

Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2018

Attendees

Board of Trustees: Al Himes – Chair, Linda Battaglini, Emily Goodin, Janice Morris, Hieu Nguyen, Chad Ohlandt, Andrea Ryon, Art Stevens, Warren Wright

Officers: Amy Shepherd – Secretary, Peter Vitaliano – Treasurer

Guests: Rev. Terasa Cooley, Mimi Borenstein – Director of Music Ministry, Tamara Srader – Chief Administrative Officer, Walter Clark – Ministerial Assistant.

Open, Call to Order, Chalice Lighting, and Check-in

Board Chair Al Himes called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Rev. Terasa shared “It’s Monday Morning” and the Board and Guests shared their thoughts and connections.

Consent Agenda

Treasurer’s Report

Revenue and Expense Summary Report

Hieu Nguyen motioned to pass the Consent Agenda, Warren Wright seconded the motion. Linda Battaglini asked to remove the September minutes from the Consent Agenda to make corrections to the description of the Auditor’s discussion. Motion PASSED.

Minutes of September 18, 2018 board meeting [<http://www.uucava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2018-09-18-Board-Minutes-resized-links-inserted.pdf>]

Linda moved to amend the draft minutes to correct references to the description of the Auditor’s evaluation of internal controls, as that is not part of the audit work. Amendments were noted in the draft minutes, and Art Stevens moved to approve the minutes as amended. MOTION PASSED.

Future draft minutes will be sent to the Board in a PDF with all attachments.

Executive/Senior Minister Update (Rev. Dr. Terasa Cooley)

Reverend Terasa Cooley noted there was no written report this month. She noted that members of the congregation were very appreciative of the open communication style of the Board regarding recent issues.

Operations Update (ATTACHMENT A).

Tamara reminded the Board about upcoming Casino night. She noted recent items that will likely require significant expense, including improvements to the phone system, a malfunctioning boiler, concerns regarding the HVAC system, and repairs needed for the organ.

A Board member asked about reserves to cover such costs, Tamara said that ideally we would have a significant budget for this, currently there is a replacement account that we are using for these expenditures.

Tamara also noted that the landscaping company finished the grounds work, and the mums from Ron Cima's funeral were planted on the grounds by the preschool students.

Music Ministry Vision

Director of Music Ministry Mimi Borenstein provided an overview of the UUCA music program. She highlighted efforts to diversify the program, including moving music focus from performance to engagement, transforming the congregation through music, promoting outreach, and adding more points of participation. Diversifying will also include who performs in church, the type of music, and ages in ensembles. She is seeking to achieve this slowly, by planting seeds to grow, because people are more likely to support and accept changes that way.

These efforts to diversify are intended to support how music moves the worship service forward and upholds UU values. This involves changing the choirs' perceptions from performance to ministry and understanding how to transform the congregation with music by getting the congregation to sing. She noted the challenges around this as currently about 80 percent of her job is administrative and there is a limited budget. She also noted concerns around ensuring compliance with copyright matters given that we stream services online.

Mimi asked for Board support in determining what kind of music can we use to diversify. We also need to determine, with a limited budget, how to allocate funds in the music program.

Community engagement and outreach is also part of the diversity, by doing things for others and giving them the funds. Engagement is about partnering with a group and doing the work together. Voices United Community Choir last year was a good start and moderate success. She plans to have some type of music engagement every year, in 2019, for example, there will be a benefit concert in May for Gun Violence in Schools in partnership with Fairfax and All Souls UU congregations.

The diversification of different points of entry into music program has begun with Pop Up Choir, the Adult Sanctuary Singers, Chamber Choir, Three levels of Children's Choir and Youth Choirs. Maya Rogers is also working with Youth Choir for songwriting, and there is a Youth Band. One key question is how in particular do we work with the young adults.

Rev. Cooley noted the importance of thinking of things wholistically, and how we can use the music program to engage the congregation and integrate it into worship. The Board discussed

the possibility of providing a contemporary service, including the impact on the RE program and the need for more staff time and funding, as well as how many big changes the church can support in the near future. Mimi noted the value of a house band for such worship services, and if one is used, to do it well. House bands are generally paid, which will impact the budget accordingly.

