

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, October 4, 2023**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael Armstrong, Bill Brown, Kay Fairwell, Pier Ho, Randall Hudson, Beth Pollard, Cordell Sloan, Helen Tinsley-Jones

Absent: David Rosales

Ex officio members: Rev. Marcus Liefert, Tess O’Riva (Executive Director), Selene Fabiano (Secretary), Carolyn James (Treasurer)

Visitors: Barbara Cullinane, Jean Gleason, Anne Greenwood, Sheldon Jones, Larry Nagel, Sheila Tarbet, Marta Tobey, Grace Ulp, Dave Wemmer

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Helen Tinsley-Jones, co-president, at 7:19 p.m. Pier did the chalice lighting and reading, Helen read the Board covenant, Michael read the land acknowledgement, and Michael read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M _Michael_/S Pier __) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve Sept 2023 Board Meeting minutes
- Accept Sept 2023 Executive Director report
- Accept Sept 2023 Treasurer’s report
- Accept the Freestone Oversight’s Committee Report

MINISTER’S REPORT

The Committee on Ministry (COM) formed last month, and had its first meeting. The COM will meet on a monthly basis and stagger the three-year terms so not all the members go off at the same time. Dave Roberts volunteered to be chair.

Rev. Marcus has been holding individual meetings with leaders and is now in the process of setting up small group discussions. There was a quick and positive response to his request for

small group hosts. Rev. Marcus' plan is to report back on themes from these groups in June and will use some of the material in his sermons next fall.

An article announcing the beginning of Rev. Marcus's ministry was recently featured in the Kensington Outlook.

Rev. Marcus will be away on 10/15 during which time he will lead the chapter minister's group which has semi-annual retreats.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

Board or Staff Announcements:

Masking survey results

Tess reported that 101 people responded to the masking survey. Based on the survey results, the masking mandate at UUCB has been eliminated; this change was announced to all congregants in a single-subject email. The email also reminded people to stay home if they are sick or experiencing any symptoms. Masks will still be available at the welcome table. The Fireside room is being held as a place where people can watch the service if they don't feel comfortable being in the sanctuary.

Personnel announcements

Tess reported that she hired a new facilities manager whose work schedule will be Tuesday-Friday.

Statement from the Board, read by Co-President Pier: A confidential personnel concern was brought to the minister and the board in March 2023. The church followed its HR processes, which in this instance included hiring an independent investigator. The investigation concluded that the original concern was not substantiated by any reasonable evidence. Though there were no major findings, the results of the investigation did indicate a few areas for improvement. As of this meeting, the recommendations have been implemented, and the board has accepted the final report and considers the matter resolved.

Report from Board listening presence:

Randall reported that there was some confusion and concern that the Breeze database was not reflecting pledges accurately. There has been some follow-up to get this straightened out. He also noted that there have been many enthusiastic comments regarding Rev. Marcus' presence at UUCB, as well as his sermons.

Michael Armstrong will be the listening presence in November.

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board:

Anne Greenwood thanked the board and Rev. Marcus for their letters that she brought to our partner church in Homoródújfalú, Transylvania. The minister was delighted by Rev. Marcus' letter and wants to establish connection with Marcus. Anne expressed her interest in members of UUCB's BOT meeting with the Homoródújfalú church council via Zoom. UUCB has a long history with our partner church and Anne would like to include more of our respective congregations in this partnership. The Homoródújfalú church gave Anne a plywood folk art painting which she hopes can be displayed at UUCB.

Helen thanked Anne for renewing and strengthening the connection we have with our partner church. More information about our partnership with this church in Transylvania can be found on the UUCB website: <https://uucb.org/partner-church2/>

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

a. Empowerment and Expectations at UUCB

Tess shared a document providing guidelines for congregant and staff interactions and communication in the post-pandemic world. The document states that UUCB staff work for the mission of UUCB, not the congregants. She stressed that the partnership between the staff and the congregation is really important, especially now that the staff is so busy with rentals (part of our efforts towards financial sustainability). Tess wants to counter unrealistic expectations regarding how much the staff can do, and urges members to help one another and to be as self-sufficient as possible. Tess is also working on updating the "How Things Work at UUCB,"

Rev. Marcus thanked Tess for work on clarifying expectations, noting that a lack of clear expectations regarding staff capacity is an issue in many churches.

b. UUCB Safety Policy Discussion Recommendation

Pier reported that a revision to UUCB's current Safety Policy is needed. Our recently re-established Safety Response Team currently consists of Rev. Marcus, Pier (board liaison), Barbara Cullinane, Tess, and Heaven. The first step is to form a temporary committee to review and update the policy.

Rev. Marcus noted that it's important to separate out governance function and policy which falls under the board's purview and the operationalizing of the policy for which he, Tess, and volunteers are responsible. Rev. Marcus is planning to form a Conflict Response Team to address issues included in the Safety Policy that are more related to conflict/uncomfortable situations than safety.

