

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY
Board of Trustees Minutes
February 24, 2022

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

Board Members Absent: Catherine Burns, Trustee

Others Participating: Harriet McMillan (Newsletter and Transition Team), Angelo Guarino (Bookkeeper)

Preliminaries

Heather called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. She read the Board Covenant to us. A discussion relating to the value of using a Process Observer developed. Heather decided we would think about it, and for now she asked Shannon to be the Process Observer for this meeting. Shannon accepted.

Harriet asked to add an item to the Agenda under New Business: the pending departure of Wendy Wynn. Agreed.

Officer's Reports

Minutes - (Patricia)

The monthly minutes from January 27 as well as the minutes from the Special Board meeting on February 10 were **approved unanimously** after a **motion** by Robert and seconded by Eleanor.

Treasurer's Report - Eleanor

1. Eleanor reviewed the Profit and Loss Budget report from January. She sees us as "on track" for the year.
2. Robert asked about the status of the fine of \$1,055 from the NYS Department of Labor (see minutes from October 28, 2021). Angelo told us that this is still in process and he does expect the fine, which our records clearly show was a mistake, to be refunded.
3. Joanne asked if the church has any cyber security protection. Eleanor stated that since we are not using our computer at all in the church she does not think it could be breached. Most of the church business is being done from Robert's or Eleanor's home. Our bookkeeper, Angelo, is currently doing financial work for us in his own office and assured us it is fully secure. NOTE: The RE office room is now being readied for Angelo to use.
4. A question was raised about the Board members being able to receive the Treasurer's reports earlier in the month to allow time to review them before the monthly Board meeting. This will hopefully improve.
5. All of the current Treasurer's reports will be filed for audit.

(Angelo left the meeting)

Vice-President's Report - Robert

The church office is closed. He has notified Bianca Ellis that her request for the Juneteenth

celebration at our church was approved by the Board without fees. Nothing else is presently scheduled for building use. He is working with Harriet to organize the annual pledge drive.

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

Heather^[1]_[SEP] February sure has been an eventful month! I had a lovely time in Florida with my family and enjoyed the sunshine. I am happy to be home but already miss the warm. Given the fact that I have been in Florida for a month and because I flew I have been quarantining at home for the most part so I have not ventured over to the church building yet but I have seen pictures and kept apprised of the progress. Hopefully this will be the last time we are in this particular position. ^[1]_[SEP] Reverend Weissbard's service on February 13 on CRT (Critical Race Theory) was very informative but following the service Bianca Ellis emailed the church with her feelings and opinions about the service. Rev. Weissbard responded to her email. Following the initial email and reply I spoke with Reverend Flag. He was concerned with the situation and also with how Rev. Weissbard responded. Rev. Flag advised me to email a statement to Bianca. I also forwarded the emails to our UU District Representative Evin and sought their advice. Evin concurred with Rev. Flag and also advised me to email Bianca. Both of them said that the tone of Rev. Weissbard's response had a very defensive tone. This was not what I had expected because Rev. Weissbard is generally very eloquent with his words and seems to come from a place of understanding. I took their advice and emailed Bianca. She thanked me for my response. At the end of the day it doesn't really matter what our intention was or how well we thought we did our homework, we cannot dismiss someone's feelings or point of view. We may not agree or even understand where they're coming from but we can at least hear them.

The policy review meetings were put on hold for the month of February since I was out of state but will resume in March on the first and third Tuesday on zoom.

A discussion ensued among the Board members regarding the meaning of our UU church's practice of sharing an open pulpit and hearing ideas and beliefs that may be contrary to members' personal beliefs. Eleanor will talk more about this in the Worship report below.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee - Eleanor

The committee will begin working soon on the projected budget for next fiscal year. Rebecca volunteered to help in any way she could. At this point we still have no definite figures on cost for the needed repairs from Flood II.

Building and Grounds - Rebecca

1. Our public adjuster has received an offer from Church Mutual and is reviewing it. He will be in touch.
2. There are now serious problems in the roof over the RE wing. Rebecca knows it needs to be replaced with a metal roof. The question of replacing skylights is unresolved. We need to get more than one estimate for our roofing needs. Heather volunteered the name of Mike Kampnich (315)405-5859 as a good resource for us. Robert mentioned Ben Shoen. Shannon brought up the name of ROR Northeast - Upstate NY Program Specialist, from whom we had a bid for

Flood I repairs. Also, the clerestory windows are deteriorating seriously.

3. John Crupi, our custodian, is working on clearing the snow from church sidewalks. Rebecca is looking for ways to give him more hours to work. She may ask him to help with moving items. Heather wondered if Diego could use his help.

4. The need for a temporary office in the church surfaced along with the need for a plan about boxing loose items and where to put them. The emergency door closer is not working and needs immediate repair before it is a big problem.

5. Rebecca asked for help in resetting the thermostats lower to save on utility use while the building is basically empty.

Worship - Eleanor

Rev. Flag will not be available for any services until August. For March, Eleanor is proposing reassessing who we are as a church and our relationship as a church to Watertown. Eleanor also wants to have a service about the meaning of having a “free pulpit.” This again sparked a conversation among Board members.

Ad Hoc Committees

1. Transition Team - Eleanor

The Team has been working with Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt, who is presently working as a transition minister with a UU congregation in Wisconsin, which gave her glowing reports. She moves to the area where she is working and often is there for several years. She is the only person who replied to our search. There will be a report about this in the March Newsletter. Eleanor made a **motion** seconded by Patricia that we “**hire Rev. Dr. Kathy Hurt to be our Transition Consultant and spend up to \$1,000 for a service and a workshop, probably starting in May, from this year’s budget, and include any travel expenses.**” Harriet noted that we really need to decide if we want to continue repairing the church building again and continue on as a church here or make a different choice. Harriet has only heard one person say to her “I really want a minister.” Passing this motion would mean we were hiring Rev. Dr. Hurt and we would still need to work out the details with her, following UU guidelines. **Motion carried.**

2. Policy Review Committee - Robert.

Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded that “**the existence of the Policy Review Committee be extended until the end of the current fiscal year.**” **Carried.**

a. Robert **moved** and Eleanor seconded “**that we change the title of the policy called ‘Evaluation’ to ‘Employee Evaluations’ and change the text of the policy to the following: Board designated supervisors shall evaluate church employees annually. It is recommended that the Board approved evaluation form be used. New employees will be evaluated within 90 days. Evaluations should be an interactive process with the employee. Employees cannot supervise or evaluate other employees. Evaluations will be completed before May 1st. If a supervisor or supervising committee does not submit an evaluation prior to the May Board meeting, the Board will appoint someone to complete the evaluation before the June Congregational meeting. Completed evaluations will be maintained in the employee’s**

personnel folder. Personnel folders will be kept secure and confidential with access restricted by the Board. The Committee on Ministry will evaluate any Minister.” Carried.

b. Robert moved and Eleanor seconded that **“we change the text of the policy called ‘Leadership Training Funds’ to the following: The Board of Trustees approves granting funds for leadership training as the budget allows.” Carried.**

c. Robert moved and Eleanor seconded that **“we change the text of the policy called ‘Religious Education’ to ‘Religious Education for Adults’ and change the text of the policy to the following: Anyone interested in presenting an Adult Education Program shall contact our minister or the Board and request a review of the course content and curriculum. The review will be by the Minister or Board with the Religious Education Committee to determine if the proposed program is within Unitarian Universalist guidelines. The Board will address any further questions. Scheduling will depend on the needs of the facilitator, the participants in the program, and our church calendar.” Carried.**

d. Robert moved seconded by Patricia that **“we change the title of the policy called ‘Adult Supervision’ to ‘Children’s Supervision’ and change the text of the policy to the following: Two (2) or more adults are required to be present at any church activity involving the children. At least one supervisor shall be fully trained as required by the *Safe Church Manual* covering the Child Abuse and Reporting System.” Carried**

e. Robert moved seconded by Joanne that **“we change the text of the policy titled ‘Child Care’ to the following:
The Safe Church Manual requires that childcare will be provided by an employee of the church who is at least eighteen (18) years old and has satisfactorily passed a formal background check and trained in child abuse prevention and reporting. The responsibility for recruiting, hiring, and supervising this position is assigned to the Religious Education coordinator.” Carried.**

f. Robert moved and Eleanor seconded that **“we adopt a new policy titled ‘Accident Prevention Policy’ with text reading as follows: The accident prevention policy is a guidance to avoid unintended harm to anyone or damage to property on the church campus or while participating in any church activity.**

1. Activity Authorization Authorization: All activities associated with the church or on the church campus require prior authorization from the Board or the associated committee(s).

2. Accident Reporting: Whenever an accident occurs on the church campus resulting in harm to anyone or property damage, then the person in charge shall submit the Accident Report form to the Executive Committee. Any significant accident will require the Board to notify the appropriate agencies and take action to prevent similar accidents.

3. Hazardous Activities : Anyone engaging in hazardous activities must be accompanied by an adult safety person. Carried

New Business

1. Heather shared that her daughter, Peyton, will be asking to go to Camp Unirondack this coming summer and would appreciate any funds from the church that might be available.
2. Wendy Wynn is leaving the area on Monday. Harriet asked if we could gather a financial gift to help her with the expenses of her trip across the country. She will be available to collect donations at the church Boxing Day on Saturday February 26. Wendy will leave an absence in the Nominating Committee for the annual meeting, which the remaining members may need to fill.

Process Observer Report - Shannon

1. Several times hands were raised to ask permission to speak and seemed to be ignored. Perhaps we need to review this?
2. Outside of a few “snarky” comments members were overall respectful.
3. Angelo left the meeting with no one acknowledging this.
4. There was some “dead air” and perhaps we need to work on moving along and/or keeping the “flow” going.
5. The meetings tend to be very long, which might be prevented if our Committees could send a brief “blurb” about their topics ahead of the meeting. Even if it happened only a few times each meeting it could be helpful.
6. There were a few instances of someone breaking in when another person was still talking.
7. There were a few times when people should be on mute, thus eliminating extraneous and distracting noises.
8. Perhaps having a planned time to end the meeting, or having a set amount of time for presenters to speak, would shorten the length of the meetings.

The feedback from the observer was **appreciated**. Patricia mentioned that Process Observers could use the form which Rev. Marty gave to us when he recommended adopting this practice last year, and which was distributed to members several months ago.

Heather adjourned the meeting at 11:40 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia J. Sutherland, Secretary