

## **Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington**

### **Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

**February 19, 2019**

#### **Attendees**

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

Officers: Amy Shepherd – Secretary, Peter Vitaliano – Treasurer

Guests: Rev. Tamara Srader – Chief Administrative Officer

Members Absent: Janice Morris

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

The Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:31pm. He read a piece by Eric Walker Wickstram. Members and Officers each briefly shared a personal check in.

#### **Consent Agenda (ATTACHMENT)**

Minutes of January 15, 2019 meeting

8<sup>th</sup> Principle Resolution

Authorization for Absentee Balloting for March 31, 2019 Congregational Meeting

Executive/Senior Minister Monthly Update Report

Board member Andrea Ryon moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Art Stevens seconded the motion. Motion was APPROVED.

#### **Operations Update**

Tamara Srader noted the security topics discussed at the mid-year meeting on Saturday, including the use of unique nametags for Board and Church Officers and Staff. These unique badges will indicate those within the church who can provide directions, information, and security information. She also updated the Board on the various uses of the facilities by different groups, and security matters that are ongoing, including upcoming additional training by Arlington County Police.

#### **Quarterly Financial Update (ATTACHMENT)**

Peter Vitaliano updated the Board on the quarterly financial results. He highlighted the trajectory of finances for the year and how that will relate to the annual pledge drive and the budget season.

Peter noted forecasts for fiscal year-end results, including the uncertainty arising from the changes in the tax law regarding itemized deductions vs. standard deductions. The second half of the fiscal year usual trends downward from a December high, so Peter will provide comparisons to prior years to illustrate a possible trend. Based on these, it looks like this year will be one of the larger end-of-year deficits.

These numbers will be updated and the Board will be provided refined forecasts of what to expect to the end of June. A Board member asked about the budgeted loss for the year, Peter responded it is approximately \$53,000. Expenses are fairly constant, but revenues are projected to be lower.

A Board member asked when we needed to make changes about spending levels, Peter answered that at the time of the annual meeting we will know operating results and pledges with a fair amount of certainty.

A Board member asked when as a Board should make a determination about changing spending, and how to best identify the appropriate decisions to make to change expenditures, perhaps outside of the annual budget decision process. Another member noted that the church congregation approved a budget with an approximately \$60,000 budgeted deficit. Therefore, the reports are in line with the expectations in the annual budget.

A Board member noted that we have had difficult and unexpected circumstances in the past 1-2 years, but that now the pledge drive will be happening without those circumstances, so it is a good level set as to what we can expect going forward in terms of revenue and can make any longer term budget adjustments to reflect those circumstances.

A Board member noted that it would be good to have an overview of what we are doing to recruit new members, as membership and attendance have dropped off, and part of the budget decision process will be impacted by the trends in membership growth.

### **2019-20 Budget Development Update**

Tamara Srader provided the Board with an overview of the budget development process for 2019-20. She provided a first outline of a 2019-20 budget and explained the various categories and line items. This initial projection is intended to be a baseline for the pledge drive on a general assumption we will maintain current spending levels.

The Board discussed how the determination of the preliminary budget could impact the story to be told as part of the pledge drive about the future initiatives for the church. The Board discussed the relationship between the preliminary budget and the pledge campaign. The pledge drive has usually been focused on general themes and initiatives and not been tied directly to line items of the budget.

A Board member suggested having a small group touching base with Rev. Terasa to get a better sense of how the pledge drive will be launched and how it will be messaged in terms of the larger initiatives for the church next year.

A Board member noted that there was a need to clarify leadership for the pledge drive, whether it was lay leadership or more leadership from the Minister. A Board member noted that there have been several meetings about the pledge drive and the Board has been invited to them and asked what type of additional information the Board needed and whether any need for more information has been communicated to the group working on the stewardship campaign.

The Board chair noted that there will be meetings on the proposed budget and asked that in March Tamara provide a summary of the plan about outreach meetings for the budget. This was an important element of the budget process last year. A member also noted that meetings about the budget could also focus on more mission specific initiatives and themes.

### **Governance Sub-committee Update**

Linda Battagalini provided an update on the progress of the governance sub-committee and the work it has done so far. This included outreach and interviews with congregational members and meetings with the church staff. So far, they are hearing that there has been a lot of dissatisfaction with policy governance. One thing that was stressed was the importance of the Church Administrator role.

In the past at UUCA, once policy governance came into place, many committees were disbanded (Board members had been members of the committees). This created confusion about what the Board did and how to get things done once policy governance was in place. The sub-committee also heard that there were things dismantled after Reverend Michael left that were not reassembled and people are still feeling the impact of it.

The sub-committee also met with three other churches and they noted most churches do not use policy governance any more. There are issues with its effectiveness, as Board members usually roll off the Board before they fully understand policy governance.

The sub-committee also noted that particularly with the staff we have lost the communication piece on our higher purpose as an organization. We talk a lot about the work we need to do, but we need the covenant and spirituality to be the driving force behind what we do and the way we do it. A Board member noted that the ends also need to be a part of this, both the governance model and how we do the work on a daily basis going forward.

The sub-committee has gathered a lot of data and they intend to turn it into a story – for example, what problems have we identified, what policies do we want to have, and how do we want to reflect those principles in the process we go forward. By the time of the annual meeting, they should have the story but will likely not have the recommendations.

### **Establishment of Board Task Groups on Issues for Future Discussion**

The Board Chair noted that there are some items noted previously that need action. One is the Senior Minister/Executive Expense Account Policy. He asked that if people want to work on this policy one or two members may want to draft a sample policy. The others are the modification of the ends to reflect the 8<sup>th</sup> principle, and the selection process for the 2019-20 Board Chair.

Andrea Ryon and Linda Battaglini volunteered for the Expense Account Policy, and planned to reach out to Janice Morris to see if she would participate as well.

Chad Ohlandt and Art Stevens volunteered for the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle and the Ends.

Warren Wright, Andrea Ryon, and Art Stevens volunteered for the selection of the Board Chair, including timing issues such as should the Chair be decided/proposed before the new slate of members is determined, or after. They will come up with a proposed process. A Board member noted that the focus should be on the characteristics that will make a good board Chair rather than any other specific criteria.

This group may also discuss whether there should be a Vice Chair/Executive Committee. The focus will be on leadership. This is also something that should be included in the discussion of the governance committee structure.

### **Communications Schedule**

Emily Goodin suggested that the Board write a letter of support for the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle vote and there is a need for a letter of support for the pledge campaign.

**The regular meeting Adjourned at 9:42.**