Discussion

- Some important information in the Safety Policy is not generally known or even known to the people responsible for enforcing the policy.
- Revising the policy and re-educating the congregation is a process, not a one-time event.

- Important to differentiate between board policy and the more flexible, operational procedures.
- This is a process. No board actions to be taken right now.

c. Green Sanctuary proposal

Sheila Tarbet provided a presentation on the UUA’s “Green Sanctuary 2030: Mobilizing for Climate Justice” program and UUCB’s Green Sanctuary Proposal.

Green Sanctuary 2030 provides structure, leadership and support for the UU community to engage in an ambitious environmental and climate justice movement. To participate in the Green Sanctuary campaign, UU congregations are asked to plan and carry out the following four campaigns:

1. Congregational transformation. This involves moving the responsibility and passion from a small group to the congregation as a whole.
2. Mitigation. Lowering our carbon footprint (e.g. electrification) at UUCB and beyond the walls of the sanctuary.
3. Adaptation and resilience – acknowledging the climate is changing; need to adapt to it and develop resilience so we can thrive in the midst of this change; resilience includes developing emotional resilience, as well as cooling centers for hot days
4. Justice. Recognizing the intersectionality of the climate crisis with other social justice issues, and doing some frontline work.

There are also 4 stages in the process:

1. Congregational profile. Cynthia Greenleaf and Sheila Tarbet have created this for UUCB and are asking for the board’s approval to send it to the UUA
2. Opportunity assessment
3. Action plan
4. Progress report to the UUA

Sheila indicated that the Climate Justice Committee (CJC) would like the board’s support to go forward and welcomes the board’s ideas and participation.

Discussion

- This is an exciting opportunity to widen the circle of involvement at UUCB.
- The profile is a really valuable document for our church – has lots of history and information.
- Big thanks to Sheila and the CJC.
 - A Board role would be to consider a vision and policies that advance UUCB’s climate justice work . Beth offered to assist if or when that’s of interest.
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Questions and Answers

Q: Would there be specific goals that we would be working towards?

A: Yes. The goals will come out of the Opportunity Assessment and Action Planning process. We think this will help give us a focus and allow the congregation to channel its energy. An example of a justice goal might be developing a partnership with Urban Tilth in Richmond.

Q: Is there any funding for this from UUA?

A: No.

Q: Will staff be involved?

A: Tess met with us and has been doing things like buying non-polluting soaps and recycled paper. We don't want to take a lot of staff time but would welcome their ideas and participation.

Action:

Motion (M- Helen / S -Beth) to endorse the CJC's engagement in UUA Green sanctuary—the 1st step of which is submitting the congregational profile. This motion passed unanimously.

d. Beacon Article topic suggestions

David will be writing the article. A recap of the "Start-up" workshop would be a good topic.

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

Nominating Committee. Michael reported the 2023-24 Nominating Committee has met twice. They met with outgoing committee members to talk about best practices, made agreements about the procedures, and began reviewing the membership list for potential candidates.

Chalice Circles. Michael reached out to Natalie, Lisa, and Lenore and will attend one of their meetings.

Governance Manual. Kay reported that she and Beth have met and think there are ways to make the manual more concise. Their focus is to separate governance from administration. They plan to finish by the end of 2023, share a draft in January, and have a version in February 2024. Beth and Kay will do most of the work and will tap expert assistance as needed.

WTCC. Beth shared three items: 1. The WTCC wants to lift up the Music department's work in bringing music by musicians and composers from a variety of backgrounds; 2. The WTCC is requesting examples of where UUCB has widened the circle so they can highlight those; 3. Expressed concern regarding the availability of childcare. It's harder to widen the circle, if

families show up for service and there's no childcare. Beth asked about the budget allotment for childcare workers and the status of getting more childcare workers.

Discussion

Tess reported that Heaven recently on-boarded a new childcare worker who can work on Sundays. UUCB has 3 childcare workers; the hope is to have 4. UUCB is trying to be innovative. Tess recently asked Heaven to create have a list of finger-printed members who can volunteer to help with childcare. In addition, they are targeting adolescent children of UUCB members. It's a win-win. The teens get work experience and pay in a safe environment. Interested teens should contact Tess and she will help them with the necessary paperwork.

Several people believe the challenge is less about the hourly wage for our childcare workers (\$20/hour) and more about the schedule (i.e. not everyone wants to work 3 hours on Sunday). Others believe the \$14,000 budget line item doesn't cover that much and that \$20/hour is below market rates.

Family Ministry. Pier reported the new RE model is going well, although attendance is still low. Youth group is going very well. The FM is looking for more RE educators.

SJC. Helen reported Indigenous People's Day, a state and national holiday that celebrates indigenous cultures and traditions, is October 9th. Social Justice Sunday will be held on Oct 22nd (10-2PM) and will celebrate diversity with games, food, singing, dancing, award-winning film. Check the website for additional information.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Helen thanked everyone for coming, noting this was a "great news" meeting that highlighted the great work we're doing and the ways we're reaching out to the community and widening our circles.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:16PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS AND BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

Next Board Meeting: 11/1/23