

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

Board of Trustees Business Meeting Minutes  
**November 16, 2021 (6:30-8:30 pm)**  
via Zoom

**In attendance:** Becky Densmore, Jody Hanger, David Gross, Brian McDermott, Mick McEnroe (guest), Rev. Karen Bush, Jennifer Ellis, Lan Richart, Rev. Sally Fritsche (left at 7:25 p.m.), Jerry Frye (joined at 6:50 p.m.)

Meeting called to order at 6:33 p.m.

**Chalice Lighting and Ministerial Offering** - Rev. KB

We light this chalice flame as a sign of our faith  
May we ever trust  
The good light within each heart  
The sacredness of life  
The transformative force of love  
And our own power to make a difference.

The agenda for the evening was finalized with no changes.

**Consent Agenda**

- The Board received reports from the Consulting Minister, the Associate Minister of Congregational Life, the Director of Congregational Administration, the Consulting Minister for Religious Exploration and Engagement, and the Coordinator of Religious Education and Engagement
  - Densmore - noted the concern about Adult Choir being in limbo; KB - choir director will be at the next COVID Task Force mtg.
  - McDermott - applauded Franklin for new rose window idea and bringing in the congregation
  - Hanger - asked whether REE team concerned about low attendance at recent events; KB - weather really got in the way, looking forward to meeting in small groups; McDermott - beneficial to OWL to meet in person in the church, kids doing a great job following COVID safety protocols
- The Board received minutes from the 10/19 BOT Special Session Business Meeting
- The Board received minutes from the 10/26/21 BOT Business Meeting

The consent agenda was accepted unanimously without revision.

**ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE/REVIEW**

- Consulting Minister Update for October/November - Rev. KB
  - good that COVID group is meeting in the middle of the month
  - wonderful congregation and spectacular staff!
- Oral Report on Monthly Financials for October 2021 - Lan Richart  
Resources: [A Layperson's Guide to Understanding UUCUC Finances Summary Report OCTOBER](#)  
[OCTOBER Financials.xlsx](#)
  - Hard to discern trends, but October not a good month, 1/3 of fiscal year,
  - \$19,799 in pledges is the lowest in the past 14-16 months, general donation and plate collections were \$1725, income \$21,632 substantially down,
  - Expenses lower than average, but still \$44,769.

- Pledges \$20,417 below budgeted amount through this point of the year.
- Need to watch what happens in the next few months, things have been a bit soft.

## OLD BUSINESS

- **Action/Discussion:** Staff Covid Vaccination Policy

**DRAFT MOTION:** Based upon the guidance and recommendation of the Personnel Committee, the BoT recommends adoption of the Covid Vaccination Policy and directs its immediate execution upon the BoT majority approval.

Resource: [Covid Vaccination Policy](#)

Gross moved to accept the motion as written: the heart of the motion is to have our staff vaccinated, those who choose to work for the church should be vaccinated. Hanger seconded.

### Discussion:

- Ellis - fully supports the idea for all staff to vaccinate, but has serious concerns
  - is the church being compliant with the ADA and Civil Rights Act
  - why no religious exemption?
  - exemption should be signed by supervisor, not physician - may violate HIPAA
  - requiring a negative test to return to work doesn't follow science - CDC has different criteria because people may have positive results for months after they recover
  - has problem with Board wordsmithing - the Personnel Committee, Chief of Staff need to use their expertise to put their attention to legality and inclusion
- Densmore - everyone wants a valid policy; the Personnel Committee tried to get it right
- Frye - is it known whether anyone consulted the UUA? Agreed that there are legalities involved
- Gross - policy has been discussed at length in the Personnel Committee and thinks he they have reached out
- Ellis - did further digging, there is a great website on UUA, has really good information about such issues as:
  - Can we require staff to be vaccinated?
  - Has sample policies and things to consider
- Ellis - doesn't think we can specify medical or religious exemption
- Densmore - can we vote on the DRAFT version and ask Personnel to get it reviewed?
- Gross- Personnel has worked hard on this and they want a vote on it
- Richart - it's not a policy if we just approve a draft; BOT trusts the Personnel Committee, but Ellis has good points; we need to have a legal and appropriate policy
- Frye- shares Ellis's concerns
- McDermott- agree with Ellis comments and concerns, particularly about having religious exemption being an option, appreciates the Personnel Committee's work on this, but it needs legalistic evaluation
- McEnroe (via Zoom Chat) - agrees with Ellis and Frye; maybe the Personnel Committee would benefit from Ellis's resources

