

Birmingham Unitarian Church  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
November 25, 2024

**Present:** Donna Cunningham, Mary Jo Ebert, Keith Ensroth, Art Hillman, Claudia Kocher, Tanya Nordhaus, Brian Schandavel Diane Slon, Amy Smalley, Rev. Connie Grant

**Visitors:** Kimery Campbell, Sara Constantakis, Bill Fox, Marilyn Mast, Cynthia Osterhage, Chris Slon

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

Diane called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Amy read the Board Covenant.

Rev. Connie led the chalice lighting and check-in.

### **Minutes**

- Mary Jo moved that the minutes of the October 28, 2024, board meeting be accepted.
- The motion passed unanimously.

### **Monthly Reports**

#### 1. Treasurer's Report – Keith

- Amy moved that the Treasurer's report be accepted.
- Keith presented the Treasurer's report (document attached)
- A snapshot of work in progress on facility should become a monthly report starting next month.
- Donna asked if we were running ahead on pledge collection. Keith indicated that we were but that he is not changing the forecast because of people paying a lump sum pledge.
- Diane asked about prior year pledges. Keith responded that they are lower than expected.
- The motion passed unanimously.

#### 2. Minister's Report – Rev. Connie

- Rev. Connie provided a verbal report only – no motion needed to approve.
  - She shared that there are major transitions happening at the UUA. No changes to search process this year, but there may be significant changes next year. The trend is toward contract and contract-to-call ministries rather than settled ministries. Gives congregations a chance to try out a minister before calling. Much less expensive to search that way. This may affect us going forward.
  - Diane asked why this is happening. Connie responded that a lot of ministers retired after COVID. There are also cultural shifts to ministers wanting contract

ministries. There is less commitment on both sides because of uncertainties in the world.

- There is now an Interim Transitions Director at the UUA who will sort out the Transitions dept.
- Diane noted that we will need to consider that this spring to start a committee in June if we look for a settled minister and that the Board had decided to put this on the agenda for December or January. Connie said that there may not be enough information in time for the scheduled Board meetings, but she hoped there would be enough information to proceed in the spring.
- Claudia asked if we must choose only one search path. Connie replied that she is not sure how it will be set up yet. But expenses are different. We need to learn more.

### Open Topics

#### 1. Montessori Update – Keith

- We are close to signing an agreement. Randy Safford has done a great job on the lease, and the Bloomfield Montessori owner is eager to go.
- One risk: There have been two different inspectors, neither of whom said we need fire suppression on the lower level. If the State decides we need to add it (expensive) we have a clause that lets Bloomfield Montessori out of the agreement. Low probability.
- Amy noted a concern about parents parking in the fire lane, which occurs with one renter. Keith will note that and shared that the ten lower places will be the school's for parents dropping off and picking up their children.

#### 2. Project Team Update – Mary Jo

- The team has developed a draft of the roles that will be needed to manage the lease going forward. Mary Jo, Connie, Diane just met to discuss.
- Keith is listing things that will need to be done once the lease is signed; will keep progress efficient.
- The team is getting input from good sources (other churches). They got a copy of another church's lease agreement and have contacted Grosse Pointe UU.

### New Topics –

#### 1. Strategic Planning Task Force – Chris, Marilyn, Kimery

- Donna is transitioning in as Board liaison to replace Claudia
- Task force was formed by previous board; tasked to read *Holy Conversations*.
- Chris Slon presented the strategic planning overview (see attached)
- Discussion
  - Keith noted that who we are and where we are going will require people from very diverse perspectives to come together. How does that work into this process? Chris responded that the Committee's role to collect those narratives. The committee members may not represent all those perspectives, but we must

collect all the perspectives. That is, the Committee should be functional more than representative.

- Kimery noted that *Holy Conversations* discusses how we hear one another.
- Marilyn shared that the process is amorphous. Some may happen in small, some in larger groups. Some people will need to be in certain sessions based on the focus of those sessions.
- Art asked if the steps were sequential (problem planning, development planning, frame bending). Chris indicated yes, but idea is that you pick one to do. Problem solving and Developmental planning are in progress; we need to do frame bending. He recalled attending program council, which represents all the groups, and realizing they do not support each other (e.g., music and social justice).
- Mary Jo asked if the task force sees signs in the process that we can come up with something other than a boilerplate plan that does not spark real change. Kimery responded that the book stresses focusing on things you are already doing well as a congregation and to build from there. There is a lot of mind-shift going on about our size and where we are as a congregation. Chris added that strategic planning is an ongoing process. We cannot make a firm 5-year plan because things are changing too quickly. But we need to make a 5-year plan and revisit it every year. The process gets everyone behind the ideas that are discussed and needs to happen on a regular basis.
- Mary Jo noted that there are enough people that have come into the community over the past 6-7 years whose feedback we need. What do they think we are? What drew them here?
- Mary Jo also observed that it is easy to get drawn back to the issue of the moment and push this off. How comfortable are we about making a commitment to strategic planning? Chris replied that it is a catch22. A ministerial search will take resources, but it could be a complementary process. Kimery noted that frame-bending is meant to be a longer and richer process.
- Art noted that every organization responds to the problems right before them. Without strategic planning, we only react to problems.
- Mary Jo reminded us that the Stewardship team wants to use Building a New Way in their theme. BANW is bigger than the Montessori school and can also encompass strategic planning.
- Diane asked the task force to clarify that that board will be involved, but that the committee will do the work. The task force confirmed this and stated that the board can use the task force to get things done.
- Keith noted the dilemma between type 1 and 2 processes. Type 1: react quickly, make decisions. Type 2: long-term planning. To be successful, we need to do both.
- Tanya shared that during search for Rev. Connie, the committee added an interview about strategic planning. Most candidates said doing strategic planning would be irresponsible during an interim ministry.

- Diane asked why the candidates said it was irresponsible. Bill shared that they did not like that the Interim would be making the plan for someone else. Connie stated that the Interim can *help* us make a plan, but with all these things going on, they need to be complementary in some way. She referenced Building a New Way and asked what the new way is we are going to build? If we are going to do a strategic plan, we should call it Building a New Way and make it clear that the search committee will use this information to help find a minister. Some of the items related to search can also be complementary.
- Chris made the caveat that these things will be happening concurrently and that we may not get the info to use in time for a ministerial search.
- Diane asked the Board if we approve the approach and want the task force to come back. The Board agreed unanimously that the Task Force should return with a work plan.

#### **Issues Arising for the Good of the Church**

1. None

#### **Visitor Comments/Questions**

1. Cynthia: Pleasure to hear and see the entire meeting after the technical issues the past couple of months.

Diane moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amy Smalley, Secretary

# Treasurer's Report

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OCTOBER 2024

KEITH ENSROTH

# Monthly Finances: Exhibit A

FY 24/25 MTD & YTD Financial Statements 4 Month Endings - October 31, 2024	Actualx	Budgetx	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance	Budget	4 + 8
	MTD Oct-24	MTD Oct-24		FY 24/25 YTD Oct-24	FY 24/25 YTD Oct-24		FYE Jun-25	FYE Jun-25
OPERATING REVENUES:								
PLEDGES - PRIOR YEAR	580	0	580	7,365	15,000	(7,635)	15,000	15,000
PLEDGES - CURRENT YEAR	37,225	37,342	(117)	177,809	153,547	24,262	430,000	430,000
PLATE COLLECTION	2,821	2,500	321	10,390	10,000	390	30,000	30,000
MEMORIAL GLEN	700	0	700	1,650	0	1,650	700	1,650
SPECIAL MUSIC	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,500	2,500
CoA, <u>net</u>	0	0	0	(82)	0	(82)	1,700	1,700
GUUSH, <u>net</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	950	950
SCRIP, <u>net</u>	80	117	(36)	556	467	89	1,400	1,400
RUMMAGE, <u>net</u>	0	0	0	60	0	60	17,000	17,000
OTHER FUNDRAISING	0	0	0	715	2,150	(1,435)	8,600	8,600
COMM. FOUND. SE MI DRAW	0	0	0	0	0	0	36,403	36,403
GEN. ENDOW. ANNUAL DRAW	0	0	0	0	0	0	24,042	24,042
RENTALS	10,454	4,167	6,288	24,325	16,667	7,659	50,000	50,000
OTHER INCOME:								
ERTC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Pledge Contribution	40	500	(460)	4,310	1,000	3,310	5,000	5,000
Bequest	(192,000)	0	(192,000)	0	0	0	0	0
Reimbursements	0	0	0	0	10	(10)	25	25
Newsletter Ads	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Green Sanctuary, <u>net</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UFO - Other, <u>net</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UFO - Bake-Off, <u>net</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RE - Scholarships, <u>net</u>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Emerging Needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
MAMA'S Coffee House, <u>net</u>	495	222	273	367	444	(78)	2,000	2,000
Art Committee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coffee Hour Supplies, <u>net</u>	0	(133)	133	(490)	(533)	43	(1,600)	(1,600)
Building Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunday Flowers, <u>net</u>	100	(40)	140	100	20	80	(150)	(150)
Social Justice Discretionary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Memorial Glen Endowment Draw	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,300	2,300
Memorial Tributes	0	0	0	440	0	440	0	0
Communities United WHRC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General Endowment Income	0	0	0	965	0	965	0	0
Music Endowment Income	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
420.999 Desig Inc trf to Payabl - <u>excl.</u> Cap Camp '14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NET REVENUES:	(139,504)	44,674	(184,178)	228,480	198,771	29,708	625,870	626,820
OPERATING EXPENSES:								
TOTAL DESIGNATED EXPENSES:	157	2,600	2,443	9,128	10,650	1,522	33,500	33,500
TOTAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:	2,855	5,189	2,334	19,116	20,755	1,638	62,314	62,314
TOTAL OFFICE / FACILITIES STAFF:	17,024	18,999	1,975	73,251	74,996	1,746	228,489	228,489
TOTAL MINISTER EXPENSES:	13,788	14,508	720	49,438	49,024	(414)	167,295	171,663
TOTAL FELLOWSHIP / FUNDRAISING:	214	417	203	1,087	2,417	1,330	10,200	10,200
TOTAL FACILITY & OFFICE:	15,720	13,916	(1,803)	49,909	49,316	(593)	148,200	148,200
<b>IST MERCHANT DEBT SERVICE - INTEREST</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>7,973</b>	<b>12,800</b>	<b>4,827</b>	<b>38,400</b>	<b>38,400</b>
DEPRECIATION - BUILDING	1,667	0	(1,667)	6,668	0	(6,668)	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES:	53,375	58,829	5,453	216,571	219,958	3,388	688,398	692,766
OPERATING INCOME	(192,879)	(14,155)	(178,725)	11,909	(21,187)	33,096	(62,528)	(65,946)

# Highlights For the Month

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Ann Throop's bequest has been allocated \$160K to Facility Reserve and \$32K to separate fund (Building Projects) per last month's board decision.

Raised forecast for Memorial Glen from \$700 to \$1,650 revenue given that we have already exceeded budget for the year.

Minister expenses are ~\$4K over budget due to previously reported budget miss of Rev. Eric's expenses in July.

Net: ~\$3,500 over forecast deficit.

While interest received on money market funds are not part of the operating budget, we have already brought in \$4,631 due primarily to setting Ann Throop's bequest aside in money market funds.

Given that we are delaying major repairs until spring at the earliest, we may end the fiscal year with \$8K in interest.

# Tracking Facilities Reserve

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Spreadsheet created by Max Kort and managed by Jimmy Vogel.

Budget and Finance are tracking current use of the reserve.

Budget and Finance are working on monthly process to show updates to BUC Board.

The spreadsheet will be refined in two major steps

- Once we have signed lease agreement with Bloomfield Montessori, we will have a more accurate month-by-month for revenue.
- Once we have estimates for roofing repairs in the spring, Building and Grounds will develop a three- to five-year plan for expenses.





# Cost Savings Initiative

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Several possible areas have not yielded savings.

While there are still areas being explored, we have only found \$6,000 in savings so far.

Budget and Finance Committee continues to work on it.

Draft FY 2025/2026 budget will be adjusted as areas are explored.

