for them to be in elevette
- Elevette Proposal

**MOTION (Amended):** After exploring and exhausting all other options, the BoT authorizes the acceptance of the bid by Kone in the amount of \$11,430.00 and directs the chair to affix her signature. If a lower bid by a licensed elevator mechanic is found by Friday, October 22, 2021, 5 pm Central Time Zone, this is also authorized.

Resource: [Kone Bid](#)

Frye made motion; Beckett seconded. After the following discussion, the motion passed as written with amendments; 8 in favor and 1 abstention.

- Church Accessibility Task Force (Wendy Graves, Chair)

Resource: [Reifsteck Reid & Co Architect Proposal](#)

- The Task Force met with architectural firm
  - Firm not enthusiastic about ramp
    - would be difficult for those with walkers or canes
  - Open lift or full size elevator - the firm would have to look at the structure to see if/where it could fit.
  - Firm would charge \$9100 to draw up structural options - the entire task force budget
  - Task Force conclusions - disheartening. Either spend hundreds of thousands remodeling or move to a new building.
- Densmore - What is the alternative solution to getting elevette resolved? The employee in question is hired and working already.
- Carden - his opinion is fix the elevette in the interim. Expensive but in lines with what was charged in the past.
  - part of strategic plan is to look at long-term solutions: should we stay or should we go?
  - elevette is still functional and will help most people
  - Maybe make it a wish list item? People will contribute \$
- Frye - short term remedy is to fix the elevette, but there has to be someone out there with another proposal
  - Long term solution - our church is not accessible. Period.
  - If we want to move forward, we have to start looking at other places to have services. Respects David's (Gross) opinion and displeasure -
  - doesn't see a way around this and losing an employee who is doing a good job
- Graves - even if we want to sell building would still want a ramp
- Densmore - we need to take immediate action on motion tonight to ensure that we are not closing any options, but also not delaying
- Ellis - lots of regional work that happens in this area because they need larger area to make a business. Have we fully vetted other companies?
- Voelker - have looked around for other options; Kone has monopoly of sorts in the area; hasn't gone as far as Indy or Peoria and can do that, but they would have to travel further
- There is a hydraulic lift (seen at Carle) that would fit in the space we currently have
- McDermott - wants to see a safe option. Can someone assist the employee temporarily?
  - Densmore - she is currently getting assistance
  - KB - it has been a real struggle though
- KB - crisis moment is here and sometimes it takes a crisis to push us to a new level. David (Gross) is a reason on his own to get church accessible.
- Beckett - do we look at the legality of an employee not able to do her work?
- Carden - only unsafe thing is a few spindles at the bottom of the gate; even if it more cumbersome, the elevette operates fine now.
- Densmore - opening the church up to bad things if we use the elevette without it being certified.
  - Carden - it would be certified conditionally; doesn't take long to raise money at this church. Doesn't agree that it is unsafe.
  - Carden - responding to McEnroe's written comment
    - The elevette will be safe once there is a new gate. Having people instruct and guide is helpful, but it doesn't require two people to operate. If one door is slightly ajar then it won't run or door won't open; hasn't happened as often recently; people need to understand how to use it
  - Tim - the repair issues are these:
    - gate had opening
    - emergency phone didn't connect to a person

- emergency light/alarm needs to be replaced or fixed
- McDermott - what is everyone's (Carden, Voelker, Graves) recommendation?
  - Voelker - advice is to accept bid because of the race against time;
  - Carden - we need to move and get it fixed if we are realistic about getting our church open
  - Graves - doesn't like the amount, would like other options, but take too much time; we have to do it
- Beckett asked Voelker to get a start and end date for contract, also need to let employee know that we are on it and taking care of it
- Gross - the elevette doors are a chronic problem; sees an issue with employee being alone in the building
- McDermott - add language to motion so that we are not constraining solution if Wendy finds something better than Kone proposal
- Frye - there should be direction from staff leadership so that the employee is not be in the building by themselves
  - Rev. Bush - Kathleen Holden and Brian Franklin are on it and watching employee closely - making sure she is safe

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- staff to provide guidance to employee on the use of the elevette
- look for solutions where individuals are not in the building alone
- BoT will review \$9100 architectural firm proposal at the next study session (Tuesday, November 9)

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.