

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, January 5, 2022

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved February 2, 2022

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Bill Brown, Randall Hudson, Elaine Miller, Beth Pollard, David Roberts, Ariel Smith-Iyer, Kerry Simpson, Cordell Sloan, Helen Tinsley-Jones

Ex officio members: Rev. Michelle Collins, Tess O’Riva (Executive Director), Ann Harlow (Secretary), Lenore Ralston (Treasurer)

Visitors: Selene Fabiano, Don Klose, David Lingenfelter, Larry Nagel, Jean Gleason, Kris Homme, Karen Elliott, Grace Ulp, Michael DeWitt, Cynthia Asprodites, Luana Pohlman, Fran Moulton, Marta Tobey

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Beth Pollard, president, at 7:03 p.m. Elaine did the chalice lighting and reading, we checked in, Helen read the Board covenant, and Bill read the land acknowledgment.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M Cordell/S Helen) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve Board Meeting minutes of December 1, 2021
- Forward to the congregation for its approval the Congregational Meeting minutes of May 23, 2021
- Accept monthly Executive Director report
- Accept monthly Treasurer’s report

Minister’s Report: Rev. Michelle mentioned the newly created protocols in case of any staff or volunteers contracting or being exposed to Covid-19. The staff was pretty appreciative. There are no plans for being back in person for Sunday services or large gatherings any time in January. More applicants are needed for the custodian search and two event hosts, so she hopes those attending the meeting will help spread the word about these openings. They really need more A/V volunteers for Sundays. The staff are working on job descriptions for four Sunday positions. Additional volunteers will be needed when we return in person.

LISTENING

Announcements: None

Report from Board listening presence: Beth was the December listener and received one call, from Kris Homme.

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board: Kris Homme asked if Board members had read her letters regarding vaccinations, and it appeared that all had. She has great concerns about possible harm the vaccines themselves can cause. Jean Gleason offered to help with volunteer position descriptions.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

Approval of Congregational Meeting Agenda of February 13, 2022: Kerry asked if we could make the award presentations a little more personal, less “cold” than on Zoom. Ariel suggested having them do it live on the chancel, and Michelle said that would be tricky with a Zoom meeting (as opposed to a live-streamed service) but pre-recording the presentation could be done again. Motion to approve draft agenda (M Randall S Kerry) passed unanimously.

Annual Board self-evaluation and evaluation of its committees: Beth mentioned trainings and team-buildings that took place last February/March. She noted that Stewardship is not listed as a Board committee but possibly should be; it’s ultimately a Board responsibility. Randall suggested a quick, informal process of whether or not we think we are doing a good job. Or the congregation could be asked that simple yes/no question. Kerry commented that she thought the current Board is the best in years, partly in terms of its diversity. Kerry suggested the former Board presidents (who already convene as the Awards Committee) could suggest a format for the evaluation. Ann suggested all Board members could annually review the Governance Manual and asking if we are following it and whether any of it needs to change. They could also reflect on progress on the Ends Statements and the yet-to-be-defined benchmarks. Elaine suggested including a question about “is there something the Board could do better?” and commented that she likes the standing 6:30 executive session that Beth implemented. Beth said we should probably schedule a stand-alone time in late February or March for the self-evaluation. Helen moved and Cordell seconded that the past presidents/Awards Committee be asked to recommend criteria for evaluating the Board’s work. Randall suggested that a survey would be useful. Examples of board evaluation processes may exist. So the past presidents may discuss techniques as well as criteria. Ultimately the Board will be self-evaluating. The motion passed.

Annual Pledge Drive/Stewardship: Dave pointed out his recent email that there is no one so far willing to co-chair this year’s Stewardship Team. He had since heard from Patrick Cullinane that he is willing to do it. He has drafted a preliminary outline and will be talking further to key people in the coming days. A discussion during the break emphasized the need for humor, and Helen endorsed the idea of incorporating humor in the campaign. Ariel offered to join the team. Celebration Sunday will be March 27, but most of the work needs to happen in the next six weeks.

BOARD COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE/LIAISON REPORTS

Lenore reported that a subcommittee of the Finance Committee is working on suggested revisions for the Governance Manual section about the scope of the committee. The draft included with the agenda is a first pass. They would like more clarity on what exactly the Board wants from the Committee. Tess commented that it’s good to have someone paying more attention to the budget line items than the Board can reasonably do. There will be more checks and balances, points of view, in keeping an eye on church finances. They would welcome feedback on the draft. It will appear for action on a future agenda.

Bill, reporting on the Freestone Committee, said they are waiting to hear back from some specialists. Randall commented that getting a use permit looks like an uphill battle. Tess agreed, and Michelle said we will need to have a deep, intentional discussion on Freestone but not yet.

Randall said the Audit is underway. Tess is gathering data to give to the audit firm. The cleanup of the temporarily restricted funds is now complete. Smiley Nelson has volunteered to do tax returns for the two trust accounts. Michelle thanked Lenore for all she does.

Ariel said the Family Ministry Committee had not met in the last month and asked Michelle about the search process. It's about to kick into full gear. Helen said the Widening the Circle Committee will meet in late January and is seeking new members. Elaine said the Music Committee hasn't been meeting but she will ask Bryan if he wants anything reported to the Board next month.

OUTGOING COMMENTS – APPRECIATIONS

Ariel will thank Smiley. Helen expressed appreciation to all who set up the Christmas Eve open house, spearheaded by Michelle. About 50 people came by. Beth appreciates all the people helping with livestreaming Sunday services.

ADJOURNMENT

Beth adjourned the meeting at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Harlow, Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS AND BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

January Listening Presence: Kerry
February Beacon article (due Jan. 15): Kerry
Next Board meeting: February 2, 7 p.m.