Birmingham Unitarian Church  
Unrestricted Cash Calculation  
4 Month Endings - October 31, 2024

	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24
General Fund - Huntington	27,253	15,518	22,540	43,921	34,085	80,700	78,943	58,606	57,808	55,763	6,723	39,005
General Fund - Level One	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
General Fund - 1st Merchants	111,820	124,647	123,454	18,096	24,130	33,426	41,217	46,191	148,363	58,556	63,004	69,571
Money Market - Huntington	36,404	36,482	26,544	89,717	90,059	90,391	120,765	121,210	217,743	218,573	219,343	170,021
Money Market - Level One	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Money Market - 1st Merchants	75,842	75,842	75,871	101,196	101,552	101,947	102,306	102,691	103,062	199,575	200,100	200,467
Fidelity	5,215	5,346	5,346	7,779	7,779	7,779	7,779	7,779	7,779	7,779	7,779	7,779
Available Funds:	256,534	257,835	253,756	260,709	257,604	314,242	351,009	336,477	534,755	540,246	496,949	486,843
<i>FY 23/24 Pledges - paid in advance</i>	<i>37,854</i>	<i>32,446</i>	<i>27,038</i>	<i>21,630</i>	<i>16,222</i>	<i>10,814</i>	<i>5,406</i>	<i>(0)</i>	<i>(0)</i>	<i>(0)</i>	<i>(0)</i>	<i>(0)</i>
<i>FY 24/25 Pledges - paid in advance</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>600</i>	<i>16,250</i>	<i>20,250</i>	<i>52,843</i>	<i>63,443</i>	<i>58,156</i>	<i>52,869</i>	<i>47,582</i>	<i>42,295</i>
AP, Trade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accruals	128,607	122,589	123,339	124,589	123,839	145,290	144,540	143,290	130,040	126,164	110,187	264,812
Sculp Hodas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Memorial Glen - Maintenance												
Memorial Glen	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441	2,441.12	2,441.12
Memorial & Tributes	11,558	11,558	11,558	15,273	15,273	15,273	15,273	15,273	15,273	15,273	15,273.34	15,273.34
Special Music	3,556	3,556	3,556	7,156	7,156	7,156	7,156	7,156	7,156	7,156	7,155.62	7,155.62
General Endowment	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100.00	100.00
CoA	320	320	320	320	320	320	320	320	320	320	320.00	320.00
Bequests for RE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
UFO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Special RE	801	801	801	801	801	801	801	801	801	801	800.77	800.77
GUUSH	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,632	2,631.64	2,631.64
GUUSH Service Plate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Minister's Discretion	5,726	5,726	9,049	7,974	7,974	7,974	7,974	7,974	7,974	7,974	7,973.89	7,973.89
MAMA's Coffee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Art Committee	510	510	510	510	510	510	510	510	510	510	510.00	510.00
Hodas Geothermal Gift												
Program Initiatives	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594	4,594.19	4,594.19
Building Projects	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	32,000.00
Sunday Flowers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Von Drehle Bequest	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Von Drehle Grounds	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Capital Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Landscape Architect												
Elaine Book Cart	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Social Justice	1,699	1,699	1,699	1,415	1,415	1,415	1,415	1,415	1,415	1,415	1,414.59	1,414.59
Communities United WHRC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Capital Campaign 2014	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
WDET Donations 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Class Conversations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Capek Woods	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	0.00
Committed Payables/Cash:	200,397	188,971	187,636	190,033	199,525	219,569	246,004	249,948	231,411	222,248	200,984	382,322
Unrestricted Cash:	56,137	68,864	66,120	70,675	58,079	94,673	105,005	86,529	303,344	317,998	295,965	104,520
<i>Unrestricted Cash - incl. 24/25 pledges</i>	<i>93,990</i>	<i>101,309</i>	<i>93,157</i>	<i>92,905</i>	<i>90,551</i>	<i>125,737</i>	<i>163,254</i>	<i>149,972</i>	<i>361,500</i>	<i>370,867</i>	<i>343,547</i>	<i>146,815</i>

# Exhibit B: Unrestricted Cash and Designated Funds

\$85K net of accruals and \$32K of Ann Throop's bequest.

Some of these funds have not been drawn from in over a year; others for over six months.

Max Kort is working with Valerie.