

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY
Board of Trustees Minutes
Thursday, November 18, 2021

Board Members Participating

Heather Winn, President; Robert South, Vice-President; Eleanor Allen, Treasurer; Patricia Sutherland, Secretary; **Trustees:** Shannon Starkweather-Burke, Rebecca Carr, Catherine Burns, Joanne Harter

Others Participating

Harriet McMillan, Newsletter Editor; Angelo Guarino, Bookkeeper

Preliminaries

President Winn called us to order at 9:37 am. and read our Covenant to us. Rebecca will be our Process Observer. The Agenda was modified to accept a report from Robert under New Business.

Officer's Reports

Minutes - Patricia

Eleanor **moved** and Rebecca seconded that **“the minutes be accepted as presented.”** Carried.

Treasurer's Report - Eleanor

The Treasurer's Reports were emailed yesterday afternoon, and our Treasurer noted that they are trying to get them to us even sooner, hopefully by January's meeting when the holiday schedules are over. She discussed the most recent report, which is for October. Our income situation looks good. Patricia asked for clarification on several categories and learned: the category named “Charitable Contributions” covers our budgeted donations to the Watertown Urban Mission, Camp Unirondack, and the NYS UU Justice Lobby Group; “UUA Annual Program Fund” covers everything we are provided by the UUA, and we pay this amount based on our budget; “Payroll Expenses - Other” was payment to an agency to help us find a new custodian.

In our previous Board meeting in October we could not review the Treasurer's reports due to their late arrival to the members, so they were not filed as accepted. At this time both the previous and this month's reports will be filed with all concerns or questions answered.

(Angelo left the meeting)

Vice-President's Report - Robert

Janine Johnson will no longer need the use of our piano for her students' lessons. The Q-Center is no longer using our building for their meetings. The mailbox situation is in fine shape. Robert noted that he has learned that our insurance liability covers all authorized building use. Now we require proof of insurance only if a group requesting the use of our building wants to include alcohol use.

President's report/Executive Committee report/Policy Review Committee report - Heather

The Policy Review Committee worked on communication policies, general building use policies, and Memorial Garden policy. The next policy review meetings are scheduled for December 7th and 21st at 11:00 am. We will be looking at:

*Personnel: evaluation, hiring, and ministerial compensation.

*Security: computer use, key/code, office access/key.

*Special programs: leadership training funds, Memorial Garden, and religious education.

This will leave us with the following policies:

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

*Appendix: Code of Ethics for those working with children.

I have also been having conversations with Reverend Flag about ways that ASUUC and Emmanuel can

work together. We are hoping to be able to set up something around MLK day. We are also discussing working together to do a dollar dinner. Any other ideas are appreciated.

Note: This report had been emailed to Board members. There were no questions.

Committee Reports

Finance - Eleanor

The Finance Committee met with Bill Couch, our UBS financial advisor, and Angelo Guarino, our bookkeeper, to discuss our UBS accounts. Mr. Couch suggested that he develop an Investment and Endowment Policy, which would be a legal document. Both Angelo and Eleanor have a copy of his proposed policy. Eleanor has also contacted the UUA to learn how they handle their situation and has received a copy of their Investment and Endowment Policy. She plans to study both documents and compare them, then review it with the Finance Committee. The advantage of having this type of plan would help our financial advisor know how we want our investments handled. It could also be useful for anyone considering endowing monies to the church in the future.

Social Action - no report

Building and Grounds - Rebecca

1. Rebecca **moved** and Eleanor seconded a motion that **“we accept a seasonal snowplowing contract for \$2600 from The Cutting Edge.”** It would extend from 11/1/21 through 4/30/22. This is the best price we have been offered. The contract needs to be signed. We would also need a volunteer to clear our sidewalks. Robert volunteered to do this for events if the custodian could maintain this when Robert is not available. **Carried unanimously.**

2. The grease trap problem is ongoing and needs the drain pipes cleaned out, as they are in bad shape. The trap has now been cleaned for \$400. It will need to be checked monthly for at least 6 months. Rebecca **moved** and Robert seconded that **we pay the \$400 to Pomerville Septic services for cleaning out the grease trap. Carried unanimously.** Patricia asked how frequently the trap should be cleaned. Rebecca stated that she will monitor this. Pomerville recommended Jet-o-Rooter to clean out the pipes to and from the grease trap. Rebecca has received Jet-o-Rooter's estimate of \$250 for this project. After much discussion a **motion** was made by Rebecca and seconded by Patricia to **accept the Jet-o-Rooter estimate to clean out the drain lines to and from the grease trap and to pay any additional expenses. Carried unanimously.**

3. The ceiling under the roof is falling in one section. Rebecca met with Tibbles' company. They determined that rain was getting under the roof through the roof vents. Repairs will be made.

4. Regarding the custodian, he is learning where to put the trash cans for collection. He needs to be reminded to fill out his time sheets. He has also been working to clean up the fall season dead flies. Rebecca is open to suggestions for the best ways to wash the outside of the windows.

Outreach - Catherine

1. UUA is suggesting we send letters of appreciation and connection to various persons including prisoners. Harriet suggested we use cards we get in the mail to send cards to prisoners as we did in the past.

2. Catherine mentioned honoring the indigenous peoples who lived where our church now stands by entering a Land Statement on our church web page. This proposal was authorized previously by the Board and Catherine will try to have a statement ready for Board approval by the end of this year.

3, Heather mentioned Rev. Flag's desire to have our church partner with Emmanuel Congregational in various ways such as social justice work, dollar dinners, etc. to help each church. The Our Whole Lives (OWL) program for young people might be possible also. Perhaps the churches could split the cost for the training. This is something to think about.

Heather mentioned that she and Harriet have talked with Evin, our District Representative, who recommended the OWL program as a possibility for us.

4. Heather noted that Rev. Flag is willing to provide pastoral care without charge.

5. Harriet mentioned being very interested in Critical Race Theory and has learned that Rev. Flag has taken several courses in this which he is willing to share with us.

Worship - Eleanor (Joanne entered the meeting)

Rev. Flag will be speaking in our church on November 28. Joanne and Sarah are planning December services. Eleanor is doing the planning for January. The services will be announced in the Newsletter and the Weekly Post.

Religious Education - no report

Ad Hoc Committee

Policies - Robert

1. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“When emails are sent to the entire congregation, the email addresses will be in the blind carbon copy (BCC) line. This is to protect private contact information. The Newsletter and Weekly Post are our primary means of notifying the congregation of news and events. Emergencies and special announcements that are approved by the Board Executive Committee will be sent by email via BCC. Personal contact information will not be given out without the authorization from the person of concern.”** Motion carried.

2. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded a motion **“to repeal the policy titled ‘Endowment Fund for Social Action.’ ”** Motion carried.

3. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded a motion **“to repeal the policy titled ‘Public Events at All Souls.’ ”** Motion carried.

4. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded a motion **“to replace the text of the policy titled ‘Guest Speaker Pay’ as follows:**

Guest Speaker Pay

According to UUA guidance, ASUUC may pay ministers from outside of the congregation and UU ordained ministers up to \$300 plus mileage for each engagement. The Worship Committee will negotiate any compensation for lay speakers.

Developed 10/21/09 Revised 11/18/21” Motion carried.

5. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded a motion **“to replace the text of the policy titled ‘Church Building Use’ as follows:**

Church Building Use

Offering the church building for use to members and non-members is seen as a service of All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church to the community. The fees designated for non-member use and the donations received from member use are intended to defray the costs of building maintenance. Building use fees for non-profit activity may be waived by the Board but donations are encouraged.

To request building use, the person requesting building use must fill out a Building Use Request Form and submit it to the church office. The person requesting building use must consult the building use calendar found at www.allsoulsuu.org or on the office door to determine whether the requested time and place is available. Building Use Request Forms may be submitted with or without fees or deposit. The person requesting building use must submit the appropriate fees at least 10 days preceding the planned event or the event may be cancelled.

Any member of the ASUUC Executive Committee has the authorization to sign the

Building Use Request Form, attesting that the Executive Committee has been consulted.

Building use approvals will be reported at the next Board meeting by the signing Executive Committee member. Office personnel may cancel building use requests that have not been approved within seven (7) days prior to an event. Authorized office use personnel will check and update the church calendar as events are scheduled to avoid conflicts.

When a non-church member schedules an event at the church, the person will be required to submit a security deposit equal to the total of all applicable fees for one day of building use. If the Board waives the fees the deposit may still be required. The deposit will be held and returned to the building user if there are no damages or unusual maintenance expenses. The security deposit does not limit the responsibility for all damages. If damage costs are beyond the required deposit, the person requesting building use will be billed for the full cost of repair or replacement.

If the Executive Committee judges a building use request to be of sensitive or controversial nature, the building use reservation shall be contingent upon a consensus of the Board of Trustees.

Building use requests for church member activities should use the Church Activity Building Reservation Form. This application may be approved by authorized office personnel. Other requirements may pertain to these requests.

The Board of Trustees may require a donation:

- **if the event sponsors another organization.**
- **if a fee is charged to participants.**
- **if it is for a for-profit event.**
- **if services of the custodian will be required.**

Suggested donations may be determined by the ASUUC Executive Committee. All members of the Executive Committee shall be notified, and a donation amount determined with approval. A memorial service for a church member has traditionally been free of charge.” The motion carried with one (1) abstention.

New Business

1. Eleanor presented Kelly Sackheim’s request as follows:

Kelly Sackheim has asked us to switch our individual personal, and also the church’s, National Grid accounts so that her hydro-electric generating plant will become our electric supplier. Warren and I just recently switched our personal account to have her as our supplier of electricity. I understand that April has also signed up with her.

Kelly sells any electricity produced at her plant directly to National Grid and National Grid, in turn, pays her. National Grid is obliged by law to purchase electricity from green energy-producing companies. (Distributed generation facilities like Kelly’s actually help meet the additional demand for energy on high usage days). They pay her enough for her to make a small profit, which she’s willing to share with us and with All Souls. If we sign up to get our electricity from her, there will be a credit on our National Grid statements that reflects that a portion of the electricity is coming from Sandy Hollow Hydroelectric - but that doesn’t mean our electricity would be cut off if something happened to her plant, or if it wasn’t generating at full capacity. If something were to happen to the Sandy Hollow Hydroelectric plant to prevent it from generating electricity, our electric service wouldn’t be interrupted, but it would come from other sources at National Grid and we would no longer get a credit representing our share of Kelly’s profit.

For our personal electrical account, Warren and I aren’t interested in the small amount of money back we’d receive. We’re doing it because we like the idea of supporting a small hydroelectric plant right here in Philadelphia that produces green energy to National Grid. There are several other green energy

generators supplying energy to National Grid. Some of them offer a larger incentive for individual customers than Kelly, but I haven't investigated whether any of them would offer an incentive to the church. Kelly has promised a \$250 sign on incentive to the church. I think it makes sense for our church to also switch our account to a company that is supplying National Grid with clean energy because it would align with our UU values, but I'm not specifically promoting Kelly's hydro-electric generating plant.

Eleanor **moved** and Robert seconded that “**we switch the electric use portion of our National Grid account to Kelly's Sandy Hollow Hydroelectric.**” Discussion followed.

Motion carried with one opposed.

2. FYI from Robert: Bianca is planning to fill out a Building Use Form for next Juneteenth. The understanding was that she would deal with vendors instead of the church doing that part.

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia J Sutherland, Secretary