

Birmingham Unitarian Church
Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2023

Present: Claudia Kocher, Tony Kubien, Tanya Nordhaus, Julia Pulver, Andrew Schreck, Brian Schandavel, Diane Slon, Amy Smalley, Craig Stroup

In-Person Visitors: Jenn Karteczka (NomCom/Personnel), Sharon Niedermaier (Personnel), Carole Wiseman

Zoom Visitors: Nancy Duffy, Mary Dunn (NomCom), Mary Jo Ebert, Carol Hayford, Art Hillman, Sharon Jacobs, Marilyn Kelly, Donna Larkin Mohr, Cynthia Osterhage, Dick Rappleye, Ed Sharples, Carey Wendell (NomCom)

The meeting was held both in person at BUC and on Zoom.

Andrew called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM. Amy read the Board Covenant. Andrew led the chalice lighting and check-in.

Minutes

- Andrew moved that the minutes of the September 25, 2023, board meeting be accepted. The motion passed unanimously.

Monthly Reports

1. Treasurer's Report – Craig
 - Andrew moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted.
 - Craig presented the treasurer's report (document attached).
 - September revenues were \$8,200 favorable to budget, due largely to a bequest.
 - Variances are due to pledges (ahead for the year), partially offset by rental shortfall.
 - Operating expense variance due to timing of three items (insurance, plate collection, RE items) that will appear in October.
 - Facilities gains offset by two tech expenses: a new projector for the sanctuary, and a new local file server.
 - Unrestricted cash is at \$96,774.
 - Budget and Finance has reviewed the Investment Policy Statement and plan to have their modifications reviewed and present them to the Board in November or December.
 - Budget and Finance noted that there is no specific line item for technical items. We may want to carve that out.
 - Craig Spangler is willing to get involved in creating next year's budget; he has some ideas for savings.

- Planned Giving Update: Kathy DuHame is working on a postcard that can be used for communication. Craig Spangler will reach out to members who currently have BUC in their estate plan to confirm that is still accurate
- Updated elevator estimates: \$40,000 for sump pump repair, \$125,000 to repair or replace the existing elevator, \$200,000 to replace with a different style of elevator.
- Endowments were down for September.
- The motion passed unanimously.

Open Topics

1. Discussion of Town Hall – Andrew
 - Overall view was that the meeting went well, and members expressed their appreciation to Andrew.
 - It was noted that the answers did not dance around the issues, and that the questions from the floor were handled well.
 - The slides have been posted to the Member Resources section of the website. The video of the Town Hall will be posted tomorrow.
2. Conflict Transformation Task Force – Andrew
 - Andrew asked all members to go forward with their current tasks with a December goal.
 - The task force has identified three churches with Right Relationship committees that they will interview.
 - Andrew will plan to talk with Rev. Sharon Dittmar when she returns from sabbatical.
 - We will need someone to run this; it should not be put on a staff member.

New Topics

1. Future Town Halls – Andrew
 - It was proposed that each town hall, regardless of topic, start with a general update.
 - Dates and topics for monthly town hall were proposed for the next four months:
 - 1) November 19: Membership and Budget and Finance
 - 2) December 10 (Lisa Presley here): Ministry
 - 3) January 14: Minister and search update
 - 4) February (date TBD): Strategic Plan and Interim Search
 - It was noted that we don't need all meetings to have a focused topic ahead of time.
2. Vision and Strategic Planning – Andrew
 - Marilyn Mast and Claudia Kocher had found old strategic plans.
 - This is important work that we still need to do alongside the interim search; however, we cannot focus on it at this meeting
 - We need to focus on the next 18-20 months, which will include this work
3. Ministerial Transitions – Andrew

- Immediate next steps
 - 1) Refer to the UUA Transitions plan. All Board members have been asked to read the Transitions page on the UUA website, as well as the Transitional Ministry Handbook.
 - 2) Andrew will meet with Transitions Director Keith Kron on Thursday. Amy and Tanya will also attend.
 - 3) The timing will be to form the search committee in February (board appointed); they will submit materials to the UUA in mid-April for an interim ministry. Amy will reach out to a member of the previous interim search committee to get more details.
 - 4) If we want to call a settled minister the following year, we will need to put search committee candidates on the ballot for the Annual Meeting in May.
 - 5) We need to determine how the search process works if we want to call a developmental minister.
- Pastoral Care Coverage
 - 1) Karen Madrone had arranged a pastoral care exchange with Rev. Mandy. We need to ask her if she is still willing to provide pastoral care for us and, if so, if she wants compensation.
 - 2) Tanya will call her.
 - 3) A suggestion was made at this point that we put together a work plan with swim lanes or something similar to capture the action items that arise out of our discussions.
- Chain of Command/Reporting
 - 1) PCA and WA teams currently have no one to report to, as they had reported to Rev. Mandy.
 - 2) Andrew thinks the PCAs may be ok as is, but he will talk to them.
 - 3) Andrew will reach out to the WAs for next step; they may need coverage for worship planning.
 - 4) A question arose about who congregants would reach out to in the event of a crisis. Andrew indicated that people should call the office, and Val will put them in touch with Rev. Karen or a PCA.
 - 5) Staff members can bring their admin/personnel issues to Andrew, but the Board does not take responsibility for program supervision. For that we will trust the program leaders and not direct workflow.
 - 6) A question arose if we could be flexible with Policy Governance to provide more support during this transition, i.e., assign board members to functions as a support. Andrew will put a signup on the Google drive.
 - 7) It was asked if the temporary minister would function as the executive and, if not, how do we get to the end of the year without one? It was noted that if there were no executive function, the Board would need to be more involved. Andrew will discuss this with Keith Kron.
- Additional Considerations
 - 1) Craig Spangler will be starting the budget with a zero-base model.
 - 2) We will push visioning/strategic planning out a couple of months.

- 3) We will need to remember the planned resilience fund going forward. Andrew asked Craig to send out the list of projects that have been identified.
- 4) A suggestion was made that we should meet more than once a month right now. There will be an executive session on November 6.
- 5) Starting with the November 6 meetings, all Board meetings will move to Zoom for the winter.

Issues Arising for the Good of the Church

1. Tanya encouraged everyone to attend the November 12 recognition of members over age 90.
2. Andrew noted that Trunk or Treat has generated nearly 300 “interested” responses on the public post and needs volunteers to make the event a success.
3. Amy reminded everyone that it was the last week to take part in the flamingo fundraiser.
4. Diane asked about Article II activities and whether there is still a task force. Andrew was not aware of the status but will get an update. The group could possibly do a town hall if they have information to share.

Visitor Comments/Questions

1. Donna Larkin Mohr praised for Mark Ewert and for Rev. Mandy’s letter, as well as Ed’s letter about Maurice Lefford’s passing. She shared a few concerns from the town hall: (1) The ministerial shortage is a reality. Many ministers have left our denomination. Northwest is still in search, and the situation is the same in other states where she has UU friends. (2) If we are facing an increasing shortfall, we need to address our staffing level as it compares to our size. We should give staff full information and involve them as best we can. (3) We need to educate the congregation about minister types and searches.
2. Mary Jo Ebert expressed her thanks for the town hall and her belief that having the town hall right away headed off speculation and rumor. She referenced the hate speech email mentioned in the town hall and asked if that person had been dealt with. Andrew indicated that if the person is still a congregant that he will use the Disruptive Behavior Policy. If the person is no longer a congregant, they will be removed from the email distribution list.
3. Mary Dunn offered profound thanks to the Board for their work and for the notice about Rev. Mandy and the town hall. She was thrilled to see so many people returning. She suggested contacting Kym Worth if we need an executive and Doug Gallager and Celia Thurston to help fill the pulpit.
4. Carey Wendell put her name forward to be considered for a search committee. She would like to serve.
5. Nancy Duffy echoed Donna in her appreciation for the town hall. She asked if we are going to consider doing exit interviews. Andrew said we would, and that they would be handled by Membership/PCA/Board depending on the reason.
6. Carole Wiseman said she is used to seeing the entire Board on the chancel in a meeting and thought we should have all been up there for the town hall. She asked if it was unusual for each board member not to have an assigned program area; Andrew

responded, no, not in our governance model. She hopes Craig will provide a slide show for the finance town hall, as well as provide a takeaway. She was sorry to see only 9 bridge tables in the Hodas Hall; a lot of people are now playing online. She brought a UU World article about shared ministry to our attention. She talked about venues like the Packard Proving Grounds that host parties and suggested that we do the same to increase rentals. She feels we need to do more publicity like we did for Trunk or Treat. She asked if Rev. Mandy was involved with other ministers in the area. She suggested having town halls on a Sunday when the choir sings to improve attendance. She would like to be involved with exit interviews but would want a script to do it; Andrew will talk to Sara about that.

7. Jenn Karteczka asked us to please lean on the Personnel Committee for staff issues.
8. Tanya and Diane talked about rentals: (1) the possible use of sites like "The Knot" that is popular for weddings; (2) Do we need a task force for rentals? There are lots of ideas, but how do we gather it and who executes it? The staff had been working on this with Rev. Mandy.

Andrew moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Smalley, Secretary

Birmingham Unitarian Church

Treasurer's Report to Board of Trustees

October 23, 2023

1. September 2023 Financial Statements are complete, and the results presented to Budget & Finance are below:

	Month of September			September Year-To-Date			Full Year
	Actual	Budget	B/(W)	Actual	Budget	B/(W)	Budget
Revenues	\$56,903	\$48,686	\$8,217	\$155,308	\$141,406	\$13,902	\$632,665
Adj. Oper. Exp	-\$62,796	-\$62,537	-\$259	-\$163,154	-\$175,243	\$12,089	-\$716,179
Adj. Oper. Inc./Loss	-\$5,893	-\$13,851	\$7,958	-\$7,846	-\$33,837	\$25,991	-\$83,514

- Revenue variance is primarily the Martha Pfaff bequest of \$14,000 that was received in September, as favorable pledge income was largely offset by a YTD shortfall in Rental Income
- Operating expense variance is primarily due to three items: 1) plate collection distribution for Jul/Aug was delayed and will show up in October; 2) UUA staff insurance for September was processed in October; 3) Religious Ed Other Expenses. The favorability we had seen for Jul/Aug in Office/Facility was largely offset by two significant technology expenditures in September (new sanctuary projector and new local file server). It was noted in the B&F meeting last week that we don't have a specific line item in our budget for information technology equipment and upgrades, so maybe that should be broken out in future budgets.

2. Estimated General Fund (unrestricted) cash at September 30 is \$96,774 (\$145,443 incl, 2023-24 prepaid pledges)

3. As I mentioned last month, the Budget & Finance Committee has reviewed the Investment Policy Statement and we have a few proposed modifications. We hope to review them with Melissa Joy at Pearl Planning and bring them to the Board in November or December for approval.

4. The Budget & Finance Committee discussed a few items worth mentioning at our meeting last week:

- Craig Spangler is willing to get involved with the development of the 2024-25 budget, and has some ideas for areas where there may be opportunities for savings
- With regard to our Planned Giving responsibilities, Kathy D is working on a brochure/postcard that could be utilized to communicate regarding existing and/or potential future bequests, and Craig Spangler is willing to reach out to those who have previously indicated BUC is in their estate plans to confirm/update our records.
- Updated estimates for elevator repair have been received, and my understanding is that the sump system repair will be approximately \$40K, and the repair/replace of the existing elevator would be another \$125K. Another option is to completely replace with a different style elevator, at a cost of approximately \$200K.

5. Endowment fund market values at August 31, 2023 were as follows:

- General Endowment: \$552,042.92 (down \$19,332 from August 31)
- Music Endowment: \$44,270.60 (down \$1,338 from August 31)
- Memorial Glen Endowment: \$42,944.25 (down \$1,448 from August 31)

Respectfully submitted by Craig Stroup, Treasurer
October 23, 2023