

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, May 1, 2024**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael Armstrong, Michael DeWitt, Kay Fairwell, Beth Jerde, Beth Pollard, Pier Sun Ho, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Helen Toy,

Absent: Dave Rosales

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

Visitors: Anne Greenwood, Paul Hudson, Larry Nagel, Marta Tobey, Dave Wemmer

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Pier Sun Ho, co-president, at 7:20 p.m. Michael Armstrong did the chalice lighting and reading, Kay Fairwell read the Board covenant, Beth Pollard read the land acknowledgement, and Helen Toy read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M Michael Dewitt_/S_ Beth Pollard) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve April 2024 Board Meeting minutes
- Accept Executive Director’s monthly report
- Accept March financial reports
- Accept Freestone Oversight Committee Update
- Approve replacing Cordell Sloan with Lorraine Schnurr as a Nominating Committee Member for 2024-25

MINISTER’S REPORT

Rev. Marcus had a successful service trip to Tijuana with the UU Justice Ministry of California to build a home for a family. UUCB member Jack Duggan was present along with 15 members from 7 other UU congregations. Rev. Marcus hopes UUCB will participate in an annual service

trip and more members can attend. He thanked everyone who helped with the “over-the-top wonderful” installation. Next Sunday is the Doctors of Durability service. Thanks to Barbara Cullinane for all her work on making it happen. Last Sunday (4/28) was Heaven Walker’s last Sunday at UUCB. We had a good celebration. The search is underway for a new Director of Family Ministry. There are several exciting applicants and the search committee hopes to bring a recommendation to the June Board of Trustees’ meeting.

Charlie Clason, Tess’s niece, was hired as a childcare worker and is also training to be an event host. Charlie is on leave from Smith College and is interested in doing an unpaid internship through Smith reflecting on accessibility and welcoming at UUCB.

Rev. Marcus will take vacation and study leave during the end of June, most of July, and the beginning of August. He will come back for an “unplugged work week” in July. During the “unplugged work week”, UUCB staff won’t work on their computers or respond to email but will work together on various other projects around the church that are often hard to get done during the regular work week. He is lining up guest speakers for the summer services. He recommended we read Sue Magidson’s email to the community regarding her health concerns. The Board discussed rescheduling our July and August board meetings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

Board or Staff Announcements:

- a. Call for volunteers for the Bylaws Committee - Pier stated that we are looking for additional Bylaws Committee members.
- b. Report on Right Relations Update – Helen Tinsley-Jones stated last fall, it was brought to the attention of Rev. Marcus and the co-presidents that, several years ago, a difficult situation, which involved a then-employed, but not currently employed staff person. The message we received was that the matter was not sufficiently resolved, and continued to be of concern. As it is the Board’s intention to abide by our UUCB Covenant of Right Relations, we engaged in a process of gathering information and of healing, which includes transparency. While we had hoped to read our report at last month’s Board meeting, the Board decided to take a deeper look at the document and is now in the process of making revisions. The former staff person involved has been advised of this, and plans are being made for the document’s reading at a future Board meeting. We believe that the finalized document will benefit from the extra care and thoughtfulness of this process.

Report from Board listening presence: There were many wonderful comments about the Installation. It made me feel connected to our other UU brethren. We are all still reveling in it.

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board:

Dave Wemmer reported that the prospective buyer of the two undeveloped Freestone lots is doing due diligence and we are hoping that things will progress successfully.

Anne Greenwood encouraged interested individuals to attend the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women in Romania (September 5-7th) which will be followed by a fantastic tour of historical sights.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

a. Approve the 2024-25 Budget for voting at the May 19th Congregational Meeting
Tess shared the latest draft with the updated pledge revenue for FY24-25 (currently \$502K). They are projecting \$525K in pledge revenue. Staff salaries reflect an across-the-board 2.6 % COLA for all staff except Rev. Marcus who is not taking an increase in salary. In addition, almost all staff salaries will be increased to the minimum per the UUA guidelines. Funding for professional development for staff was also increased. The 24-25 budget double's last year's Hospitality funding, includes a \$2000 Rainy Day reserve fund, and includes a \$9200 surplus. A few donors offered to give specifically for technology upgrades.

