Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, August 5, 2026

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Approved Minutes

ATTENDEES:

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

Absent: None

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

CALL TO ORDER AND OPENING RITUALS:

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Co-President Selene Fabiano at 7:19 p.m. Helen did the chalice lighting and a reading from Jackson Brown, Beth Jerde read the Board covenant, Selene read the land acknowledgement, and David read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA:

a. Approve agenda
b. Approve June 3 and July 8, 2026 Board meeting minutes
c. Accept monthly Treasurer's report
d. Accept Operations Director's reports
e. Adopt Resolution 26-1 authorizing Janae Heard, Operations Director, to execute documents for the sale of UUCB's three-parcel Freestone property at 10635 Barnett Valley Road, Sebastopol, CA

M/S, Pier/Helen, to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

MINISTER'S REPORT:

Rev. Marcus reported that upon his return from summer leave he is catching up on pastoral and administrative matters. Staff is working on shoring up Sunday A/V support, and facilities work has benefited from temporary help during Peter's absence. Chalice Camp attendance was up this year, with support from Lily Salazar. Rev. Marcus shared that he will be in the pulpit earlier than expected, August 9, as he will be at a family memorial on Sunday, August 23.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING

a. Board or Staff Announcements:

- <u>Update on Freestone property listing</u>: Co-President Selene reported that Realtor Laura Richards from W Real estate is being engaged to handle the listing, which is expected to be active by early September. Work is planned for weed abatement/brush clearing and well repair, along with the well testing and septic tank inspections needed for property listing. Rev. Marcus noted that access to the property by congregants and others is not permitted unless authorized by staff.

- Honoring and Memorializing Freestone: Rev. Marcus will have conversations with members most impacted by the sale of Freestone about their honoring and memorializing wishes. There is also the matter of retrieval of important items from the dome building**.**

b. **Congregants who wish to speak to the Board:** No one wished to speak.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

a. UUA General Assembly Report and planning for 2027 GA in San Jose – Melissa Rosales

Melissa Rosales presented a power point report on the 2026 UUA General Assembly and proposed establishing a one-year General Assembly 2027 Task Force to prepare for the June 2027 GA in San Jose. The task force might work on ideas such as:

- Increase congregational participation
- Encourage youth involvement
- Develop fundraising opportunities
- Explore ways UUCB can contribute to the GA programming

Board members expressed support for development of a task force proposal. Melissa, with Selene, will draft a task force charge for Board consideration.

b. Discuss roles, responsibilities, and reporting structure for current and potential Board committees, including Endowment, Widening the Circle, and Buildings & Grounds/Property

Co-President Pier explained that this agenda item is part of the Board's work in distinguishing between governance and operations, and in aligning committees and accountability accordingly within UUCB's organizational structure.

Endowment: With a couple of exceptions, the committee's role and responsibility is principally estate planning and education rather than in investment decisions - since endowment funds are now invested through the UUA. Board members discussed how this focus shifts the purpose of the committee away from governance and into programs and operations, similar to the Board's recent action for the Stewardship Committee.

M/S, Carla/Selene, to hand over the Endowment Committee functions from Board governance to staff, with a report to the Board at least every year. Motion passed unanimously.

Lisa will speak with the current Endowment Committee Chair, Anita Mermel, about next steps in filling out the committee. Carla reiterated her interest in being on the committee, and Kristin noted other potential members.

The Governance Manual Task Force will make the change of removing Endowment as a Board Committee in the Governance Manual.

Widening the Circle: Lonnie Mosely and Melissa Rosales explained the history and the original intention for it being a Board committee - including ensuring there was a strong UUCB commitment to and accountability for promoting cultural awareness, diversity, and related initiatives. While the committee is not currently meeting the way it used to, they wish for it to continue to be a Board committee.

Board members raised questions about whether there is a way for the Board to show its commitment without it being a Board committee, is it the Board's job to make sure things are happening with the committee, is the work is more programmatic, ministerial or operational than policy, and whether it fits with Board visioning work around knowing how people come into being a member.

Lonnie and Melissa will send information for the Board to consider when it re-visits the issue at its September 2 meeting.

Buildings & Grounds/Property: Rev. Marcus offered the idea of separating operational tasks from governance decisions pertaining to UUCB's physical assets. Specifically, there could be a Property Committee for board governance functions – such as advising and planning on capital needs, with direct Board oversight in this significant area of its responsibility. A Buildings and Grounds team/committee could focus on maintenance and volunteer work, with staff oversight.

The Board asked that members of the Buildings & Grounds committee provide comments on these ideas for the September 2 Board meeting.

c. <u>Consider inviting Tim Kelley, True Purpose Institute, to facilitate meetings with the congregation on discerning mission and purpose</u>

Rev. Marcus introduced Tim Kelley and Brett DeSchepper from the True Purpose Institute, and advised that while UUCB has mission and vision statements, he has observed a diffused sense of purpose in the congregation.