<https://www.uua.org/leadership/library/staff-vaccinations>

*Vote was one in favor of accepting the Staff COVID Vaccination Policy as written; six voted against the draft policy.*

- Ellis will forward her concerns and resources to the Personnel Committee
- McDermott suggested that Brian Franklin, DCA could be a good resource for getting info from the UUA

- **Action/Discussion:** COVID Advisory Taskforce

**MOTION:** The Board of Trustees affirms the SLT's (Staff Leadership Team) recommended specific and immediate exception to UUCUC's reopening framework that would allow for the small youth class Taking Flight (our current Our Whole Lives/OWL sexuality education program) to meet indoors at UUCUC on Sundays from 4-6pm.

Resource: The SLT's response to "why?"

- Why this specific and immediate exception? Our Whole Lives is critical and time sensitive and cannot take place online, it can only happen in person. Offering an exception to have them meet on-site and inside is integral to Taking Flight running successfully. Every other small group that we offer currently can meet online, and is not time sensitive in the many ways that this program is (these youth are actively in puberty, exploring their sexuality, and being exposed to harmful sex ed. online and in their schools).

McDermott moved to accept the motion as written; Frye seconded. Vote is unanimous; motion to affirm the SLT's decision to allow the youth OWL program to meet inside the church.

## NEW BUSINESS

- **Discussion:** Staff Holiday Recognition

Resource: [Personnel Committee Proposal](#)

Resource: Finance Committee could not find the resources and provided the following guidance:

- Very tight budget year - concerns related to finishing the year balanced in terms of revenue and expenses
- Cuts have been made to accommodate expenses related to ministerial medical leave
- Committee expressed concerns with modifying an approved congregation budget without a critical need to do so. In this instance, we would be taking money from approved congregation expenses to cover one that was not.

- Personnel Committee suggested a gift card instead of a paycheck bonus
- McDermott - bonuses traditionally given to staff more at the end of the church year; not planned or put into budget
- Frye - might be something available later in the year
- McEnroe - suggested a card shower
- Richart - suggested alternative ways to show appreciation; difficult decision but supports the Finance Committee's response
- KB - the important part is being remembered
- McEnroe - maybe a "staff appreciation day" when it's warmer and safer
- Densmore - agrees with the Finance Committee's suggestions

- **News:** Immigration Justice Task Force (IJTF) - Hospitality Planned

Resource: [IJTF Approved Hospitality Amendment](#)

- Densmore - the IJTF educated and followed up with staff about immigrant family arriving;
- Richart - IJTF found out from the Refugee Center that Afghan family arriving Saturday and needs temporary space for 5-7 days; will stay in the YRUU room and exit through side doors; won't be near any staff; may not even be around very much as they work with the Refugee Center; no ICE involvement

- Denmore - proud to be a UU today!

