

Birmingham Unitarian Church
Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
December 18, 2023

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

Visitors: Soren Anderson, Terry Fitzpatrick, Yvette Kaplan, Jenn Karteczka, Jane O'Neil, Carole Wiseman

The meeting was held on Zoom.

Andrew called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM. Amy read the Board Covenant. Andrew led the chalice lighting and check-in.

Minutes

- Andrew moved that the minutes of the November 27, 2023, board meeting be accepted. Craig noted a few edits. The motion passed unanimously with those edits.

Monthly Reports

1. Treasurer's Report – Craig
 - Andrew moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted.
 - Craig presented the Treasurer's report (document attached).
 - The motion passed unanimously.

Open Topics

1. Town Halls – Andrew
 - 1/14/2024 – Ministerial Update: targeted and interim. Can add other topics as needed.
 - 2/11/2024 – Strategic plan
 - 3/17/2024 – Budget and finance
 - 4/21/2024 – TBD

Discussion

- As 3/17 is Bake-Off, we'd likely need to move to 3/10.
- Craig would still be in Arizona for the March town hall and will need to present remotely on Zoom.
- A discussion of planned giving needs to be part of a future town hall.
- Multiple Board members received positive feedback on the town hall that Rev. Lisa Presley did in December, especially regarding congregational freedom to keep the current eight principles and six sources. Furthermore, she helped people see the UUA more positively.

- It was proposed to have Rev. Sharon Dittmar come in April
2. Conflict Transformation Task Force – Andrew
 - Andrew talked to Rev. Sharon. Her recommendation is to compile our learnings and keep them until the targeted and interim ministers can help us.

New Topics

1. January Board Working Session – Andrew
 - Tabling discussion for this meeting to incorporate planning documents Diane and Amy created.
 - Meeting will be 1/13/2024. Can be a hybrid session.
2. Exit Interview – Andrew
 - Will be the evening of January 25; invitation to follow tomorrow.
3. Strategic Planning - Andrew
 - We need to determine if we should use a consultant or a UUA resource to help with this.
 - Rev. Sharon mentioned Mark Ewert; Andrew shared some feedback from the weekend he spent with us.
 - The UUA has regional consultants for approximately \$600/day that can work with us via Zoom.
 - Andrew will follow up with David Pyle, the Regional Lead for the Mid-America district and Rev. Sharon's boss. We will learn more in January.
 - Rev. Sharon suggested we speak with two other churches in our district—All Souls in Indianapolis and a church in Iowa—who are managing large facilities. Claudia and Tony volunteered to reach out in January.
 - Rev. Sharon can also put us in touch with a church that went a year without a minister.
 - The question was raised again about the possibility of our sharing space with other churches.
4. Stewardship Guidance – Andrew
 - Eric Sargent has asked for the 2024-25 stewardship target.
 - Amy noted that in the Revenue Committee meeting, Craig Spangler indicated that he was assuming flat revenue and thus a \$450,000 target for Stewardship.
 - Andrew proposed using a \$450,000 target again this year. Craig and the rest of the Board agreed.
5. Alliance – Andrew
 - Motion:
The Birmingham Unitarian Church Alliance was founded in 1954. It is an auxiliary organization for the benefit of BUC as well as a social and service group. According its

1999 bylaws, the Alliance president and vice president, elected yearly, must be members of BUC. That the Alliance has its own bank account was to save the front office from the large number of detailed monetary transactions as they gathered members and began having organized board meetings, lunches, and monthly activities.

The Alliance opted for two persons, the Treasurer and one other, to have authority to sign Alliance checks. Following the death of Ann Throop, a second person is needed, and Anne Calomeni has agreed to fill that role. This may turn out to be a temporary step, as members and interested persons explore options concerning the Alliance, but it will solve the immediate need.

Discussion:

- Per Craig, Priscilla Hildum is unclear on the future of Alliance. If they decide not to keep a separate bank account, their balance could go in the BUC general cash account, and they could maintain it from there. Carole Wiseman indicated that Alliance might be willing to use funds for a plumbing repair.
- The motion passed unanimously.

6. First Merchants Bank Accounts

- Craig sent a message to First Merchants Bank about changing some of our accounts to improve earnings. He has sent them Board Minutes so that we can go in and sign off on changes.
- Craig will let us know the next steps.

Issues Arising for the Good of the Church

1. Andrew received an email from Valerie about an envelope from the Community Foundation of SE Michigan re: Betty Blair's estate. Only he can open it, so he will go to BUC in the next day or two and will let us know what he learns.
2. Andrew noted that we have a renter with a substantial outstanding bill of about \$5,000. Andrew is not aware of our having legal counsel for this. Valerie is pursuing an option for now, but another suggestion was made to send a certified letter as a next step.
3. Julia reminded everyone of the Yule celebration on 12/21 from 6-8 PM.
4. Tanya noted that this year's Alliance luncheon tied an existing record for most attendees and that Carole Wiseman is trying to save Alliance.
5. Amy announced the new date of the Talent and Services Auction: April 13.

Visitor Comments/Questions

1. Soren Anderson volunteered to pursue the funds owed to us by the aforementioned renter. He also proposed that the Board consider a group of returning members to try to encourage those who have left BUC to return.
2. Jane O'Neil asked about exit interviews. Andrew recapped the process and noted that we need to determine how we will use the information we obtain.

Craig moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Smalley, Secretary

Birmingham Unitarian Church

Treasurer's Report to Board of Trustees

December 18, 2023

1. November 2023 Financial Statements are complete, and preliminary results are below. Note that these have not yet been reviewed by the Budget and Finance Committee, which will meet tomorrow, Dec 19.

	Month of November			November Year-To-Date			Full Year
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>B/(W)</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>B/(W)</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Revenues	\$43,016	\$45,686	-\$2,670	\$242,336	\$236,073	\$6,263	\$632,665
Adj. Oper. Exp	<u>-\$44,487</u>	<u>-\$58,783</u>	<u>\$14,296</u>	<u>-\$290,834</u>	<u>-\$293,775</u>	<u>\$2,941</u>	<u>-\$716,179</u>
Adj. Oper. Inc./Loss	-\$1,471	-\$13,097	\$11,626	-\$48,498	-\$57,702	\$9,204	-\$83,514

- November revenue unfavorable variance was primarily pledge income, as rental income was near budget for the first time this year. YTD Revenue variance is primarily the Martha Pfaff bequest of \$14,000 that was received in September, partially offset by the YTD shortfall in Rental Income
- Operating expense favorability in November was due to minister expenses and facility & office, and on a YTD basis, favorability in all categories (primarily Facility & Office) more than offset the unfavorability in minister expenses as a result of the timing of the severance payment in October.

2. Estimated General Fund (unrestricted) cash at November 30 is \$158,385 (\$196,239 incl, 2023-24 prepaid pledges) Note that these amounts are higher than the amounts shown in Exhibit B of the financial statements because I have adjusted for eliminating the accrual for Minister Sabbatical (\$16,174) which is no longer a BUC obligation and the Deferred Income adjustment for ERTC Revenue (\$86,074), as we intend to use this amount to cover the current year deficit budget that was approved by the Board earlier this year.
3. Craig Spangler has started working on the 2024-25 budget, and met with Joanne last week to get more detailed information on past spending. He is looking at both bottoms-up zero-based budgeting and a top-down percentage of revenues approaches as possibilities, and he will be sharing his findings so far with the Budget & Finance Committee tomorrow night.
4. Craig Spangler was also asked by the Stewardship team for a target, which we will discuss at tomorrow's meeting with possible input from tonight's Board meeting.
5. Endowment fund market values at November 30, 2023 were as follows:
 - General Endowment: \$574,549.62 (up \$35,486 from October)
 - Music Endowment: \$46,077.68 (up \$2,638 from October)
 - Memorial Glen Endowment: \$44,780.63 (up \$2,767 from October)

Respectfully submitted by Craig Stroup, Treasurer
December 18, 2023