

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, May 4, 2022**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael Armstrong, Bill Brown, Pier Ho, Randall Hudson, Elaine Miller, Beth Pollard, Cordell Sloan

Absent: David Roberts, Helen Tinsley-Jones

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

Visitors: Victoria Bowen, Jean Gleason, Ann Harlow Don Klose, David Lingenfelter, Lisa Maynard, Anita Mermel, Mary Muehlbach, Larry Nagel, Sylvia Parisotto, Marta Tobey, Grace Ulp

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

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M_Pier_/S_Michael) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve Board Meeting minutes of April 6, 2022
- Accept monthly Treasurer’s report
- Accept monthly Executive Director’s report
- Designate a group of seven delegates plus two alternates to the UUA June General Assembly: Suzette Anderson-Duggan, Stephanie Ann Blythe, Victoria Bowen, Evelie Delfino Sales Posch, Liz Der, Jane Lundin, Melissa Rosales, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Rev. Jane Ramsey

Beth acknowledged the hard work Lenore put into the Treasurer’s report. Thank you to Victoria Bowen and Melissa Rosales for recruiting delegates for GA and thanks to the members who volunteered to be delegates.

INFORMATION ITEM

Minister's Report: Rev Michelle

- UUCB has a new phone and voicemail system. The outgoing message will be updated.
- Director of Family Ministry search committee has 2 final candidates and hopes to make an offer next week.
- Freestone Dialogue process continues. An immense amount of information was collected and put into the packet of materials related to Freestone. Three info sessions were held. Approximately 70 people attended at least one session. There with lots of great questions and discussions. Dave Wemmer, Tess, and Rev. Michelle will put together a FAQ; for non-factual questions the answers will include different perspectives. The Freestone history wall event will be held on the afternoon of Saturday May 21 at 1 pm. Due to a conflict in Rev Michelle's schedule, the Freestone Dialogue is being rescheduled to another date (to be announced). Rev. Michelle expressed her gratitude for all the work that has gone into this Freestone Dialogue process.
- There has been a small number of instances where masks do not cover one's nose or are removed at service and other events. Rev. Michelle would like members of the Board, as well as other church members, to help with mask reminders as a shared responsibility. One board member suggested putting up signage about the mask requirement or including it on the welcome slide.

LISTENING/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Executive Director reported that the Kensington Fire Protection District (KFPD) Department has asked to use the church's lower parking lot for 18-24 months while they retrofit their station on the Arlington, and is in lease negotiations with the church. KFPD is addressing the use in public meeting reviews in El Cerrito and Kensington.
- Beth Pollard reported that the election for the Ministerial Search Committee has been conducted. The Board is reviewing the results and hopes to be able to announce the results at the May 8th Sunday service.

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board: None

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

- a. Vaccination Policy: Recommendation from Opening Task Force is to discontinue the Board policy requiring vaccination verification for large events (including Sunday worship), and

instead use a vaccination honor system for all events regardless of size, with the understanding the verification requirement may be reinstated.

Lisa Maynard, co-chair of the Opening Task Force, shared the reasoning behind this recommendation:

1. Primary reason: The current requirement of verification of “full vaccination” is outdated because of the definition of “full vaccination” and the time frames in which vaccinations are believed to be effective. “Full vaccination” is defined as the first 2 Pfizer or Moderna shots, or one J&J vaccination and doesn’t include the boosters. The current belief is that the two initial COVID vaccines no longer provide a high level of protection. Thus the verification doesn’t allow the OTF to ensure safety vis a vis COVID. The option of adding an additional round of verification for boosters was considered by the OTF but they concluded that would be very difficult as it would require a close scrutiny of the timing of each person’s additional booster shots, an understanding of people’s medication condition (including who is eligible or not eligible for a 2nd booster), and greater scrutiny of documentation being submitted for verification. Some OTF members are not comfortable doing this higher level of scrutiny. Judgment calls would have to be made re type of vaccine and date of it. The OTF would have to “unclear: everyone in the system and begin the process of verification again with everyone.

2. The UUCB congregation is very interested in being vaccinated. 270 people have gone through the vaccination clearance. No visitors have been turned away because they were unvaccinated, and Lisa has not encountered anyone saying that they aren’t coming to church because they are unvaccinated. Reverend Michelle shared that she has only granted a waiver to one person and that was for a medical exemption.

Lisa emphasized that the OTF was not recommending abandoning the vaccination policy. The change would be to affirmation of status (i.e. relying on the honor system of individuals’ affirming their full vaccination status) rather than verification by UUCB volunteers or staff.

- Discussion Points:
Important to be consider our current context when making this decision. We are in the beginning of another surge (per articles in today’s SF Chronicle and LA Times) and the numbers of cases are believed to be under-reported.
- There were questions as to whether this decision was being driven by there not being enough volunteers to manage the verification. Lisa indicated that this was not the driving force for this recommendation and that there is typically only 1 or 2 people each Sunday for whom new verification is needed. On the other hand, the registering/checking-in of people does take time and it may not be possible to always check for the red heart on people’s name tags (verifying full vaccination status). Reverend Michelle added that there have been a shortage

of volunteers on some Sundays necessitating either she or Tess step in to help with check-in/registration.

- There was a feeling by several Board members that this is a step that we'll move to at some time but they would prefer to vote on it next month. Lisa also felt that this policy change doesn't need to happen right away but done it's a reasonable step to take as we move forward incrementally. Suggesting a change to affirmation not changing vaccination requirement.
- Concern about relying on affirmation versus verification suggests that we don't trust people to tell the truth.
- Concerns that in only using affirmation some people might not see the sign or have not read the affirmation statement when registering for service.

The board thanked the OTF for all their work and for thinking about these issues.

A Motion to table a vote on this recommendation until the June board mtg was made by Pier. Cordell seconded. The motion passed, with Elaine Miller opposed.

b. 2022-23 Priorities: Approve areas of Board emphasis and related priorities

Beth shared the pinwheel of priorities and reviewed the outcome of the priorities at the April Board meeting, which was to continue with these themes and make some adjustments regarding what we've already worked on and what we want to emphasize.

Special thank you to Helen for creating and updating it.

Motion to adopt these priorities for 2022-23 program year was made by Pier and seconded by Elaine. Motion passed unanimously.

Beth encouraged the Board to think of ways to make these priorities widely known among the congregation.

c. 2022-23 Budget: Approve budget to recommend to the congregation

Tess shared the proposed budget and highlighted some key items:

1. The amount listed for pledge income on the budget is higher than what the stewardship committee has reported.
2. The line item for wages has decreased from last year because UUCB will not have an intern minister this year. Salaries have increased for staffed positions in order to hire and retain qualified staff and to live our UUCB values of compensating staff fairly. The personnel line item will increase by \$5,000 based on Board Executive Session direction.

3. Increased costs include the \$15,000 for the search committee, as well as costs for contractors and sound engineers to address technical needs of our Sunday services.
4. A \$1000 contingency fund is for small needs that arise that are not currently listed in the budget.
5. The amounts budgeted for expenses are in line with actual expenses from the current year.
6. Expenses exceed income in the FY 22-23 budget by \$41,000. However, cash reserves from FY21-22 budget (due to Paycheck Protection loans and unfilled staff positions) can cover this deficit.

Discussion and Questions/Answers

1. Some board members believe that looking for additional income sources (e.g. fundraising, rental income, applying for grants) rather than relying so heavily on member pledges is the way forward.
2. Tess indicated that there is grant money that can be sought. For example, Rev. Michelle secured a \$3800 grant to support youth ministries. Church members with grant-writing skills who can volunteer their time are encouraged to do so.
3. One expense from Freestone in the budget is for insurance (currently \$2340). The insurance for Freestone has historically been covered by the general budget. All other Freestone costs are covered by the Freestone Committee.

Thanks to Tess for work on the budget. The board appreciates that Tess was able to hold the line on total costs while taking care of staff by increasing their salaries.

Pier moved to approve this budget with the \$5000 increase for adoption at the 5/22 meeting. Bill seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

d. May 22 Congregation Meeting: Approve agenda

Logistics re hybrid congregational meeting.

- Per Rev. Michelle, UUCB has the infrastructure for doing an in-person meeting and a Zoom meeting in the sanctuary. PowerPoint presentations can be simultaneously shared via Zoom and on the screen in the sanctuary.
- Tess assured the board that she and Caitlyn will be on site to manage the Zoom meeting.
- Michael Armstrong volunteered to be the mic runner for when/if there is discussion on an issue.
- Tess assured us that voting for the budget can happen via both Zoom (looking at raised hands in “gallery view”) and in-person.
- Beth will ask Stephanie Ann to be parliamentarian.

Beth shared a draft agenda for the meeting and noted these changes to the draft:

1. Per Tom Tripp, no capital projects oversight report is needed since there aren't any significant updates from the report at the February Congregational Meeting.
2. Report from the OTF will be added, as may be a Stewardship report.

Tess explained that the financial audit "pickle" referred to providing information to the congregation re how the financial difficulties of 2018 occurred and how they can be prevented in the future.

Motion to approve the congregational mtg agenda was made (Pier) and seconded (Bill), and passed unanimously.

BOARD COMMITTEE/TASK FORCE/LIAISON REPORTS

Youth Ministry (Michael) - Monthly activities with youth; great turnout for Easter – 1st time many of the youth transitioned from participating in the hunt to making it happen. Thanks to Tess for approving a new fozz ball for youth to use during gatherings.

Elaine: fundraising concert on Sunday that went well; it raised over \$2000 and was attended by more than 100 attendees.

OUTGOING COMMENTS

June Listening Presence: Michael

Executive session board meeting on 5/14 at 9AM.

Next Regular Board Meeting: 6/1 at 7PM

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 9:10 pm to Executive Session, and thereafter at 9:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary