

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, October 1, 2025
Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference**

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael DeWitt, Kay Fairwell, Kristen Jensen, Beth Jerde, Carla McCasland, David Rosales, Pier Sun Ho, Helen Tinsley-Jones, Helen Toy

Ex officio members: Rev. Marcus Liefert, Selene Fabiano (Secretary), Lisa Maynard (Treasurer), Janae Heard (Operations Director)

Visitors: Mary Gardner, Anne Greenwood, Albert Kueffner, Susan Lankford, Anita Mermel, Bob Moore, Larry Nagel, Beth Pollard, Marta Tobey, Tom Tripp, Dave Wemmer, Lucinda Young

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Kay Fairwell, president, at 7:17 p.m. Lisa Maynard did the chalice lighting and reading, Selene Fabiano read the Board covenant, Helen Toy read the land acknowledgement, and Beth Jerde read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M _Pier _/S _Beth Jerde _) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve September 2025 Meeting minutes
- Accept monthly Operations Director's report
- Accept monthly Treasurer's report
- Accept Freestone Oversight Committee report

MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Marcus appreciated the UUCB staff and provided a few updates. Eliza Cantwell, who started as our admin assistant in June, has now taken on the responsibility of coordinating rentals and is off to a great start. We're looking at how to get more facilities support for Peter to help cover for two staff that are dealing with medical and family issues. I'm working with staff to empower them vis a vis their working relationships with volunteers and reminding them that they aren't supervised by volunteers.

UUCB is hosting Berkeley High's "Metamorphoses." We may be seeing a lot of high school students at the church this week. All the ministers of northern CA have been invited to meet with our UUA president this Friday. We'll have talk about how things are working regionally, as well as what is happening nationally and taking a moral stand in this moment. Preparation for Marcus's parental leave: Guest preachers will be starting 10/12. Marcus will continue working

until his wife goes into labor. Appreciation to board members for signing up for the Sharing the Responsibility.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

Board or Staff Announcements: Appreciation for Andrew Brown

Report from Board listening presence: Some congregants are looking for more help on Sunday mornings with moving tables. Lots of praise for Brian and the choir. A few people wanted some musical pieces to be shorter. Some expression of dislike about the tables in the atrium being “policed.” Lots of frustration over the ongoing questions re Freestone. Some concern that there doesn’t seem to be anyone in charge regarding the kitchen. One person has stopped volunteering in the kitchen because they feel bossed around. There continues to be tremendous support for Rev. Marcus

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board: None

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

a. Freestone Proposal

Kay invited both Dave Wemmer from the Freestone Committee and a representative from the Freestone Oversight Committee to speak.

Dave Wemmer shared that the FC removed the conditions from their previous purchase offer and believe they have raised the \$250,000 needed to meet the first milestone. They are looking forward to moving forward with the work and feel confident they can meet the upcoming milestone dates.

On behalf of the Freestone Oversight Committee, Beth Pollard repeated the statement that the FOC had shared with the board: *“The FOC advises the Board that the offer sufficiently meets the September 30, 2025 milestone to raise \$250,000. The FOC further advises that we are not qualified to provide legal counsel on the offer.”*

Kay noted that the board had received the generous offer. The board is seeking legal consultation regarding the offer. It was also noted that a lot of the board’s time has been devoted to Freestone and that has been a burden.

b. Finance Information from Treasurer, Part 1

Lisa Maynard reviewed the process UUCB uses to create the operating budget. (See attached document at the end of these minutes.) The Finance Committee wants to be as transparent as possible and welcome feedback on how they can provide opportunities for meaningful input and improve the process. Lisa reminded us that Sharon Dolan, our former interim Executive Director, suggested that UUCB change its bylaws so the Board of Trustees, rather than the congregation, would approve the budget. Lisa reviewed the 2025-26 1st quarter actuals vs budget document shared in the board packet. Most items were what would be expected.

Discussion/ Question and Answers

Q: Is the community use rental revenue lower than expected?

A (Lisa and Janae): The budgeted rental revenue is ambitious. In addition, rentals tend to be very

seasonal, and summer is a slower season for rentals.

Q: Does the Facilities section of the Operating Budget include capital expenses?

A: No. The operating budget doesn't include any capital expenses that will be paid for with the Ladd Griffith funds. The Facilities expenses in the operating budget are primarily for utilities and supplies.

Big thanks to Lisa for the information about the budget process.

c. Five-year Project Budget. (Janae Heard)

The use of a 5-year project budget was suggested by Sharon Dolan. It is designed to be an annual process in which updates would be provided in subsequent years to share what projects have been completed and discuss any changes in priorities. This is UUCB's first time doing this. Janae provided an explanation of the process used in creating this capital projects budget. The starting point was a list of building needs created by the Buildings and Grounds Committee (B&G) a few years ago which was then updated and reviewed by the Finance Committee. The budget is divided into 3 sections:

1. (in green) Projects that could be paid using the quarterly disbursements from the Ladd Griffith fund as those funds become available. The Board's approval of the 5-year project budget would allow those projects to proceed.

2.(in purple). Projects that could be financed using money from the Board Designated Endowment. The Finance Committee had recently advised the Board that as a "quasi endowment fund," it is not necessary to maintain the corpus of the Board Designated Endowment fund plus 4%, as is required of actual endowment funds. Instead, the Finance Committee has recommended maintaining \$300,000 of the Board Designated Endowment Fund and using funds in excess of the \$300,000 for needed capital projects. The Board Designated Endowment Fund currently is valued at approximately \$643,000. The use of funds from the Board Designated Endowment for these projects would require a decision from the Board to bring it to a congregational meeting for a vote by the congregation.

3. (in white). Possible projects to consider for a Capital Campaign.

Q& A/ Discussion

Q: Is there a plan to update the heating system for the school?

A: Yes. That is included under the "electric heat pumps" item that is listed under the capital projects list.

Q: What is the issue with the school bathrooms?

A (Janae): They are in rough shape. The pipes are corroded and there are visible cracks. There have been repeated plumbing issues with the toilets. We want to fix them before there is an emergency.

Q: Where on the priority list does lighting in the Fireside Room?

A (Janae): I hadn't heard about this as an issue. Please send me an email.

Q: If we start spending down the Board Quasi Endowment, wouldn't that reduce the Ladd Griffith funds?

A: Yes, but the Ladd Griffith Fund will be getting money from the Building Endowment Fund which received a very generous gift from Grace Ulp this year.

Lisa Maynard encouraged the board to consider if they want to ask for a congregational vote for this funding and, if so, to put it on the calendar. Time is needed to educate the congregation about the building needs and the proposed 5-Year Projects Budget.

d. Capital Campaign Next Steps

There are many needed building projects for which there is no current funding. A capital campaign could help UUCB address deferred maintenance issues as well as move in ways to pursue the mission of our church as wholeheartedly as possible. The board needs to decide if they want to initiate that process. If so, the next steps would be to identify a chair or co-chairs who would gather input, prioritize the needs to be addressed by a capital campaign, and provide a proposal for a campaign by next spring. Kay asked for volunteers and/or names of people who would be a good fit for this position, noting it would be ideal to have representatives from different groups.

Q&A/ Discussion

Q: Where would we get funding to pay Kay Crider for the next step? How much is it?

A: Her rate is \$150/hour. Most congregations assume those costs will be taken out of the funds that are raised. Or the church could put consultation fees into the operating budget.

e. Safety Committee

Task force is Helen Toy, Kay F, and Helen Tinsley-Jones. Their first meeting will be on 10/14. They will report more at next month's board meeting.

f. Governance Manual Task Force

David Rosales reported that the Task Force is meeting bi-weekly. Interviews with key people are almost finished. If you have an immediate need for the Task Force to look at something, please let David know.

g. Human Resources Committee

The committee would create/update HR policies and do an annual review of staff compensation. The board is looking for people to join this committee.

h. Beacon Article Ideas - November Beacon article - Carla McCasland

Her idea: reflections on the appreciations; maybe mentioning possibility of a capital campaign

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

Social Justice Council. Carnival of Care was held and provided congregants an opportunity to learn more about the SJC. We have a new heat pump at UUCB. The Climate Justice Committee received Green Sanctuary status from the UUA. The Immigrant Solidary Project, led by Jenn McDougall and Francie Liefert, has held vigils at SF and Concord immigration courts.

Honoring Indigenous People. Sponsoring a community read of *The Bead Workers: Stories*.

Coming of Age. The 9 youth have met their mentors and had their first retreat, met their mentors. Their first project will be a Haunted House.

Family Ministry. K-1 OWL is underway and going really well.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Thanks to everyone for all their work and participation. Lisa will send her document on budget process to the board. The Board is having a retreat this weekend.

Upon request, Rev. Marcus provided the following blessing: Blessings for your heartfelt presence and care, for bringing your curiosity and vision, for bringing into being the future that we need, for your capacity to feel and take in all that is happening. Blessings of gratitude for all that you do and are as leaders among us.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:28PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

Lisa Maynard's Document re UUCB Operating Budget

Process	When?
With input from Senior Staff, Operations Director develops basic expense budget, based on staffing plans and staff salary increases, past expenses for basic supplies, maintenance, utilities and overhead, knowledge of price increases	Fall/Winter
*some expenses are necessary to our operations	
-utilities, property tax, insurance, basic supplies	
-we can vary staffing and abundance of supplies/services	
Operations Director and Treasurer cooperate on budgeting for program expenses, with input from groups/committees	
*costs in this area total 2% or less of operating budget	
Operations Director and Treasurer cooperate on budgeting for revenue, including donations (pledges and other contributions), rentals, and fundraising	Winter
*Operations Director brings information about rentals	
*Treasurer brings input from Stewardship about pledge income	
Operations Director and Treasurer bring draft budget to Finance Committee for review/recommendations	February and March meetings
After changes, adjustments, etc., draft budget is presented to Board for initial review, with Finance Committee recommendation	April Board meeting
Board votes on budget to present to congregation for approval	May Board meeting
Congregation votes to approve budget	May congregational meeting

How might we improve this process, in

- transparency?
- opportunity for meaningful input from congregation?
- expediency?

Interim Executive Director Sharon Dolan suggested in her final report:

Consider having the Board of Trustees approve the budget rather than the full congregation (to streamline the process and to encourage board membership).