

Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington

Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

December 6, 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, Walter Clark – Ministerial Assistant

Other Attendees: Paul Blackburn, Bruce Rieder, Becky Ross, Paula Bendl Smith, Stephanie Thomas

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

The Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:32pm. Rev. Terasa shared a *Blessing for Giving Thanks*, with Board members sharing reflections on the reading for a brief check-in.

Consent Agenda

Board member moved to pull the 2018 Audit Report off the consent agenda, as it was not sent around as an attachment. The Board Chair noted he would send it separately for approval. With the Audit Report removed, Linda Battaglini moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Art Stevens seconded the motion and the Consent Agenda containing the Minutes of October 16, 2018 meeting was APPROVED. [<http://www.uucava.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/2018-10-16-BOT-Minutes.pdf>]

Executive/Senior Minister Update

Rev. Terasa noted there was not a report, as most items were covered in other items. The governance work is underway, with the committee starting an appreciative inquiry in March. Walter Clark and Rev. Terasa have met with the Leadership Development Group, and will meet again after the Holidays.

Rev. Terasa provided an update on the Holiday services, which will include the Sunday pageant, carols, family service, and jazz service. Many guests are coming to services in the winter and the spring. Upcoming services will include an overview of the ministerial search process and one on beyond categorical thinking.

In January Walter will meet the social justice group leaders and discuss how we can focus energies together based on the congregational mission. For example, how we can pool resources together to do more things in the community.

8th Principle Task Force Update (ATTACHMENT A)

Paul Blackburn, Becky Ross, and Stephanie Thomas provided an overview of the work of the 8th Principle Task Force. They went over a timeline of 8th principle activities. Over about the past year, there was a town hall about the 8th principle, the Task Force was formed, and they have been learning from other churches that have adopted the Principle. It was also addressed at the Annual Meeting, they have been tabling on Sundays and having one on one conversations, there is an 8th principle Facebook page, and information has been included in Connections. There have been two Sunday information sessions (4 sessions) and there are two more planned. There is also one scheduled at Goodwin House.

Given these activities, the Task Force believes that the congregation is ready to vote. In addition to the activities noted above, Stephanie noted that she's talked to members at the Richmond UU congregation about what they did. Richmond estimated that they had reached 100 to 120 people, and the Task Force already has that many signatures on the petition.

Most feedback has been supportive, there are some questions about the specific language, but that does not necessarily indicate a lack of support for the principle itself. The committee feels optimistic. There is a survey that went out, they will evaluate the feedback from the survey and adapt the plan of action if necessary.

Paul Blackburn thanked the Board for its support and outlined the next steps they would like the Board to take:

1. Have a formal statement that the Board supports adoption of the 8th principle. Paul recognized that the Board might want to see the survey results first.
2. Set a date for the vote. Early in the year would be good, perhaps February.
3. Identify a couple of people who will be liaisons to the 8th principle committee to facilitate communication.
4. Identify someone who will lead the congregational meeting for the vote, perhaps aided by a Parliamentarian. Perhaps in the Center between services, a one item meeting.

The Task Force then answered some questions from members of the Board, such as why not have this at annual meeting? The Task Force felt that February would be good as it is Black History month, and it would be before General Assembly, which would facilitate taking the decision to GA to help its overall support. The Task Force would also like to begin focusing efforts on the actual implementation, changing culture, governance, etc.

Board members expressed concerns around process, and ensuring that this topic was not seen as getting a special meeting when others don't. The Task Force felt that Annual Meeting often has a lot of discussion and debate, and it could be time consuming at the Annual Meeting. Thus the preference for a meeting that is focused on this issue alone. There would be debate at this meeting, but hopefully all questions are answered beforehand.

The Board asked about common issues/concerns that have arisen. The Task Force noted that most frequently it is about the specific language of the Principle itself, and whether it is overly wordy. They also have been asked why this isn't already covered by other Principles. Some people object because they want to include other issues such as climate change or gender issues. Support has come from statements that UU African American leaders have asked for this, it creates a legacy, and it resonates with the Youth.

The Board inquired about what will change after the vote. The Task Force noted that it is still brainstorming, but things like greeter training, hiring practices, Board governance – the way we conduct meetings, use of Robert's Rules of Order, and how we conduct worship are options. For example, do we include enough writings and music from people of color? We also want to get people more excited about social justice and criminal justice issues.

One Board Member noted that other outreaches have been more extensive. For example, the Ministerial Search Committee had around 30 meetings and 500 people engaged. Through appreciative inquiry, over 300 people came to 20 plus meetings. Assuming we need to be exhaustive, there needs to be a more robust outreach effort.

The Task Force noted that in its proposed plan, the congregation would vote on the existing language now, we would join other churches based upon this language, and this would go to UUA. It would then be adopted as an 8th Principle by the UUA. As a result, it is more like adopting a draft that will be taken to the UUA.

A Board Member noted that we need to think about what it takes to make a decision in the church and what it means to adopt it. For example, we voted on Green Sanctuary, and it wasn't part of any governing document or policy. Should we instead vote to instruct our GA delegates to support this principle at the GA?

