

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
Board of Directors Regular Meeting, May 18, 2021
Minutes

Attending:

BOD Attending by Zoom Meeting: President Jane Zaun, 1st Vice President Carol Lavoie, 2nd Vice President Linda Savard, Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu, Secretary Rod Belshee, Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt, Minister Reverend Barbara Fast and Assistant Minister Reverend Ian Riddell.

BOD Absent: Director-at-Large Mack Rogers

Congregational Members by Zoom Meeting:

Chris Eager, Linda Moretti, Hiroshi Yamaguchi, Sheryl Eaton, Jane Betts Stover, Rob Duwors, Sarita Gonzales, Barbara Storms

Meeting minutes:

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Jane called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:00 pm PST by Zoom Meeting. Jane led a reading while Reverend Barbara lit the chalice.

2. Check-in:

3. Approval of the Minutes:

The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes as written for the April 20, 2021 regular meeting of the Board.

By consensus the Board deferred approval of the minutes for the May 16, 2021 Annual Business Meeting of the Congregation.

4. Time-keeper and Process-observer: Carol Lavoie

5. Voices of the Congregation:

no items were raised.

6. Reports:

a. President Jane Zaun:

Jane submitted a written report.

b. 1st Vice President Carol Lavoie:

Carol submitted a written report. In the meeting, she mentioned that the auction will be a week earlier than typical, with the silent auction on Friday, November 5 and the live auction Saturday evening, November 6. The date accounted for potential DOS rental on Friday November 12, and the Pride Parade on Sunday November 7.

c. 2nd Vice President Linda Savard:

Linda submitted a written report. In the meeting she emphasized that there is a lot going on in the UUA Region.

d. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu:

Jerry submitted a written report regarding our financial position and notable financial events.

In the meeting he called attention to a small reduction in the budgeted expenses due to a minor error in the spreadsheet presented at the annual meeting (hidden rows caused an expense to be added twice).

Annual UUA dues FY21-22 went up from \$8,696 to \$9,800 according to new UUA schedules. But increases are limited to a 10% annual increase, so our dues are \$9,566. Jerry sought guidance from the Board and by consensus the Board agreed to pay the \$9,566 figure.

e. Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt:

Bob submitted a written report. In the meeting he recapped that the Choir is planning two more songs before summer hiatus. The Worship Committee has services planned through July, and is now planning August.

f. Director-at-Large Mack Rogers:

Mack was not able to attend.

g. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast:

Reverend Barbara submitted a written report.

In the meeting, she rejoiced about the Mama Gloria event, and mentioned some ongoing pastoral care and her three remaining services. She complimented President Jane on a high quality annual meeting, a smooth transition with Rev. Ian, and especially remarked on the huge quality of trust the congregation has in the leadership.

h. Assistant Minister Reverend Ian Riddell: *(attends quarterly: Nov, Feb, May, Aug)*

Reverend Ian submitted a written report. In the meeting he added appreciation for calmness and quality of annual meeting.

7. Old Business:

a. Attitude of Gratitude, Jane

Cards for Gratitude were sent from the entire Board:

- For helping on Mama Gloria: Fran Hoag and Gloria Kapp

b. Finance Committee Proposal, Sarita Gonzales

Sarita recapped that the proposal to payoff the mortgage last month was missing a discussion of reserves and was too rushed as it aimed for presentation at the annual meeting. Subsequently several Finance Committee and Board Members jointly worked the proposal, which the Finance Committee now presents to the Board.

Sarita reviewed the updated proposal. Key points are that we have large reserves with little prospect of return while we pay interest on our mortgage. Retiring our mortgage would save \$23K every year from the annual budget. For example we might apply \$75K from undesignated reserves plus a capital drive of \$50K-\$60K to completely retire the mortgage.

An issue raised at the previous Board meeting was consideration of prudent operating reserves. A subset of the Board and Finance Committee studied this question and recommends retaining at least three months of operating reserve and building up to 4.5 months over the next couple of years.

Roughly, that means applying about \$75,000 of reserves plus embarking on a \$50,000 to \$60,000 capital campaign to pay off the mortgage. It may take until June 2022 to receive the pledges from the capital campaign. The actual numbers will vary since we will continue to make payments on the mortgage note until it is paid off. Finance proposes a capital campaign through June 2022, with progressive pay down of the mortgage along the way.

Discussion included timing and uncertainty. Jerry pointed out that budgets are tenuous until about December and is nervous about dedicating all \$75K before we have good visibility in December.

The specific proposal from Finance, unanimously approved by a motion by the Board is:

- Approve the concept of paying off the mortgage
- Authorize Finance to form a Capital Campaign Committee
 - identify campaign leadership
 - establish goals
 - prepare presentation for congregation and updates in the monthly newsletter
- Authorize providing a confidential list top pledge units to the campaign leadership
- Authorize the capital campaign committee to prepare presentation for a special congregation meeting to gain approval of pay-off or reduce

c. Approve Right Relations Policy, Rob Duwors and Barbara Storms

The first reading of the Right Relations policy was two months ago, with a few revisions since then. Rob reminded the Board that the Destructive Behavior policy is a separate existing policy (which will have a proposed revision).

The Board approved Right Relations Policy as drafted.

Discussion included that the roll-out is still TBD since volunteers have not been identified, and enacting the Policy requires communication and training.

d. Sacred Grounds, Rod

Excitement regarding Sacred Grounds peaked in March 2020 after several years of building interest, two well attended Sunday meetings, newsletter articles and preaching from pulpit. A big event on patio was scheduled the Sunday that we closed. Sacred Grounds has been dormant ever since.

Recent interest from several people has pushed to restart Sacred Grounds. Discussion included patio project concepts, fund raising and communication. But the group was put on hold due to potential conflict with fundraising and the pending proposal to pay off the mortgage. A Sacred Grounds Newsletter provided an update to the 39 people who had previously expressed interest, but approaching the overall congregation was on hold pending guidance from the Board.

Jane pointed out that Sacred Grounds is an official Interest Group of UUCOD, listed in directory.

e. Pavers, Jane Betts Stover

Rod highlighted that pavers are on the agenda for two reasons: 1) any patio project would relocate them to a new Celebration Garden to circle Gene's upper art, and 2) pavers could be a potential Sacred Grounds fundraiser.

Jane emphasized the excitement about Sacred Grounds, and ideas spawned from patio project. She talked about the beauty of having something physical to bring people together now as a healing process after a difficult year of separation. Sacred Grounds, much like the labyrinth, can be a source of great unity and healing.

Jane proposed we change the name from Pavers to Sacred Stones. That more deeply reflects the idea that people are making a sacred offering to celebrate an event, departed loved one, or other deeply felt need.'

Jane recounted that the existing pavers program is stuck. The original engraver left the area. Jane researched tons of engravers and proposed a new one, the same person who provided our labyrinth monuments. William will provide engraving at \$75 each if we order eight at a time. The process is much higher quality including sandblasting and painting in the etched lettering.

The original paver material is not aging well, and in fact no local engravers will agree to work with that material. The new material is similar in size with a less regular shape, but similarly inexpensive.

The total cost \$80, about same as previous. Will ask \$250 each, same as previous.

The Board moved to form an Ad Hoc Aesthetics team to create proposal for the pavers and Celebration Garden to bring to Board. Jane Betts Stover will lead the team.

f. Draft Board/DIBM Covenant

The Board discussed the draft Board/DIBM Covenant and suggested some additions. DIBM will review and likely suggest changes as well before the Covenant is ready for adoption.

Suggestions included reflecting positivity and joy in the journey, encouraging all to speak freely with an open heart and ask any and all questions with sensitivity and mindfulness to others, for example considering who is the best person to ask without causing harm. When speech is hurtful regardless of intent, be able to hold that an apologize.

The wonderful thing is that even if one steps out of covenant then the others stay within covenant and reach out to call others back in.

8. New Business

a. Year End Accounting Adjustments Recommendations, Jerry

Jerry described the five recommendations:

1. Transfer \$6,657.92 currently in 2520 Labyrinth Fund to the 2311 Sacred Grounds reserve and modify the labyrinth agreement to remove the \$2,500 reserve requirement
2. Transfer the \$8,000 in 2330 Solar Reserve to the 2310 Building Maintenance Contingency Fund
3. Transfer \$7,000 from this years Net Revenue to the 2310 Building Maintenance Fund
4. Transfer \$8,320 from this year's Net Revenue through Other Restricted Funds to apply to next year's projected deficit
5. Pay the mortgage down approximately \$25,000 depending on the final year end expenditures

Jerry explained that the second and third item allow us to meet the annual \$15,000 building reserve indicated by our long term building capital reserve plan, and that the fourth item is necessary to enact the deficit FY21-22 budget approved by the congregation.

The Board unanimously approved a motion for the five recommended accounting adjustments, though Jane noted that she opposed removing the \$2,500 labyrinth reserve requirement.

b. DOS (Desert Outreach Synagogue) Request for Rental, Jane

Jane summarized the request for DOS to begin holding Shabat services once a month on Friday evenings starting September 10, announcing that to the DOS members June 1, and starting choir practices. DOS agrees to enforce our Covid-19 protocols, including special provisions for singing.

The Board is in great support of DOS returning to the Sanctuary, however since UUCOD has not yet established and communicated a timeline for resuming UUCOD services, the Board felt it inappropriate for DOS to communicate plans on June 1. Discussion also included the observation that pre-Covid the demand for building use was high and we had a policy to fill in all UUCOD activities on the calendar before offering dates to other groups.

The proposal was tabled, and Jane will report back to the Rabbi a NO on communicating June 1 but positive support and we need time to get our plans together.

c. Delegates to June Virtual General Assembly

The UUA General Assembly will occur virtually on June 23-27. We are allowed three delegates. Linda and Jane planning to attend and one other is in discussion.

d. Developmental Ministry Assessment, Final Year

We need to complete the final Developmental Ministry Assessment by June. This was tabled last month and again this month. Since we did do a review of developmental goals in March to determine the type of ministry we wanted going forward. Carol, Jane, and Rev. Barbara agreed to create a draft for the Board to approve in June.

9. Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment of Regular Board Meeting

Jane extinguished the chalice with a reading and adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:04 pm.

10. Executive Session

The Board met in Executive Session.

11. Adjournment

Jane adjourned the Executive Session at 7:48 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rod Belshee

June 15, 2021
Date Approved

Addendum to Board of Directors Meeting Written Reports of Board Members and Committee Chairs

Attachments

Written Reports of Board Members and Minister

- a) President Jane Zaun's written report
- b) 1st Vice President Carol Lavoie's written report
- c) 2nd Vice President Linda Savard's written report
- d) Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu written report
- e) Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report
- f) Director at Large Mack Roger's written report
- g) Minister Reverend Barbara Fast written report
- h) Assistant Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell's written report

Written reports of Committee Chairs

- a) Facilities Committees

a. President Jane Zaun's written report:

b. 1st Vice President Carol Lavoie's written report:

c. 2nd Vice President Linda Savard's written report:

d. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu written report:

As of April 30, the church held cash assets of \$304,473.10 in its bank accounts. Reserve and restricted funds totaled \$239,915.02, leaving a balance of \$64,558.08 in unrestricted funds. We received donations in the amounts of \$5,000 for the Audio-Visual Fund, \$5,000 for Sacred Grounds, and \$5,000 for reduction of the mortgage. Insight Community of the Desert paid rentals fees for March and April in the amount of \$500. The Spirit Level Foundation notified UUCOD that it was awarded a grant of \$20,000 to help fund installation of new audio-visual equipment.

There were also significant expenses in April. We paid \$2,905 for the second installment of our property tax, \$5,000 towards the mortgage principal balance, and \$8,100 for new phone and internet cabling that will allow us to live stream services from the sanctuary. Expenses exceeded revenues by \$7,022 in April. We provided our Share the Plate recipient, Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine, a check for \$336.

At the April board meeting, the board approved a proposed budget in the amount of \$257,910 to be presented to the congregation at the May 16 Annual Meeting for consideration. The Finance Committee presented a proposal to the board to pay down the mortgage. No decision was reached but a small team was formed to further develop the proposal. The Treasurer is developing a proposal for the May board meeting regarding year-end changes to the financial statements to better reflect the organization, accommodate a deficit for the coming year, and provide funding for current initiatives.

e. Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report:

f. Director at Large Mack Roger's written report:

g. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast's written report:

h. Minister Reverend Ian W Riddell's written report:

attends quarterly: November, February, May, and August.

Care Team

- The Care Team continues to meet monthly.
- We continue to check in and share our contacts with congregants and offer each other guidance and support in our support of congregants' needs.
- We reviewed sample "Emergency Contact Forms" from other congregations and will be creating a new form for UUCOD. We hope to have the form available on paper and online.
- Margaret Beaman continues to work on creating neighborhood maps to aid in connection and communication.
- This coming month, we will meet with members of the Spiritual Development committee to begin to make plans for fall offerings around end-of-life planning and preparedness.

Pastoral Care

- I have continued to meet with individual congregants and couples by phone and Zoom.

Worship

- I lead worship service with Joni Paddock on May 9 "To Accept the Past: Gifts from My Grandmothers."
- I participated in the monthly Worship Team meeting and several Production team meetings as we discussed managing technical issues around our Sunday services on Facebook live.

Study and Teaching

- I am beginning to refresh my learning on trauma-informed ministry and am continuing to read *Emotional Agility* by Susan David and the UUA's *Widening the Circle*.
- I continue to participate in the second session of *Beloved Conversations* online which runs through June

More

- I meet weekly with Rev. Barbara
- I continue to sing with the choir (not part of my 1/5 ,me as AM)
- I participated in the Church Council meeting on April 24.
- I participated in the final interviews and decision-making for the Church Administrator position.

Written Reports of Committee Chairs:

a. Facilities Committee Chair Rod Belshee's written report: