

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY
Board of Trustees Minutes
May 26, 2022

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

Board Members Absent: None

Others Participating - Kelly Sackheim, Angelo Guarino (Bookkeeper)

Preliminaries

Heather read our Covenant to us. Kelly was asked and agreed to be our Processor Observer. Heather called the meeting to order at 9:32 am. The Agenda was accepted to include these items requested by Robert: ratification of rummage sale items, approval of Land Statement, and appointment of GA representatives.

Officer's Reports

Minutes - Patricia

Eleanor **moved** and Robert **seconded** that **the April minutes be accepted as written with one minor correction of a typo error: our transitional minister was referred to as Doctor Reverend Hurt and should have been Reverend Doctor Hurt.** Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report - Eleanor

Eleanor pointed out to us that due to not being able to use the building we have little money going in or out. We do have some unexpected monies from both Amazon Smile and bank interest, and the pledges are coming in nicely at 80% of the total amount pledged. The snow removal amount paid being unrealistically low to date is due to not yet receiving the invoice and will rise soon. Angelo noted that the rise in the Bookkeeper line is due to an oversight from an earlier month when he forgot to cut his own check, and the rise in the organist line is due to the loss of the first check, resulting in voiding that lost check and a duplicate being sent to her, making it look like she was paid too much. The organist will now be paid with direct deposit. Eleanor also told us that our National Grid bill is "messed up" with incorrect reporting and crediting connected with our switch to using Sandy Hollow Hydroelectric for our electricity, which explains why the report shows nothing was paid. She expects this to be cleared up eventually. (Angelo left the meeting)

Vice President's Report - Robert

1. Robert still needs reports from Heather, Eleanor, and Rebecca for the Annual Report booklet.

2. Robert has worked out a new Land Statement and **moved**, with Eleanor seconding, that **"We acknowledge the land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations including Haudenosaunee member nations. We also acknowledge that Watertown is covered by the Treaties of Fort Stanwix, Fort Harmer, and Fort Canandaigua."** After discussion, Robert amended his motion to eliminate the last sentence, leaving the motion to read **"We acknowledge the land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations including Haudenosaunee member nations."** Motion **carried** with 1 abstention.

President's Report - Heather

1. Reconstruction has started. There are some add-ons to the contractor's accepted bid

which we need to talk about.

2. The rummage sale was great and lots of people showed up.

3. The road cleanup went great.

Committee Reports

Executive Committee - Heather

Nothing new to report

Finance - Eleanor

During our present fiscal year 35 people pledged \$36,000 and are sending in their pledged monies as expected. For the next fiscal year so far 29 people have pledged a total of about \$29,000. However, quite a number of those who pledged in the past have not yet pledged and this is an issue.

Building and Grounds - Rebecca

There are “big problems in the walls” which are being discovered as we move furniture. There are some other issues also. She has discussed this with our contractor Diego who sent us his estimate for these repairs. There was much discussion about: fixing walls before replacing the roof, replacing rugs and using epoxy, possibly tarring the lower 10’ of the RE wing roof so it would last until next year, the difficulty of finding a contractor to replace the roof this year, replacing all the walls on the south side of the building, rugs which are old and deteriorating on the undersides, the possibility of selling the building and the feasibility of doing these repairs until this issue is decided, and repairing the ceiling pipe in the closet in the LaMothe lounge which leads to an outdoor spigot. Meanwhile, during the meeting Kelly Sackheim contacted a roofer she has used (John DeWitt, owner, DeWitt Construction - cell: (315) 523-1640) who might be willing to submit a bid for replacing the RE roof with a metal roof. Rebecca **moved** and Robert seconded that we **accept Diego’s estimate of \$19,339.96 additional repairs of our church building.** Heather called for a vote. There were 4 yays, and 2 nays. **Motion carried.** Rebecca stated she will try to pursue Kelly’s suggested roofing contractor and send the possible bid to Board members to vote on. Discussion followed. Eleanor proposed we ask Rebecca to get more bids, send them to the Board for review, and we can decide at that point whether to discuss this in a special Board meeting. Agreed by consensus.

Outreach - Catherine

1. There have been no recent Committee meetings. She finds it is hard to have any outreach without a building to use for other than outdoor events. Eleanor mentioned two events in which we might participate: Pride Day and Juneteenth.

2. Eleanor also mentioned a friend of hers from Emanuel Baptist Church who suggested we combine our churches. Her friend also mentioned that building upkeep is a major topic in their Board meetings as well. Eleanor suggested we consider the idea of combining our churches as another future option for All Souls.

3. The Outreach committee has not progressed with the idea of combining with our Social Justice Committee, but Catherine does think we have too many committees.

4. An AA meeting that had been held at our church has decided to leave us in June, at least for now, as our building remains unusable.

(Heather left the meeting at 10:45 and turned the meeting over to the vice-president, Robert)

Worship - Eleanor

There has been an interesting suggestion that 5 different churches join to produce Sunday services to share among their congregations. She is not sure how this would work if we wanted to participate. She discussed this with her committee, which decided that we are not ready to do this now as our church has already made plans for coming services.

The Transition Task Force is working with Rev. Hurt to plan meetings for a July weekend to start discussions about All Souls' future.

Religious Education - no report

Social Action - no report

Ad Hoc Committees

1. Policy Committee Report - Robert

A. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“we adopt the following policy, titled ‘Complaint Response Policy.’**

Anyone who suspects or is made aware of an allegation of child abuse will report that concern to the President or Vice President and/or the Minister.

It is not the function of any member or employee of the church to conduct an investigation into accusations of child abuse. Rather, it is both New York State Law and the policy of All Souls Church to immediately report any situation in which we have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been or is likely to be abused or neglected. Such a report must be made to the Department of Human Services at (315) 785-5079 or 1-800-342-3720. Once a report is made to the appropriate authorities, the church will rely on the decisions of those authorities as to the validity of the complaint.

Meanwhile the President or Vice President will appoint a three-member response team, who will develop a plan to safeguard the children and also provide protection for the accused abuser from further complaints by a permanent plan once the authorities have returned a report.” Motion Carried.

B. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that **“we replace the entire text of the Safe Congregation Policy with the following:**

1) Supervised Religious Education.

The Director of Religious Education, or a Board designated substitute such as the chair of the Religious Education Committee, will supervise all child-oriented activities and classes at All Souls.

2.) Authorized Child Care Workers.

Children attending All Souls activities must always be either in the

company of a parent or in the company of a minimum of two adults, one of whom must be an Authorized Child Care Worker.

To be an Authorized Child Care Worker at All Souls, an employee or volunteer must have a current Child Care Affirmation Form on file in the Church Office, signed within the last year by the Child Care Worker and either the Director of Religious Education or the chair of the Religious Education Committee. The DRE or RE Chair will not sign any worker’s Child Care Affirmation unless the person has been oriented to the relevant policies and has passed a criminal background check with no felony convictions or convictions for child abuse of any kind. Violations of this policy must be reported to the Director of Religious Education or chair of the Religious Education committee, and are grounds for the termination of status as an Authorized Child Care Worker.

3) Grounds for Contact Bans.

No individual who has been accused of, convicted of, or pled guilty, *nolo contendere* or ‘Alford’ plea to a charge of sexual misconduct or who has been determined to have engaged in any form of child abuse in any civil, criminal, administrative or ecclesiastical forum or any forum, will have contact with our children or youth or the parties involved, except in the presence of the child’s parent or guardian.

If an individual has been legally accused of sexual misconduct and is currently involved in civil or criminal litigation of such a charge, that individual will not have contact with children or youth or the parties involved except in the presence of the child’s parent or guardian.”
Motion Carried

C. Robert moved and Eleanor seconded that “we adopt the following policy, titled ‘Policy Regarding Disruptive Behavior.’

Situations involving disruptive behavior will be brought to the attention of the Board of Trustees, minister(s) and any other staff. The Board may appoint a response team to investigate the matter using this policy as a source of guidance

When any conflict arises which cannot be resolved by the involved parties, the Minister or President shall be informed, and form a Response Team. This Response Team will include the Minister, the President of the Board of Trustees and at least two other members of the congregation appointed by the President. The Response Team will gather necessary information and develop a response plan for

the situation.

If the Minister and/or President are involved in the conflict, the Board of Trustees shall be called into a special meeting to appoint a Response Team.

The Response Team will meet to assess the findings and decide on a course of action that will be reported back to the Board of Trustees, minister(s) and any other staff involved. This may also include reaching out to a UUA representative for guidance. The following four levels of response are recommended.

Level One: The response team contacts the person named as the source of the disruption and informs them of the nature of the concern. The person's viewpoint of the matter will be elicited, valued and documented. Committee members will then assess the situation.

Level Two: If the original concern is determined to be valid, this finding will be clearly communicated to the person in question and a covenant clearly defined behavioral change will be negotiated for

Level Three: If the person in question refuses to negotiate a covenant, aided by the response team, or is engaging in behavior of sufficient severity, he or she may be excluded from the church for a specified period of time, with reasons for the action and conditions for return.

Level Four: The person in question may be permanently excluded from the church and the church premises. Steps may be taken as needed to enforce the integrity of this decision.

The following are offered as dimensions to be used in assessing the nature and severity of referred problems:

1. **DANGER**– Is the individual the source of threat or harm to persons or property?
2. **DISRUPTIVENESS** - What is the extent of disruption to church functions?
3. **CONGREGATIONAL INTEGRITY** – How likely is it that existing or prospective church members will be driven away by the alleged behavior?
4. **PROBABILITY OF CHANGE** – How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
5. **HISTORY** – What has been the frequency and the degree of disruption caused by the individual in the past?

The following principles along with guidance from the UUA shall guide the response:

1. **Persons identified as being disruptive will be responded to as individuals of dignity and worth.**
2. **Information concerning the alleged incident(s) that led to concern will be systematically collected from the concerned parties by delegated Response Team members and documented before any action is taken.**
3. **The Response Team may offer a referral for professional services**
4. **If the Response Team decides that exclusion or expulsion from the Church is necessary the Board of Trustees, minister(s) and staff will be consulted prior to action.**
5. **In the event of imminent risk or actual harm to church members, church employees or church property, immediate action will be taken to secure the safety of persons and property.**
6. **All documentation developed in the course of investigating and resolving allegations of disruptive behavior will be kept confidential. The President of the Board of Trustees in counsel with the minister(s) will be responsible for ensuring its security.” Motion Carried**

2. Walker Heap Memorial Service - no update

New Business

1. **Rummage sale - Robert moved and Eleanor seconded that we “ratify the sale of two rocking chairs, a combo computer, a cassette player and a VCR at the church rummage sale on May 7th.” Motion Carried.**

2. **GA Representatives - Robert**

Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that we **appoint Eleanor and Catherine as our delegates to General Assembly this year. Carried**

3. **Unirondack Liaison - Robert**

Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that we **appoint Kelly Sackheim as our Unirondack Liaison. Motion carried.**

Process Observer report - Kelly

Kelly is impressed with how well we kept the meeting on track and handled disagreements with respect. She liked the sidebar conversations in the Chat without disrupting the meeting.

Robert adjourned the meeting at 11:05 am.

Respectfully Submitted

Patricia J Sutherland