Rev. Terasa noted that UUA changed the Principles in the 1980s, and it was an iterative process. It's really about having a process to determine that this is a principle of highest importance.

The Board noted that we need to be a little more concrete on what this will mean and how adopting this principle be lived in the church.

Walter talked about what has happened in Richmond post-vote. Richmond has been doing a lot of "8th Principle" work over the past 5-7 years. This has been part of its conversation about

what it means to be a fully welcoming multi-cultural place. He noted that early adoption is influential, it sends a message to other congregations and to the UUA.

The Board Chair noted that the Board was not ready to schedule a definitive date, but suggested putting the topic back on the Agenda for January after the survey results are received. If things appear on track, there could be a meeting scheduled on the 24th of February, which would allow meetings to happen in February before a vote at the end of the month. On the 23rd, there will be a meeting on going beyond categorical thinking, and it would fit with this to vote on the 24th.

A Board member noted there were still concerns about making sure that when the vote happens that there is plenty of time for discussion, and make sure that the vote itself has appropriate process. There is still some concern about having a congregational meeting in advance of an Annual Meeting.

Warren and Art noted they are willing to help and serve as Board liaisons and talk about ways to ramp up the outreach.

The Board thanked the Task Force for all of their hard work and patience with the UUCA governance process.

Treasurer's Report

Peter Vitaliano covered the standard reports he provides to the Board, focusing on the highlights of operating results, income and expense, reserves and size of the endowment fund. Reserves and endowment funds have fluctuated around Board targets. The reports also cover long term debt (mortgage). This month there is also a second report that is updated through November.

Peter noted that YTD operating results look much like past years, even with changes in pledges last year. It will be interesting to see how paid pledges change this year in December due to the changes in the tax laws.

Peter mentioned looking at the mortgage again and what upcoming amortization changes will mean for ongoing payments. In the past we have discussed a capital campaign to help pay off the mortgage. Timing issues would include whether we wait for a new Senior Minister, or start it ahead of time so that s/he doesn't have to focus on this.

Peter noted the Board might want to move this up in consideration to think about how this could dovetail with the annual campaign. A Board member noted that there was less than \$10,000 this year for Giving Tuesday. This was less than ½ of the goal, the Casino Night was also low. These are factors to consider, as well as who would lead this campaign.

Stewardship Update

Bruce Rieder provided a stewardship update, and noted that the general sense was that it is time for different leadership for the stewardship campaign. Rev. Terasa has met with several individuals and raised notion of going forward with a team effort. There are 11 people who have volunteered, there are 38 people who have expressed additional interest. There will be an initial meeting next week and further discussions after the holidays about specific roles that people may want to fill.

Rev. Terasa noted that having more people involved in more ways collaboratively will exemplify “We are the Church” and that the church is not just a few key people. If we don’t have a “chair” but a coordinator of many different leaders, it is a refreshing new approach. Delaying it until March will be a good change as well, as it will have a focus more on launching into the Spring. She also mentioned that it doesn’t really work to combine this with the mortgage, generally it works better to do them about 6 months apart.

Treatment of Staff Assessment / Ministerial Review Process

The Audit and Monitoring Sub-Committee discussed its overarching approach, including treatment of staff interviews and the senior minister performance appraisal. The plan is to take a modified 360 review approach for the senior minister, with the senior minister selecting two people who can also provide feedback.

Treatment of Staff review would be the normal review process, modified so that it is more of a conversation and it draws out any issues about the ways in which goals or results were achieved.

The Sub-Committee will put together a draft of the materials for Board review in February, with final Board sign off in May. They would like to recruit expertise from Rev. Terasa as a way to look at this for a new minister. Ideally, we can build a model that we can replicate year after year. Then we will have a process established for the new Senior Minister.

Rev. Terasa noted there will also be an evaluation of the interim process.

Board Letter to UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee & January 13th Forums (ATTACHMENT B)

Emily Goodin moved to send the letter to the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee. Hieu Nguyen seconded, and the motion was APPROVED.

On January 13th, after the service, there will be forums where Sarah Lambert will address any questions and concerns about the ministerial fellowship process. Some Board members should be present as well. AI will speak to Annie about making sure we reserve space for this.

Mid-Year Congregational Update Meeting

In the past, there was a meeting mid-year. Due to last couple of years and issues that were addressed, the Board ran the meeting and selected its focus, but prior to that Church staff ran the meeting and provided an update on activities. This would also be a leadership development meeting to which everybody was invited, along the lines of “Here’s what we are doing, what how would you like to be involved?”

The Board noted that while it was usually in January, January is tough this year with packed activities and suggested an alternative of February 2nd.

Communications Schedule

Emily Goodin noted that she does not feel like she is getting adequate feedback when she reaches out to the board on communications issues. Specifically, many people are not responding to requests or providing input on communications.

The Board recommitted to be more responsive to Emily’s requests for input/feedback and items for Connections.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:41pm