

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY
Board of Trustees Minutes
Thursday, December 16, 2021

Board Members Participating: Heather Winn, President; Robert South, Vice-President; Eleanor Allen, Treasurer; Patricia Sutherland, Secretary; Trustees: Joanne Harter

Board Members Absent: Shannon Starkweather-Burke, Trustee; Catherine Burns, Trustee; Roberta Carr, Trustee (excused)

Others Participating: Angelo Guarino, Bookkeeper; Harriet McMillan, Newsletter Editor; Till Fritzsching, Buildings and Grounds

Preliminaries

President Heather Winn read our Covenant to us. Our Process Observer will be Robert. There are additions to the Agenda from Robert and Eleanor which fall under New Business.

Officers Reports

Minutes - Patricia

Eleanor **moved** and Robert seconded that **the minutes be approved as written. Carried.**

Treasurer's Report - Eleanor

1. Eleanor reviewed her report and then asked for any questions. Patricia asked for an explanation of the difference between "Generosity Project" and "Unpledged Income." Eleanor explained that the Generosity Project consists of loose change donations from the collection plate that are unspecified, 50% of which is divided among the organizations our members chose at our last Annual Meeting, while unpledged Income, with no specified purpose given, is generally directed for church expenses. Patricia also asked about the "Bank Service Charges," which our Bookkeeper Angelo explained as the 3% charge from PayPal, which is deducted from monies donated to the church using this method. When asked if the report category could be labeled differently, Eleanor noted she would prefer to keep it as "Bank Service Charges" in case any other type of bank charge might arise. She also explained that the category of "Computer and Internet Expenses" does not include the cost of connecting to the Internet, which is actually included under "Utilities, Telephone," since the Internet and Telephone charges are billed together.

2. Eleanor followed up on the Board decision last month to join the Sandy Hollow Hydroelectric plan for our electricity. She told us that our December bill from National Grid was about \$700, which was paid in full by Kelly Sackheim, a church member who is also the Manager of Sandy Hollow Hydroelectric, and that Sandy requested the church to credit her payments towards her annual church pledge. Future monthly payments from Sandy Hollow Hydroelectric will not normally be this large. The charges will begin to appear on the December Treasurer reports, which we will review in January. This month's Treasurer's report will be filed for audit. (Angelo left the meeting).

Vice President's Report - Robert

In response to a request he received, Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded **that ACR Health be allowed free use of our building on 12/20/21 for a pot luck office meeting. Carried.** In response to another request, Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **Friends of Thompson Park be allowed free use of our sanctuary on January 27th. Carried.**

President's Report / Executive Committee Report / Policy Review Committee

Report - from Heather's email

As we see 2021 coming to an end it is a great time to take a minute, in the midst of all the craziness, to reflect on all of the blessings that we have seen over this past year and also to think about where we would like to see our paths take us in the year to come. I hope that everyone has a happy holiday season filled with love, laughter, and amazing memories with the people you care about most.

The Policy Review Committee worked on policies surrounding employees of the church, use of church office equipment, and policies regarding key codes and keys to the church and to the office. The next policy meeting is scheduled for December 21st at 11:00 am via zoom. We will be looking at special programs, leadership training funds, Memorial Garden, and Religious Education.

In January the Policy Review Committee will meet on the 4th and the 18th at 11:00 am via zoom. We will be looking at the remaining policies, which are:

*Youth and children: adult supervision, child abuse training, child care, and safe congregation (including policy regarding disruptive behavior).

*Conflict resolution policy

*Appendix: Code of Ethics for those working with children

Committee Reports

Finance - Eleanor

No report

Building and Grounds - Till

Nothing new.

Social Action -

No report

Outreach

No report.

Religious Education

No report

Worship - Eleanor

1. The January Sunday services are being planned by Eleanor, including guest speakers Bianca Ellis, Dave Weissbard, and Rev. Flag. The remaining services include a video service and a reading of an essay by Bertrand Russell. Catherine Burns is planning the February services.

2. The Worship Committee met with Till Fritzsching a week ago to discuss how to spend the money granted us by NYSCU for equipment to produce better dual platform services. Till later sent a worksheet outlining the cost of the equipment we discussed. I was asked to bring a motion to the board, on behalf of the worship committee, to authorize the amount needed to purchase this equipment.

I **move** and Robert seconded that **“the Worship Committee, in conjunction with Building and Grounds Committee, be authorized to spend up to \$3000 to purchase equipment for better streaming of services, including cameras, a 65” TV, a laptop computer, and stands for the cameras. The \$3000 will come from the funds granted to us by NYSCU for this purpose (\$1,772.98) plus \$1,227 from general funds.* “**

*Eleanor explained that the amount being taken from general funds is because we had \$3,762.52 in a 'special account' left over from the auction many years ago, which she believes was going to be used for our sign and for upgrading our sound system, and which is now in our general funds because the sign was paid for with other funds. The equipment currently being considered is detailed in the worksheet submitted by Till, attached below. (See end of Minutes)

There was some discussion. **Carried** (Till left the meeting)

Ad Hoc Committees

Policies - Robert

1. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“the policy titled ‘Evaluation’ be retitled to ‘Employee Evaluations’ and that the text be replaced with the following: “Board designated supervisors, or supervising committees, shall evaluate church employees annually, using Board approved forms. The Committee on Ministry will evaluate any Minister. New employees will be evaluated within 90 days. Evaluations should be an interactive process with the employee. Employees should not be appointed to supervise or evaluate other employees. Evaluations will be completed before May 1st. If a supervisor or supervising committee does not evaluate an employee by the deadline, then the Executive Committee should appoint someone else to complete the evaluation. Completed evaluations will be held in the employee's personnel folder, along with pay records. Personnel folders will be kept secure and confidential, with access restricted to those authorized by the Board.”** Following discussion about the process of carrying out the details of this policy as written and with a recommendation that the Policy be returned to the Policy Committee for further clarification, the **Vote failed**

2. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“the policy titled ‘Hiring’ be replaced with ‘Employee Hiring’ and that the text be changed to the following: Hiring decisions will be based on criteria established in advance for the particular position. The Board will set hiring criteria, and shall not include special preference for church members or family members.”** After a brief discussion the **vote carried**.

3. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“the policy titled ‘Ministerial Compensation’ be entirely repealed.”** Discussion followed, clarifying that this policy is covered elsewhere and is therefor redundant. **Carried**.

4. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“the title of the policy ‘Change in Building Access Key Code’ be changed to ‘Alarm Code’ and that the text of the policy be replaced with the following: The building access code should be changed at least once a year as authorized by the Board. Office personnel must inform all authorized key holders, and only authorized key holders, of the new code.”** **Carried**.

5. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“the policy titled “Key/code” be retitled to ‘Key Holder Responsibilities’ and that the text be replaced with the following: All persons issued keys will be required to sign a form approved by the Board, informing them of their responsibilities. The Board may revoke key holder permissions from those failing to comply with those responsibilities.”** Discussion followed. The issue of how many unauthorized keys are “out there” was raised and by

consensus this topic was relegated to a future conversation. The **motion carried**.

6. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“the policy titled ‘Computer Use’ be retitled to ‘Office Equipment’ and that the text be replaced with the following: The use of All Souls office equipment and of supplies is for official church business only and they should not be used for personal purposes.” Carried**.

7. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded **“the creation of a new policy titled ‘Key Holder Authorization’ with the text to read as follows: ‘Office personnel may issue keys and building codes only to persons authorized by the Board of Trustees. Blanket permission is granted for the issuance of keys to elected or appointed church officers, trustees, chairs of standing committees, employees, and one responsible person in each group recurrently using the building indefinitely in accordance with the Building Use Policy. The office will keep written records of keys and key holders. The Executive Committee will be informed whenever a key is issued or returned. Non church members will pay a ten dollar deposit when issued a key. Deposits will be returned when the key is returned.’ ”** Discussion followed. Harriet suggested labeling the church keys before they are given out as a reminder that the key belongs to ASUUC. The **motion carried**.

8. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“the policy titled ‘Office Access/Key’ be retitled to ‘Office Key’ and that the text be replaced with the following: Office keys will be issued by Board approval and will be limited to current members of the Executive Committee, the Registrar, the Collector, the Newsletter Editor, authorized office personnel, the Minister and the Director of Religious Education (DRE).” Carried**

9. Robert **moved** and Patricia seconded that **“the text of the policy titled ‘Memorial Garden’ be replaced with the following:**

1. The Committee, established in accordance with the ASUUC By-laws, is responsible for approving all Memorial Garden transactions. Except as provided herein, the board grants blanket approval for the Committee to manage the affairs of the Memorial Garden without further Board authorization. The Committee meets annually prior to the church Annual Meeting and may meet more frequently as necessary.

2. The cost for placing or scattering the ashes of a member, member’s family ,or friend shall be \$300. This includes the engraved plate which will be attached to the Memorial Garden Plaque in the foyer. If ashes are not scattered or placed in the garden, the cost of the engraved plate alone will be \$200. Payment shall be made in full prior to any Committee approval for the plate engraving, and/or dispersal of ashes. Fees collected shall be used to cover costs for engraved plate, burial or scattering of ashes, and maintenance of the garden and records.

3. Ashes must be scattered or buried only in specified areas of the property but no individual burial site map will be maintained by the Committee. The Memorial Garden Committee will try to honor one’s wish for location of burial. The final decision on such location rests with the Committee. Individual plot markings are prohibited. Burial is considered permanent. Ashes may not be moved. If burial is chosen, ashes must be contained in a cardboard, or other biodegradable container, no larger than 10” X 8” X 6.” Winter conditions

may delay interment.

4. The Committee must be consulted prior to any planting, so that each planting fits into the overall plan. Cut flowers and/or potted plants will not be permitted in the garden. The overall care and planting of the garden shall be the responsibility of the Memorial Garden Committee.

5. This policy may not be changed without permission of both the Committee and the Board. Any changes must be reported to the membership at the Annual Meeting.” Carried.

New Business

1. **Annual Pledge Canvas** - Robert

Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded “**that the canvas for this year take place through the month of March in 2022.**” **Carried.**

2. **NYSCU Grant** - Eleanor

Eleanor is asking the Board if there is any current interest in applying for either a grant or a loan from NYSCU. Several ideas were discussed but nothing was decided. The deadline to apply for a grant is by the end of January, 2022. Another possible source for financial support is UUA’s Chalice Lighters Program.

Process Observer Report - Robert

Robert saw this as a good meeting, the way it should be!

President Heather Winn noted that in January we will go back to **meeting on the 4th Thursday**. She adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia J Sutherland, Secretary

***Till’s Hybrid Worksheet:**

Mevo Camera Start 3pack	www.Mevo.com	\$999.00
Mevo Camera Stands x3	www.mevo.com	\$79.00
TCL - 65” Class 5 Series QLED 4K UHD Smart Roku TV	www.bestbuy.com	\$699.00
Laptop (Computer Center) (1) New Lenovo 15” Touchscreen with SSD drive (Computer Center Watertown)	www.ccny.us	\$950.00
TOTAL		\$2885.00