## GRATITUDE PRACTICE

- Card Shower Recipients
  - Walt McMahon, Kathleen Robbins, and Gail Schiesser for their part in the Veteran's Day service
  - December - Chancellor Robert Jones and Florence

## NEWS FROM THE FIELD

- Accessibility Task Force - David Gross
  - He and Wendy Graves met to talk about next steps; they are struggling with where to go next with no budget and wants BOT's help; feels that the overall opinion is that the mobile people think church is accessible - how do we make it clear that it's not
- Church Governance Task Force - Brian McDermott
  - invitation sent to last person, waiting to hear back and then will send doodle poll for meeting times
- Covid Advisory Task Force - Brian McDermott
  - meaty conversations coming up this Thursday, he can't attend, but someone else from BOT could go and listen in
- Finance - Lan Richart
  - accepting Nan Erlich's bequest - motion coming to next BOT meeting
  - McDermott - could the Finance Committee find out how \$40,000 of PPP used? \$30K went into excess reserves, but wondering about the rest
- Gift Policies Review and Recommendations Special Project- Jennifer Eliis
  - has documents to review
- Immigration Justice Taskforce - Lan Richart
  - Nov 28 - IJTF is hosting the service - going to be really special and good - lot of music and wonderful things lined up, all staff involved
- Personnel - David Gross
  - ball is in court of BOT regarding COVID Staff Vaccination Policy
- Racial Justice Project - Jerry Frye
  - panel discussion tomorrow (November 17) moderated by Don Owen from Lead for Equity - hoping for a good turn out
- Strategic Planning Task Force - Becky Densmore
  - nothing to report
- Other
  - Ellis - church's rainbow flag is in total disarray; not very prideful. Can she just buy a new flag and give it to the church? (Answer from all - YES!)
  - Ellis - feeling anxious about condition of physical building - are we ready to reopen?,
    - McDermott - Smaller group of COVID Task Force is discovering what would be needed for hybrid service; Tim Voelke has been looking at each room and looking at filtration, windows, etc.;
    - Brian Franklin - meetings scheduling system implemented; the staff is on it
    - KB - the reopening plan right on the webpage
    - McDermott - everyone agreed that we had to be at pre pandemic accessibility levels (e.g. working elevator)
    - McDermott - what's the plan for Christmas Eve?
      - KB - Rev. Sally is in charge and has been talking about it
      - McDermott - could we do a special collection for UU Utility Fund again?
        - (a) KB - will take to Comm mtg tomorrow evening; McDermott will write up details and send to KB
  - Frye - the 2022 shared offering submission date is now November 29 and the decision meeting is now December 5; only one or two submissions received by original date

## ACTION ITEMS

- Review New
  - Ellis will provide specific feedback to the Personnel Comm regarding BOT's concerns about proposed staff COVID vaccination policy
  - Densmore will let Personnel Comm know about BOT decision to table staff bonus discussion until May based on Finance Comm recommendations (DONE)
  - Richart will attempt to trace how PPP funds were spent
  - McDermott will write up details regarding special Christmas Eve UU Utility Fund collection and send to KB
- Review Old
  - Denmore to send email to REE team (Jenny Hunt, Rose St. Clair, Adrienne Summerlot) about changes to REE budget lines and that they can request money (DONE).
  - Gross will take the BOT's recommendations and concerns re: the COVID 19 Vaccination Policy back to the Personnel committee for refinement (DONE)
  - Densmore will make changes needed to the 21-22 BOT Handbook (DONE)
  - Densmore will send Pam Richart an invitation to the November study session to talk about the Social Action committee (DONE)
  - Frye and Richart will come up with a plan for covering the elevator repair costs (had informal meeting - in progress)
  - Densmore will publish change in November and December BOT meeting dates in the eNews (DONE)
  - Hanger will provide a proposed method to archive BoT policies and action items for reference and review and easy retrieval (In Progress - December 2021)
- Review Ongoing
  - All Board members will write card shower cards
  - Jody will send out the addresses for card shower recipients
- FUTURE DATES:
  - a) Study session with Gift Giving Policies and Procedures review team (January 11, 2022)
  - b) Study Session with Nominating Committee to review smaller BoT size and recommendations for new board 22 - 23 (February 8, 2022)
  - c) Study Session with COSM to resolve issue surrounding Mediation Committee (March 8, 2022)

Meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

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