Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday June 3, 2026
Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference
Minutes

ATTENDEES:

Voting members: Peter Boland, Ryan Devine, Selene Fabiano, Kristen Jensen, Beth Jerde, Carla McCasland, David Rosales, Pier Sun Ho, and Helen Toy

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

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Co-President Selene Fabiano at 7:15p.m. Selene did the chalice lighting and reading, David read the Board covenant, Kristen read the land acknowledgement, and Carla read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion for the following (M/S, Pier/Helen) passed unanimously:

a. Approve agenda
b. Approve May 6, 2026 Board Meeting minutes
c. Accept May 17, 2026 Congregational Meeting minutes for congregational approval
d. Accept monthly Treasurer's report
e. Accept Operations Director's report

MINISTER'S REPORT

<u>Gratitude to staff:</u> Rev. Marcus is grateful for the staff team's support, noting Intern Minister Liesl Dees handling the worship service the Sunday after he tore his Achilles tendon. Also, Operations Director Janae and staff member Thor are working extra hours with Facilities Manager Peter out on medical leave. Peter will transition to long-term disability in July, enabling staff to look at other facilities work arrangements.

<u>Gratitude for Freestone Discernment Task Force, and for "Kitchen Cabinet" efforts:</u> The Task Force has been gathering visioning perspectives from the congregation. Ladie Malek has stepped in to facilitate the search for new Kitchen Cabinet leadership and related transitions in how Sunday lunches will function after the summer hiatus.

<u>Three-year reflection:</u> As he concludes his third year with UUCB, Rev. Marcus shared his sense that the church is doing really well: It's taken on challenging issues, feedback is healthy, and it's a vibrant, growing community. Looking forward, he believes the congregation's work now is to improve clarity on what we want to accomplish andwhat it would look like to have a bold vision.

<u>Dates;</u> Rev. Marcus is on leave until returning to the pulpit August 16, but available in emergencies. Intern Minister Liesl Dees' last day is July 12.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

a. Board or Staff Announcements: Selene welcomed to the Board new Trustee Peter Boland, who the Board appointed last month to fill a vacancy.

b. Board Listening Presence (Helen): Helen reported one congregant was displeased with the transition from a monthly news bulletin publication to the blog format.

c. Congregants who wish to speak to the Board on agenda items or other matters: Membership Co-Chair Lonnie Moseley spoke about how important the sense of "Belonging" is in the church, particularly for new members. She praised Sunday's service that celebrated and connected our recent high school graduates with young adult members, prompting those attending coming away with a sense of connection. She encouraged Board members to invite new members to sit with them at lunch, as they can find it daunting to know where they would be welcomed. Board members engaged in brief discussion and brainstorming with Lonnie, and Co-chair Victoria Bowen, out of which the catchphrase "No One Sits Alone" and the theme "Belonging" emerged. They were asked to come back to the Board after lunch has started up again to report on how things are going with new members feeling welcome there.

Michael Dewitt spoke about intentionally trying to meet one to three people each Sunday.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

a. Board development of communication goals, with presentation/report from Manager of Membership & Engagement Charis Domador

Beacon Blog: Charis explained how to access the Beacon Blog, which is on the UUCB website homepage. It's currently titled "News" but she will revise the name to indicate it is the location of the Blog. She encouraged church groups to continue to email her information items that used to be submitted for the Beacon, starting in July, so that they can appear on the homepage blog. An advantage of the blog format is that there is no deadline like there was with the monthly Beacon, thereby improving the timeliness of announcements and other information. The weekly *Week Ahead* will direct members to the Beacon Blog section on the homepage. Members sending items might keep in mind that the homepage is where visitors first go to find out about UUCB.

Communications overview: Charis provided a power point presentation summarizing:

The evolution of communications over the past few years

Communication channels, and their most frequent audience/content:

- Digital: Facebook (Age 40+, Community awareness), Instagram (Younger, visual storytelling), YouTube (worship recordings/wider reach), Mailchimp/Week Ahead (core members/highest engagement) , Discuss Lists, (small groups, direct conversation), Website (new visitors, reference resource) and Podcast (audio worship recordings).
- Analog: Worship announcements (highest impact, although there can't be too many), Atrium posters (visual reminders) and brochures (info-table collateral)

Data analysis Jan – May 2026 on subscriptions, viewing rates, click-on rates:

- Week Ahead: 806 subscribers, 13.4% average open rate (industry standard: 20%), 4.9% avg. click rate (industry standard 2.5%), showing that readers are engaged but just not opening the content
- Facebook: ~30 views/post, .39 interactions/post, .18 new follows/post

- Instagram: .7 profile visits/post, .15 new follows/post

Charis noted that the current goal is not mass reach, it is being visible and welcoming to members and prospective visitors; quality is more important than volume. Understanding what quality looks like is part of the strategic conversation ahead.

Concluding observations from Charis:

- In-person/analog communication is most effective
- Social media works best as a visible presence and welcome mat
- Audience has become more fragmented since COVID
- Email/Week Ahead is UUCB's digital backbone
- Prioritizing UUCB's communications channels & use is critical given limited staff capacity
- Strategic work is needed on a unified narrative about who we are, what is our story, and who we want to reach - going beyond just communicating what is happening

Board members shared observations around the large interest in in-person interaction, and the importance of developing focus for the next five years with Charis' assistance. Charis lifted up the idea of looking into more in-person outreach events.

c. Appoint delegates to the UUA General Assembly: Evelie Delfino Sales Posch, Lonnie Moseley, Melissa Rosales, and Cordell Sloan.

Lonnie Mosely raised the question of whether delegates are expected to vote as representatives of UUCB or to vote their own conscience.

David advised that in his delegate experience, decisions often have to quickly be made based on new information received wherein delegates need to have an open mind for changing their stance – making it impossible to have a set position ahead of time. Consequently, the Board is saying in the appointments that those delegates align with Board values.

Lonnie noted that the Board would need to be prepared to decline appointment of delegates who are interested in serving but are not in alignment with the Board's values.

It was the consensus of the Board to ask the Governance Manual Task Force to draft a provision in the manual revision addressing the issue of Board appointment and expectation of delegates that is consistent with David's comments.

M/S, Selene/Pier, to appoint Evelie Delfino Såles Posch, Lonnie Moseley, Melissa Rosales, and Cordell Sloan as delegates to the 2026 UUA General Assembly. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Freestone Discernment Task Force: Update on task force process and progress, and discussion on Board guidance for its next report to the Board

Kristen is Task Force Chair, and Pier and Peter are members along with other congregants. The Task Force is nearing completion of its outreach and engagement with groups and members of the congregation on the pending choice before the Board around whether to sell or donate the Freestone property. Task Force members indicated that several ideas have emerged, including around disposition of proceeds if the property is sold, and they wish to hear from the Board the scope and depth of what to include in the report.

The general direction from the Board for the report and the actions the Board expects to take included:

- The initial focus of Board decision-making will be selling vs. donating, followed by parameters around selling or donating; disposition of proceeds if the decision is to sell will come after those two decision points
- Advice from the Task Force about general themes discerned from member comments, along with pros and cons, is desirable
- A general Board consensus, rather than a divisively split vote, will be desired for its decision on whether to sell or donate the property
- The Board will need to decide:
    - The role of the Task Force, Board and/or other(s) on steps to implement the sale or donate decision and any corollary conditions on the transaction, if any
    - If here is a role for the congregation in future decisions, such as on affirming disposition of proceeds, if any
    - Upon review of the 1970 and 1975 congregational resolutions on Freestone, whether there is a need for those to be formally rescinded
- The Task Force will submit a written report for Board discussion and potential action on selling or donating the property at a Board meeting on July 8th.

Rev. Marcus advised the Board to lean towards decisions that will advance the church towards what we are supposed to be in the world rather than what will make the most people happy

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d. Determine Fiscal Year 2025-26 contribution to GRIP (Greater Richmond Interfaith Program), per the question in the Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lisa Maynard explained that the Board earlier this year expressed the desire for $2,000 to be donated this fiscal year to GRIP, authorized $1,000 to be allocated from the Board Discretionary budget, and committed to revisiting the issue late in the fiscal year – which is now. The Social Justice Council has offered $500, leaving the potential for the remaining $500 to be donated from the Board Discretionary budget.

M/S, Selene/Beth J, to authorize $500 to additionally be allocated for GRIP from the Board Discretionary budget. Motion passed unanimously.

e. Disclosure of Board Member conflicts of interest.

The Governance Manual calls for Trustees to disclose conflicts of interest, such as that family members are employed by UUCB.

- Kristen disclosed that her daughter works 2-4 hours/month in the childcare program.
- David disclosed that his son has worked in childcare and been a counselor in Chalice Camp.
- Helen disclosed that her granddaughter works every Sunday in childcare.

f. Update on Board Visioning Work and determining next steps

The Board visioning work group consisting of Kristen, Carla & David is reviewing the information from the recent Board retreat and other UUCB visioning work, and developing next steps on the Board becoming more visioning and strategic rather than operationally focused. Their thinking includes the Board bringing the "nesting" elements of mission, vision, goals, etc. into alignment, that who we're talking to in the world has more focus, that there is a connection between the Board's visioning and the budget, and that we are more efficient in meeting long-term vision. They will report back at the August and/or September meeting, in advance of the September 19 Board of Trustees retreat.

g. Discuss Summer Board Meeting schedule

It was the consensus of the Board that in lieu of a regular Board meeting on July 1, the Board would meet on July 8 for the sole purpose of receiving and acting upon the upcoming report from the Freestone Discernment Task Force on the question of selling or donating the Freestone property.

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS:

Safety Task Force: Helen had sent the Board the table of contents of the draft emergency procedures section of the Safety Manual under development by the Safety Task Force, which is meeting the following day with the Fire Department for their advice.

Governance Manual Task Force: David reported that the task force has been meeting and interviewing key people to identify gaps and areas needing changes. Rather than completing the entire draft before bringing it to the Board, the task force welcomes any requests for certain sections to be prioritized for its revision and review by the Board.

CLOSING COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Pollard, Secretary