Tim and Brett described the True Purpose Process as a belief-neutral method designed to help individuals and organizations discern their purpose. They explained that it has been successfully implemented in businesses, government, and organizations worldwide, and they are now piloting it at Northbrae Community Church in Berkeley. The process would be offered free of charge to interested UU Church members, with the goal of eventually helping the congregation identify its higher purpose and create a purpose-informed vision. It involves multiple sessions to go through the steps of identifying and connecting with individuals' "trusted source" and then moving into shaping their individual purpose. A single trusted source would not be expected in a congregational process that leads to overall church purpose.

Board members raised questions around how the process would intersect with Board mission and vision work underway; the anticipated timeline; potential concerns from long-time members about possible change in direction; whether additional purpose work is needed given the congregation's existing mission and the UUA values; and the number of sessions and time commitment.

Following discussion, Rev. Marucs said he would work with Tim and Brett to offer the initial "Trusted Source Connection" and "Personal Purpose" workshops as Adult Spiritual Development offerings beginning this fall. Whether to use the process for UUCB as a whole can be decided later.

d. <u>Review and discuss draft Five-Year Capital Projects Budget, for September Board action</u>

In response to Beth Jerde's inquiry and concern about Fireside Room A/V improvements, Janae said it was on the wish list not the needs list, and that she would get a cost estimate from the contractor upgrading the Sanctuary A/V.

The capital projects budget will come back to the Board at the September 2 meeting.

e. <u>Provide direction on Finance Committee recommendations for disposition of recent bequests from the Boeke, Calkins and Wile trusts/estates</u>

<u>Wile bequest</u>: The Finance Committee recommends that the Board accept the bequest from Joanne Wile ($988,084.87 received in July 2026) and transfer it to a new account at the UU Combined Endowment Funds (UUCEF). The Finance Committee advised the Board to determine in the relative near-term whether it concurs with its interpretation of Joanne's wishes that the funds ultimately be placed in the permanent endowment. If its destination is the permanent endowment, UUCB's practice is no annual withdrawals for approximately three years to allow a balance of the initial deposit plus 10% of that principal.

M/S, Helen/Kristen, to accept the bequest from Joanne Wile and transfer it to a new UUCEF account for approximately three years. Motion passed unanimously.

<u>Boeke Pooled Income Fund:</u> The Finance Committee reported that with the passing of Johanna Boeke, a final distribution will be made to her estate and UUCB will receive the remaining balance. Upon making a donation to the Pooled Income Fund, Rev. Richard Boeke had requested that after his death and the death of Johanna Boeke, the balance be used to establish a new fund, interest from which was to support visiting ministers from another country, or intern ministers. The program that facilitated visiting ministers from other countries is no longer in operation. UUCB's commitment to providing ministerial internships, on the other hand, continues. The Morgan Theological Endowment, held by the UUCEF, generates interest that provides UUCB with some funds to support our intern ministers.

M/S, Peter/Selene, to approve adding the balance of the Pooled Income Fund established by Rev. Richard Boeke and administered by UUCB (estimated at $30,000 to $35,000 after all final distributions and administrative expenses have been deducted) to the Morgan Theological Endowment held by the UUCEF. Motion passed unanimously.

<u>Calkins Trust</u>: Established in the 1980s or early 1990s, it has been administered by UUCB acting as Trustee. In recent years, the trust provided income (from earnings of the investments) to Elizabeth Calkins Davis, the daughter of original donor Phil Calkins and the last individual beneficiary of the trust, as well as to UUCB and the UUSC. With the death in early July of Elizabeth Calkins Davis, UUCB is dissolving the trust and will distribute the balance to the UUSC (1/8) and UUCB (7/8).

The Board could decide to add UUCB's 7/8 share of approximately $292,000 to the Board Designated Endowment. This action would not require any vote beyond the Board decision. However, the Finance Committee recommends that the Board seek congregational approval to allocate the funds to deferred church maintenance projects; the timing of the congregational meeting would be at the discretion of the Board.

M/S, Selene/Kristin, to ask the congregation to use UUCB's 7/8 share of the balance of the Calkins Trust to fund some of the deferred maintenance projects listed in the 2026-27 UUCB Project List - Proposed Budget. Motion passed unanimously.

f. <u>Discuss accepting a possible gift for caregiving and grief support pilot program</u>

Rev. Marcus introduced the potential for a caregiving pilot program gift of around a couple hundred thousand dollars from Jim Evans, in honor of his late wife Ilsa, to be discussed by the Board next month after more planning conversations.

g. <u>Discuss Board subgroup proposal for Strategic Planning, in preparation for the September 19 Board retreat</u>

The subgroup will proceed with preparing for the September 19 Board retreat, based on the ideas presented in the Board packet.

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

<u>Safety Task Force</u>: Helen reported that they received great suggestions in their meeting with the Fire Department.
<u>Governance Manual Task Force</u>: Work is underway.
<u>Next Beacon Blog Board report</u>: Ideas for Kristin included Board visioning work, new church year, and church communications.

CLOSING COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Pollard, Secretary