

First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis Board of Trustees

Meeting Minutes

September 24, 2014

I. Call to order

Mike Illes called to order the regular meeting of the First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis Board of Trustees at 6:30 p.m. on September 24, 2014 in the Dietrich Room.

II. Roll call

The following persons were present: Allan Callander, Madalyn Cioci, Scott Eller, Martha Hardesty, Chair Mike Illes, JD Rickard, Joyce Riedesel, Nick Rowse, Sue Tincher, Rev. David Breeden, and Assistant Minister Jim Foti.

III. Announcements/Appreciations

The Congregational Life Team was appreciated for a great start to the year—a good kick-off meeting was held to under one hour thanks to all the pre-planning done in the CLT's August retreat. The Equinox celebration was mentioned as being a great success, and thanks were expressed for Dave Leussler, head chef, for the good food at the luncheon. Appreciation was expressed for Allan Callander and Bruce Nelson for the tremendous amount of work they have been putting in around the building—much painting, repairing, and modification for Gaia Democratic School. Also, appreciation was expressed for Allan for putting together the PowerPoint used during the Board presentation this past Sunday. And Martha Hardesty was thanked for making the lovely new curtains in the RE classrooms.

IV. Consent agenda

The motion passed to approve the consent agenda, including:

- Minutes of the 8/27/14 Board of Trustees meeting.
- Recognition of new FUS members Andrew Brown and Kristin Lindberg.

V. Discussion

- a) **Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Allan Callander reported that our pledge revenue in August was \$12,000 below budget, a significant shortfall. One contributing factor was that there was fairly light attendance during August. September is shaping up to be on budget, but if things do not get better, we will have to watch expenses closely. We have new congregational database Church Windows running, and most of our data is currently being entered into it. We will watch pledge revenues closely over the next 30-60 days, and Beth Gohdes, Stewardship

chair, will be scheduling a Stewardship meeting right away. Allan reported that the designated fund drawdown has begun—we have pulled \$13,280 out of certain designated funds, in the process of centralizing funds under the FUS umbrella, rather than being in many different silos. The next drawdown will be in January, as indicated in our budget plan. There was a discussion about the importance of thanking people for their pledges. Right now, there is no procedure in place for acknowledging and thanking people who have turned in pledge forms. It was decided that a thank-you note from a Board Member would be an appropriate response to people who pledge. Allan will work up a list of the 78 people who have turned in pledge sheets so far this year, about 50 of which were pledge increases, and he will draft some sample verbiage that could be used in a thank-you note. Madalyn Cioci and Martha agreed to sign the thank-you notes.

b) Minister's Report: David Breeden reported that HR consultant Pat Langan is still working on the text of the position descriptions. RE Director Melanie Willett is working on talking to RE families about pledging. Only 25% of new RE families turned in a pledge form last year. Of our RE affiliates (non-members), last year 14 or 15 families made no contribution. At one point, there had been a plan under former RE Director Jan Devor to make it clear that RE affiliates should be expected to pay something, but it was never implemented—Melanie is working to rectify this. David mentioned that we need to sensitize people to the fact that we don't get money from the denomination, as people may be used to coming from other denominations.

David said that the Ministerial Advisory Team has two openings—the Board will provide a name for one, and David will suggest one. Beth Gohdes, Wanda McCaa, Wendy Andberg and Bill Karns are currently on the team. The Board will generate an email discussion to figure out a person to suggest and put the suggestion on next month's agenda. It would be good to have a younger person. There is still a problem with congregants asking the staff to do too much. David will put thumbnail job descriptions on the website to remind people of staff job descriptions. We will share this problem at the Leadership Team Meeting. At the Water Ceremony Sunday morning, attendance was 178, and the following week there were 193. David said that staff members are accounting for their hours—he sees everyone's time and signs off on it. This was a new system that we had put in place last year. The staff is working well together.

c) Assistant Minister's Report: Jim wants to know what the Board would like to know from him in his report. One thing mentioned was we would like an update on progress towards his goals. Jim said that he needs a “committee on ministry” to meet with him every month since he is in Preliminary Fellowship. He will do more homework on that and figure out what exactly he needs—probably 5 people.

He will also need an Ordination Committee—his Ordination will probably be April 11. He hasn't determined what his office hours will be yet. About 20 people are interested in Chalice Circles right now, which means 3 circles, of which Jim may lead one.

d) Leadership Team Meeting: Is scheduled for 9:00-11:30am on Saturday, October 4. We need to build an agenda for that day. It will include: a governance update, a reminder about staffing, a discussion of re-upping our Green Sanctuary (Social Justice Director Shannon Williams will lead this), a presentation of the Board's big vision of our capital campaign, time for David and Jim to discuss goals for the year, and calendaring. It was decided that 2-1/2 hours would be sufficient.

e) Facilities Impacts, Resulting from Gaia Move-In: The work necessary for Gaia is about 98% done. There is one cabinet that needs to be rebuilt, because there is exposed plumbing right now. We need to connect the card reader entry system at the front of the building to the card reader at the back of the building, which manages the Gaia access. The new Voice-Over-Internet-Protocol (VOIP) phone system was installed today. The new server will be installed next week, at a time when J.D. Rickard can be here. They will also put internet access points throughout the building, which is necessary for Gaia. Gaia School's demands on the building are only 10-15% of previous tenant Child Garden's usage. We need to think about re-keying the building, since there are many keys out there in unknown hands. With the new wireless network, we could get a wireless security camera system for a few hundred dollars. There are lots of little building things that need to be done. There is currently no maintenance calendar and we need one. Allan and Bruce have sketched out a job description for a 30 to 60-day position for someone to: a) catalog all the building tasks that need to be done; and b) compile a contact list of all our contractors and vendors. This idea was met positively and will be taken up at a later board meeting.

f) Feedback from Sunday 9/21 Congregational Conversation: The feedback was mostly positive from the small gathering of people who heard about Board goals for future improvements and a capital campaign to support them.

g) New policies for consideration: Three more big pieces of governance are still to be added to our Governance Policy: Discernment, Strategy, and Oversight. J.D. and Madalyn presented the rough drafts of the Discernment and Strategy sections. Discernment was defined as the process of deep listening about where we need to go, which is an important Board function, and which might reasonably occupy a quarter of the Board's time. It was mentioned that "discernment" is a vague word—"mission statement" would be more readily understood. One suggestion was to take out the example questions in the Discernment section. It was generally

agreed that a commitment to include a time for discernment as an agenda item in board meetings on a quarterly basis was desirable. As for the Strategy section, it has verbiage that is going in two different directions, the need to have flexible strategy, and the need to have long-term plans. It was stated that we need to find a way for both of these ideas to co-exist. It was suggested that the Strategic Plan could be developed by a board Strategic Planning Committee, composed of two board members and others, that would go into hibernation when not needed. But, it was brought up that many times good plans are written by committees, and then are relegated to a drawer. It was decided that was a good idea to have the Board come up with the plan, and not a committee, as it is a core board responsibility. It was recommended that we keep the language in the Strategy section very simple, and remember that we can come back to edit this document in the future. The discussion of Oversight, the last area of Governance yet to be added to the policy, was tabled till next month.

VI. Task list

- a) Generate names for the Board-nominated candidate for the Ministerial Advisory Committee—all
- b) Madalyn will send out a reminder on the Leadership Team Meeting.
- c) Allan will send draft language for a stewardship thank you note—Madalyn, Martha will sign these.

VII. Adjournment

Mike Illes adjourned the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Minutes submitted by: Sue Tincher