

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, December 6, 2023**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

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

Absent: None

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

Visitors: Lynn Hammond, Sheldon Jones, Lisa Maynard, Anita Mermel, Larry Nagel, Marta Tobey, Helen Toy, Tom Tripp, Dave Wemmer

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Helen Tinsley-Jones, co-president, at 7:20 p.m. Selene did the chalice lighting and reading, Michael read the Board covenant, Beth read the land acknowledgement, and Helen read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA

There was no Executive Director’s report this month, so that item was removed from the consent agenda.

A motion for the following (M _Michael_/S_Beth_) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve November 2023 Board Meeting minutes
- Accept monthly Freestone Oversight Committee report
- Approve Carolyn James, Linda Laskowski, and Lenore Ralston as authorized signatories for UUCB’s Vanguard account
- Approve continuation of Christmas Eve offering into the Minister’s Discretionary Fund

MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Marcus reported that he will split the offering from the Christmas Eve services with the UUA Relief Fund which gave \$20,000 to UUCB last year, to pay that forward. Five Ground and Horizon Hopes conversations involving 50 people have occurred. Rev Marcus is hopeful that a total of 150 people will have participated by the June 2024. He will resend the invitation in January for the spring, and will host some meetings by Zoom. This month is Karen Elliot's last month both as a Worship Associate and as the Lead Worship Associate. Karen has done an amazing job, providing a wonderful gift of leadership. Don Klose will step into the Lead Worship Associate role. Jean Gleason is stepping down as Program Council Convener. The Committee on Ministry (COM) has established a team that will support the board in evaluating our minister. An installation for Rev. Marcus will be held this spring.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

Board or Staff Announcements:

- The January Board Meeting will be held on January 10, 2024 (the 2nd Wednesday) rather than on the first Wednesday of the month, due to the holidays.
- Election process and timeline – Michael Armstrong announced the following slate of candidates chosen by the Nominating Committee: Michael DeWitt, Beth Jerde, and Helen Toy. The announcement for anyone who wants to petition to be on the board will be in The Week Ahead this week.
- December staff appreciation. Staff appreciation gifts will be presented at the January 25th staff meeting.
- Governance Manual. Kay announced that a draft will be ready for the board to review at the January Board meeting.

Report from Board listening presence:

We are so lucky to have Rev. Marcus (from several people including some visitors)

Enjoyed the youth group

Positive feedback regarding the availability of the listening presence itself

What will happen when the Fire Dept leaves? [Tess' response: The Fire Department is scheduled to depart in September 2024. UUCB is considering several options and are in conversation with the City of El Cerrito around the possibility of a permanent permit for the trailer.](#)

Freestone may not be living up to our hopes regarding rentals.

Due to rentals at UUCB, congregants are losing some access to the building on Sunday afternoons. [Tess's response: It's a balancing act between needs of the congregants and the need for rental revenue. Staff are expected to bring in \\$150,000 revenue in rentals per the budget.](#)

[December is an especially busy month.](#)

Concern about cars being parked in the white curb zone in front of the church. [Tess's response:](#)

[There will be more enforcement of this as some of this area needs to be open in order for fire engine access. There is a plan to change some of the white curb area to green curb \(20 minute parking for non-handicapped persons; or additional handicapped parking\). New lines are currently being painted in the parking lot by UUCB staff as many lines are now very faint.](#)

[When the Fire Dept leaves, the parking lot will be resurfaced and parking lines will be painted.](#)

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

a. Implications of Campus Electrification – Tom Tripp

Tom Tripp provided an overview of a written report from the Building and Grounds Committee (B&G), the Endowment Project Oversight Committee, and the ad-hoc All-Electric Committee.

Key points included:

1. The building is in good shape but it is 63 years-old and much of the heating and electrical equipment is well-past its life expectancy.

2. Private Sewer Lateral testing, which must be done by 2025 per county requirements, is a priority. This is a big and expensive job and the committee has received 4 bids for the work.

3. HVAC & Electrical Priorities:

1st: Music room, main switch gear, electric panels

2nd: School buildings. – Currently there is no outside air ventilation but UUCB doesn't have the funding to replace the heaters in the school buildings right now (estimated cost of \$240k). The School has found a work-around by constructing box filters for each classroom. UUCB has offered to provide the MERV 13 filters. School is happy and feels that it is safe for the students.

4. The transition to all electric will be a process and more funds are needed to accomplish it. They have applied to PGE for a larger service and have met with their engineering team to initiate planning for the service upgrade.