One Board member noted that changes to the music program should be connected to our end statements. Part of the issue for any contemporary service will also be matching the expectations of the congregation to the service – so people who show up for modern service know it is coming and no one thinks that “their” music is being pushed out.

For all changes around diversifying the music program, the Board agreed with the gradual change approach in general, and noted communication will be important to set expectations and explain the larger purpose behind this diversity.

Reflections

Rev. Cooley led the discussion about *Anxious Church, Anxious People* Chapter 1. Opening discussion questions included: How do you deal with change? How do you hold the congregation through identifying a goal and the change that creates anxiety around a new approach? What does it mean to be leaders in times of change?

Board members discussed particularly helpful ideas from the book, including the idea that anxiety is experiencing failure in advance, that the Church is a family system of family systems, and that an indicator of an anxious society is one that blames others and chooses safety by going back to what is familiar and known.

The Board discussed what can be lost by not being open to some level of risk and that risks should be evaluated by what is being given up to avoid the risk. Is the Board so concerned about negative feedback from some that it foregoes larger benefits to the overall congregation?

Reverend Cooley asked the Board to consider pieces that it wants to keep in mind as it works through the Board agenda this year. Ideas included being open to risk, avoiding blame, and maintaining openness through things like listening sessions, which many Board members felt had significant value.

Discussion of Open Questions for FY19 / Vision of Ministry (ATTACHMENT X)

Linda Battaglini provided a recap of the Board 2019 open questions - coming out of Board retreat there were three. There has been significant work already on governance and decision making, so she focused on the other two questions and how they overlap or connect with staff and Board goals. In particular, she noted that in the Attachment, staff goals are grouped under the Board open questions, as were identified challenges. She asked the Board to consider its

goals given this information. The desired outcome is a consensus that will provide guidance for the operating plan and the budget for the upcoming year.

The Board discussed the proposed goals, and whether they were sufficiently strategic or more tactical in nature. Members also discussed things that are tactical that the Board can do in order to live out “We are the Church.”

The Board discussed how the two open questions tie to Connection (Connect, Grow, Serve), including how to have meetings on particular matters such as the 8th Principle that have sufficiently broad congregational participation and reach beyond lay leaders, and how to increase levels of engagement through connections and increased Board visibility and activities.

Regarding the 8th Principle, a Board member noted the 8th Principle Task Force had indicated a desire to ask the Board to have a congregational meeting in January about the 8th Principle. Rev. Cooley and Ministerial Assistant Walter Clark met with task force members and discussed the level of preparation required for that approach. She asked Warren Wright to develop a quick survey to get better information around this to ensure we take the best approach.

Board Letter to UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee (ATTACHMENT X)

The Board discussed a draft of a Board letter that could be sent to the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee noting concerns around the process involving former Rev. McEmrys.

The Board discussed the value of a letter with the appropriate tone, raising issues like overall process, timing, and the impact on the congregation and its relationship with the Board due to the length of the process. The goal is to convey the serious nature of the concerns, the impact on the congregation, and the Board’s desire for a constructive path forward.

Rev. Cooley noted that the Committee is its own body that has its own procedures and own rules – and that the UUA does not have significant authority over the Ministerial Fellowship Committee. She noted that while this is true, from the congregation’s point of view, this Committee is the UUA, and the process damaged our congregation’s view of the UUA.

Rev. Cooley also noted that Rev. Sarah Lammert will be here in January to do a service that has a reconciliation focus between the UUA and the congregation, and will likely be open to a listening session with the congregation about this process.

Hieu Nguyen volunteered to revise the draft letter. The Board noted that if it can be in the consent agenda for next month’s Board meeting, it will be on the record before the January. It may be valuable to put it in *Connections* as well.

Communications Schedule

Emily Goodin provided an update on the monthly topics for *Connections*, noting that there are two topics remaining. Art signed up for beauty and Hieu for mystery. Emily will send reminders.

Additionally, Rev. Cooley will send out dates of sermons and topics so Board members can select the sermons where they want to speak.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:39