Discussion/Comments

The Finance committee does not want our ministers to sacrifice their income on behalf of the church. Rev Marcus' decision this year not to take a COLA increase this year should not be a precedent.

What are the Freestone expenses in the operating budget? Tess will let Beth know.

Anne Greenwood expressed a concern about setting the pledge revenue at \$498,000 in light of the fact that \$65,000 of the pledge revenue is coming from one generous donor who increased their pledge to help the church meet its stretch goal. Anne's concern is about sustainability and whether the church will have the money to continue with raised staff salaries given the unusual circumstances in which we reached this year's stretch goal. Tess responded to this concern by stating there is some wiggle room in budget. For example, the increased pledge to UUA could be lowered, if needed. Rev. Marcus stated that less than half of the \$100,000 increase in revenue from FY23-24 to FY24-25 is going towards staff salaries.

Motion. Michael Armstrong made a motion to approve the 2024-25 draft budget as presented to go in front of the congregation at the 5/19/24 congregational meeting. Michael Dewitt seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Approve the May Congregational Meeting Agenda

Motion. Helen Toy made a motion to approve the 5/19/24 Congregational Meeting Agenda as presented. Pier seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Congregational Meeting Voting Process and Roles

Helen Tinsley-Jones asked if the board wants to use a simple hand-raising process for the budget vote at the May Congregational meeting or a more layered process that has several checks in place such as the process that was developed for the Special Congregational meeting for the Freestone Resolution. The more layered process required certified members attending the meeting in-person to check in and have their names checked off on a list of certified members before they received a ballot and member card. With the more layered process, members attending on Zoom received a Zoom link to vote electronically during the meeting.

Voting Process Discussion and Decision

The layered process is time-consuming for members attending the meeting and those checking in the members. The layered process seems unnecessary for routine, non-controversial votes.

Several members expressed a wish for a simplified process for situations when the topic being voted on is simple and not controversial. We can use a more layered, secure process and explain the need for it to the congregation, as needed.

It's easier to count votes if members vote using a card rather than by raising their hands.

The following plan was established: Provide messaging about what constitutes certified membership. Using the honor system, ask members attending in-person to pick up a voting card on the way into the sanctuary. Members attending via Zoom can vote by raising their hands during the vote count.

Tasks/Roles for the May Congregational meeting

Opening readings: Pier & Helen TJ

Quorum & vote counters: Michael A & Beth Jerde

Zoom monitor (Let people in, count raised hands): Michael Dewitt

Count mail-in ballots: Selene

Tech team support: Helen TJ will ask Greg and then Bill

Contact Stephanie Ann Blythe and ask her to be the parliamentarian: Helen Toy

Hand out voting cards: Helen Toy

Coordinate with Ann Harlow regarding food: Michael A

- d. Approve delegates to General Assembly 2024: Anne Greenwood, Evelie Delfino, Sâles Posch, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Rev. Jane Ramsey, Kathleen Slobin, Ladie Malek, Melissa Rosales, with Lonnie Moseley (alternate)

Motion Pier made a motion to approve the delegates to GA 2024 as listed. Beth J seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Helen thanked Victoria Bowen and Melissa Rosales who have organized the delegates

e. Update on Calls to New Members

6 Board members contacted new members. Some sent emails and included a link to The Week Ahead. Several had nice phone conversations. One member was connected with The Week Ahead and the UUCB Discuss list.

f. May Beacon Article. Ideas: The amazing Installation, and new member phone calls.

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

Social Justice Council. Helen Toy reported on the SJC's many projects including the blessing bags, Voting Justice's enlisting postcard writers, and Climate Justice's nature walk. The World Peace group is encouraging people to send messages asking the US government not to send weapons to Israel. Cyndy Greenleaf has agreed to run for SJC Chair.

Freestone Committee. Michael Dewitt thanked Dave Wemmer for his tireless work.

Widening the Circle of Concern. Beth Jerde reported that one of their themes is encouraging people to continue noticing things that may go unnoticed.

Family Ministry. RE ends this year's programming after the first 2 Sundays in May. They are looking forward to working with a new DFM next year. The children were very excited to participate in the installation. UUCB youth participated in a beach clean-up day.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Helen thanked everyone who attended the meeting and Board members for their time and attention to board matters.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:43PM

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

Next Board Meeting: 6/5/2024