Report's Recommendation

Use endowment fund project for the following 3 things: 1. Private sewer lateral; 2. Replace the music room furnace with a heat pump; and 3. Engineering and preconstruction costs to continue investigation for HVAC & electrical upgrades including the potential for an all-electric campus

Discussion and Questions

Q: How are you defining "risk level"?

A: Financial impact on church if equipment fails.

Q: What's the likelihood of failure?

A: The usual life expectancy for switch gears is about 50 year. The usual life expectancy for heaters is. The life expectancy can be longer if the equipment is serviced well regularly. If the equipment is outside and subject to rust, or damaged (as are some of UUCB's panels), the service life is shorter. All of UUCB's furnaces have been problematic. Since this is essential equipment, UUCB would have to spend money for a temporary fix if any of them stop working before they are replaced. A 2010 analysis done at UUCB stated that the furnaces should be replaced.

Q: Will the board resolution spend down all the endowment funds that were allocated to B&G?

A: Most of it, unless a donor comes forward to pay for these items.

Big thanks to Tom Tripp for his work. We're greatly indebted to him.

Motion. Beth moved the board approve the resolution as outlined in the 12/6/23 Committee Report from Building and Grounds, Endowment Project Oversight, and the Ad Hoc All-Electric Committees, and as noted below:

The executive director, with input from B&GC and oversight from EPOC is authorized to spend up to \$189,419 from the \$758,000 endowment project funds for (1) private sewer lateral, (2) replacement of music room furnace with heat pump and (3) engineering and preconstruction costs to continue investigation for HVAC & electrical upgrades, including potential for all-electric campus.

Pier seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

b. Safety Policy Updates and Fire Drill Debrief

Tess Snook O’Riva reported UUCB had its first fire drill since 2019. Some positives: Family Ministry was out in 90 seconds. Leaders (lead usher, lead WA, staff, and Rev. Marcus) stepped up and fulfilled their roles. Lessons learned: Need more enforcement to prevent cars from parking in front of the white curb. Next steps: follow up with training.

Tess shared a draft of the new safety policy which includes a section related to online safety. The focus is on high-level policy rather than procedures which will be outlined in the appendices. The Governance and Bylaw committees (Governance Task Force and Bylaws Task Force) need to review it to be sure there aren’t any conflicts between the new Safety Policy and the Bylaws or Governance Manual. The 5-member Safety Council as well as several consultants will have input on language regarding their areas of expertise. Rev. Marcus and Tess will look at the Safe Staff requirements.

Reverend Marcus is working on developing a Safety Response Team, as well as a conflict response team. There is some consideration of having an Officer of the Day on Sundays in order to have a go-to-person in the event there is a disruptive person or someone having a mental health crisis. This will be discussed with the ushers and with the B& G Committee.

The Safety Policy will be a living document and a training guide. There will be training for kitchen users, ushers, and other specific areas. Tess asked the board to discuss the Safety Policy at the Board retreat to ensure Board members are familiar with this policy.

c. Stewardship Theme – Lisa Maynard, Stewardship Chair

Rev. Marcus suggested a theme of “Wake now our vision” and wants to know if the board can get behind this theme. Lisa asked us to avoid scheduling competing fundraising events during the stewardship campaign.

Board Discussion

Lots of enthusiasm for this theme.

The focus should be on waking up to visioning and creating a vision together.

Vision is a process and what’s important is that we continue talking about it.

Big thanks to Lisa

d. Congregational Meeting Items

Pier outlined some of the agenda items for the February congregational including a Stewardship presentation (which will include a report on the pledge goal and this year's campaign theme), the Flaming Chalice awards, official reports from the oversight committees, staff introduction, introduction of the Committee on Ministry, and announcement of the Board election results. She invited the board members to suggest other items. The agenda for the February Congregational Meeting will be approved at the January Board meeting.

e. Beacon Article – Pier Sun Ho

Cordell was encouraged to reflect on his experience as a board member and share his wisdom.

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

Freestone Oversight Committee will submit applications for 2 conservation easements; the deadline is 12/15. The committee should know in the next few months if the easements are likely to be granted. The Freestone Committee voted to put the 2 non-main lots up for sale. This recommendation will come before the Board at the January 2024 meeting. They are still dealing with the issue regarding the plot line discrepancy. FOC is considering spending \$3000 to do engineering work to see if/how much the neighbor's property encroaches on our property.

Family Ministry. Parents Night out is happening on the 3rd Saturday in December. RE is going well. Several new families are checking our programs out.

Partner Church. Our board is trying to find a date to meet with their board.

Nominating Committee. Voting for board candidates will begin on January 28th immediately after the Candidates Forum.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Helen thanked everyone, noting how inspired we are by the ways teams at UUCB are working together, and by the donation of time and skills by the congregation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:03PM

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary