

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday March 2, 2022**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes - Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael Armstrong, Bill Brown, Randall Hudson, Elaine Miller, Beth Pollard, David Roberts, Cordell Sloan, Pier Sun Ho, Helen Tinsley-Jones

Absent: None

Ex officio members: Rev. Michelle Collins, Tess O'Riva (Executive Director), Selene Fabiano (Secretary), Lenore Ralston (Treasurer)

Visitors: Victoria Bowen, Barbara & Patrick Cullinane, Karen Elliott, Jean Gleason, Lynn Hammond, Don Klose, David Lingenfelter, Larry Nagel, Luana Polhman, Marta Tobey

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Beth Pollard, president, at 7:01p.m. Beth started by noting that we are meeting as a representative democracy in contrast to the authoritarianism on display in Russia. Beth Pollard welcomed new board members, Michael Armstrong and Pier Sun Ho, and new secretary, Selene Fabiano. Beth also thanked Lenore Ralston for continuing as treasurer. Cordell Sloan did the chalice lighting and reading, we checked in, Helen Tinsley-Jones read the Board covenant, and Randall Hudson read the land acknowledgement.

Beth stepped out until Listening Time, Helen presided in the meantime.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M Elaine /S Pier Ho Sun) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve Board Meeting minutes of February 2, 2022 and February 13, 2022
- Recommend congregational approval of minutes of February 13, 2022 congregational meeting
- Accept monthly Treasurer's report

INFORMATION ITEM

Randall asked to pull the Executive Director's Report from the Consent Agenda in order to ask several questions.

Minister's Report: Rev Michelle

The Opening Task Force recommended beginning in-person, hybrid, multi-platform service on Sunday March 20, 2022. Pre-registration will be done through Breeze. Vaccination and registration checks will be done. Lanyards will be used so people can communicate their wishes related to social distancing. The service will be limited to 25% capacity (100 people). Rev. Michelle wants some spaces to be reserved each week for visitors as she does not want any visitors to be turned away.

The plan is for the 1st 2 weeks to be service only plus childcare & RE. The 3rd week there will be one additional hybrid program, as a pilot.

DRE job is listed in several places.

Pledge Drive is kicking off 3/6/22. Rev Collins is planning a creative way to raise money. Watch for what she does in the "Time for All Ages" this Sunday.

Rev. Michelle and Board members thanked the OTF committee.

Executive Director's Report

The Executive Director's Report was pulled from the Consent Agenda so the board could ask Tess questions about new member current trends vs. historical, confirming the sanctuary can be heated, learning about the Music Room and Chrysalis Room as reserved for UUCB use only so as not in competition with rentals, and the Human Rights Watch's use of UUCB for free to film an interview.

Board members thanked Tess and her crew for all the work they have done in the past 2 years, including maintaining connections with the community (e.g. Girl Scouts).

LISTENING

Announcements:

- A. Rev. Michelle will be offering two workshops in support of the congregation's Freestone discernment and decision making process:** 1. The Healthy Congregations workshop is offered on both March 10th and March 12th, 9AM-4PM; and 2. The Conflict Transformation in Congregations workshop is offered on both March 31st and April 2nd.
- B. Our Whole Lives (OWL).** Recent OWL program was successful. 11 students attended. Thanks were given to the volunteers (Alice, Carla, Maria, in addition to Michael A.).

- C. **2 upcoming youth events** will be held on March 12th & March 19th. Thanks were extended to Ladie Malek, Melissa Rosales and Sarah Ward.

Report from Board listening presence: Elaine reported there was only 1 conversation this month. This conversation was with a congregant who asked if the congregation would have a say in what kind of minister we have. She explained that there would be a ministerial search committee and that congregants can contact that committee to give feedback.

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board:

1. Barbara & Patrick Cullinane reported that volunteers are needed to help with in-person services and that the announcement of the return to in-person services on 3/20/22 will include a request for volunteers. Patrick expressed his wish that members of the Board of Trustees will volunteer.
2. Karen Elliott expressed concern that the 25% capacity limit for in-person services is too restrictive and might prevent who want to attend from being able to attend. Patrick Cullinane responded that the OTF would take that feedback into consideration.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

1. Decisions on search for next minister (for start date 8/1/23):

Beth reviewed the presentation by Melissa James regarding the UUA process. UUA process for a settled minister would need to start around this time in order to stick with the timeline. Beth prepared a decision outline (part of agenda packet) and noted that the 1st decision is whether the board wants to search for a settled minister or a different type of minister (interim, contract, or development). Beth ask all board members to share their thoughts re what kind of ministerial presence they want after Rev Michelle leaves in July 2023.

Issues raised in the discussion:

1. Things have changed so much in the past 3 years so it's hard to project into the future as to what church will look like/what our needs will be in the future. We are just returning to in-person church and don't know yet how many people will come back. As a result, we aren't ready to make a decision of this magnitude and need to buy time.
2. There is a longing for a settled minister and the stability that comes with that, but not sure that it's realistic to find a minister who would stay with the congregation long-term, given current trends.
3. The UUA process for a settled minister is expensive (approximately \$15,000), restrictive, and not that transparent. There was concern about spending so much money for the search without any guarantee of finding a minister, especially given that there are more churches looking for ministers than there are ministers. Currently, there are 30 UU churches without a minister.
4. There are several factors for why there is a shortage of ministers: 1) Retirement; 2 "The Great resignation" - many ministers deciding to leave ministry;

5. There was also concern about spending so much money on the search for a settled minister knowing that we might need to go through the same process again in a few years.
6. We need think about what it means to be a congregation going into the future, and can't use the past as a model. And the process for choosing a minister may be changing.
7. Some members felt we know what we need in a minister (strong leadership, someone who will serve us, commitment to social justice, leadership in activism) and are ready for a settled minister. Others felt we need to do more work to determine our direction and be clear about our mission.
8. We want a leader to blend our traditions with new things (e.g. technology), live our mission, grow our membership.
9. We would benefit from a wider consideration of alternatives than the UUA settled ministry search process (e.g. opening it up to other spiritual leaders)
10. It's important to remember that we are a strong, vibrant congregation and have a lot to offer to a minister. We have a great ED and have strong leadership within the church.
11. We need a task force/team of reflective people to think through the decision about what kind of minister (contract, settled, etc) and what search process to use (UUA process for settled minister search or something else) because the Board has a lot of other responsibilities and doesn't have the bandwidth to take this on.
12. The search committee needs to engage more people in conversations about what is desired in the next minister.

David made the following motion:

That the board would create a search committee that would (a) conduct and engage the congregation in conversations about the type of minister they want and the best search process, (b) make recommendations to the board. That the board would use these recommendations to direct the search committee in its work and the committee would conduct a search.

Helen amended the motion to say that the board would expedite its process to create this search committee. David agreed with the amendment.

Helen seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Beth asked for 3 volunteers from the board to shepherd the process of establishing the search committee (i.e. informing and coordinating congregational outreach, and gathering and tallying of nominees suggested by congregation. Using this tally, the Board would finalize a list of potential members on which the congregation would vote; the Board would then finalize the committee membership). Board members and others would be recruited to assist as needed.

Someone to handle the technology access; Pier volunteered to do this.

1. Someone to handle the narrative to the congregation re what we want the search committee to do; Helen volunteered for this role.

2. A project manager to one oversee this process and make sure it all happens. Dave volunteered to be the “project manager”.

There was a discussion about eligibility criteria for being on the search committee and whether spouses of board members were eligible. Points of discussion included:

1. It’s very important for the congregation to trust the search committee.
2. Having spouses of board members on the search committee may be **perceived** as the board’s having too much influence on the search process, even if in reality that wasn’t the case.

Randall motioned not to have spouses be eligible for the search committee. Helen seconded. 4 voted in favor. Bill opposed. No one abstained.

Michael suggested we consider people from the WTCOC committee for the search committee

2. **Board Process/Roles: Board evaluation process, with recommendation report from Past Presidents; Subcommittee; Liaisons; Listening Presence; Beacon; Opening Rituals; Other**

The Board is supposed to do an annual self-evaluation. Beth asked for board volunteers to work on the board evaluation process, drawing on the recommendations requested from past presidents, and then bring some recommendations back to the Board. Beth enlisted Michael and he agreed. Cordell is interested but is currently swamped. Bill agreed to be part of this group “softly”

Beth will work on roles and responsibilities off-line, maybe with a Google document.

BOARD COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE/LIAISON REPORTS

Stewardship: Early pledge event was held on 2/26. The data for early pledges is good. Patrick has done a terrific job. The next stewardship mtg on 3/7 will provide some information that can be shared with the congregation.

Finance: Treasurer and finance committee are doing a really good job and engaging in good discussions. With the audit over, Tess will get back to more normal reporting. There are some questions re what the schedule for audits, reviews, and self-reviews will be. Dave would like someone else to step up and take on the role of liaison to the Finance committee.

OUTGOING COMMENTS

Board members gave a big thanks to Stewardship and Finance, the Opening Task Force, the Tech folks who make the services happen, as well as to the church members who attend Board meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS AND BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

March Listening Presence: Bill

Next Board Meeting: April 6, 7PM