

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, January 4, 2023**

Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference

Minutes – Approved

ATTENDEES

Voting members: Michael Armstrong, Bill Brown, Pier Ho, Randall Hudson, Elaine Miller, Beth Pollard, David Roberts, Cordell Sloan, Helen Tinsley-Jones

Absent: None

Ex officio members: Rev. Michelle Collins, Tess O’Riva (Executive Director), Selene Fabiano (Secretary), Lenore Ralston (Treasurer)

Visitors: Victora Bowen, Carolyn James, Beth Jerde, Don Klose, Albert Kueffner, David Lingenfelter, Anita Mermel, Larry Nagel, David Rosales, Marta Tobey, Helen Toy, Grace Ulp

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by Beth Pollard, president, at 7:02 p.m. Elaine did the chalice lighting and reading, Dave read the Board covenant, Randall read the land acknowledgement, and Michael read the Widening the Circle Vision Statement.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion for the following (M Helen__/_S_Elaine_) passed unanimously:

- Approve agenda
- Approve Board Meeting minutes of December 7, 2022

Treasurer’s report and Executive Director’s Reports were taken off the consent agenda. The Treasurer’s report was added as an item of Discussion/Action part of the agenda. The ED report will be done verbally

INFORMATION ITEM

Minister’s Report:

A. Rev Michelle reported that she has 8 remaining projects that she wants to complete during her tenure at UUCB:

1. Freestone – get thru the process
2. Former employee record retention

3. Leading a leadership trust workshop
4. Finishing formation of a conflict transformation team
5. Form a worship council
6. Form a small groups council
7. Hand offs for the next minister
8. Creating administrative support for future minister to offer classes and workshops. She'll come up with a draft and try it out with a workshop she'll offer in February and then tweak it.

B. Potential Effects of storm & contingency plans for Sunday. Contingency and communication plans have been made if the weekend storm is likely to interfere with church.

C. Non-update on Freestone. We haven't heard anything since the week before Christmas. Rev. Michelle inquired today and haven't heard back. Working with Alan Davis & Dave Wemmer to prod Sonoma County

Beth thanked Rev. Michelle for the holiday services and events.

LISTENING

Announcements:

Beth: From the Nominating Committee: The nominees for the Board of Trustees are Helen Tinsley-Jones, David Rosales, Kay Fairwell. No other individuals have submitted petitions to run.

Congregants who wish to speak to the Board: David Lingenfelter

An article about the purposes of executive sessions was shared and a suggestion was made regarding the Board's sharing its purpose in having executive sessions.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:

1. Recommendation from the Widening the Circle Committee to revise the language of the Board's charge for the Committee, as contained in the Board Governance Manual, in order to define the WTCC as having a collaborative rather than authoritarian position vis a vis the congregation.

Motion Helen moved: Motion to accept this revision of the WTCC vision statement. Randall seconded. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions.

Big thanks to the WTCC committee members.

2. Next steps and timeline in process to determine the future of the Freestone property, including scheduling of congregational meeting that was postponed in October 2022 due to pending information from Sonoma County

Review of situation current: The Board met in a special session prior to the scheduled October 2022 congregational meeting to postpone the meeting pending receipt of guidance from Sonoma County on allowed property use. At that time the Board set a 90-day timeline to reschedule the congregational meeting to address Freestone. In October the Sonoma County Senior Planner said they wanted to consult with County Counsel and pull in the Enforcement Department before providing us with a response. The Senior Planner gave a 4-week timeline. However, there was a delay due to some uncertainty regarding the tax status of Freestone. The logjam re tax status was cleared in December. As we approach 90 days, we need to look at where we are now and how we feel about the timeline.

Discussion:

- We hoped we would have had feedback from the Sonoma County Planning office so that the congregation could make a decision about Freestone by the February 2023 Congregational mtg. However, it's important to get the final word from Sonoma County before asking the congregation to vote, even if the county's response is ambiguous.
- Questions were raised regarding how much of a priority it is to get Freestone settled before the new minister comes and whether not having it settled would make some candidates reluctant to come to UUCB.
- Rev. Michelle reported that candidates have asked her about whether Freestone has been resolved. Unresolved issues like this can be a red flag for candidates. However, UUCB is more than Freestone and she has emphasized the progress that our congregation has made vis a vis Freestone.
- There was a general feeling that there has been significant positive movement among the congregation re Freestone. The issue is less polarizing than previously, can be talked about, and in general the conflict has de-escalated.
- Once Sonoma County provides feedback the board will need to be prepared to act quickly to process the feedback. A special congregational meeting will need to be scheduled since the regularly-scheduled February and May meetings already have full agendas.
- Plan: The Board will be at the ready to respond when feedback from Sonoma County comes. If there has been no clear response from Sonoma County by March 1st, the Board will address this at the March 1st Board meeting.

3. Approval of February 12, 2023 Congregational Meeting Agenda

This will be a multi-platform meeting with a capital projects report, report from stewardship, and a short report from the MSC. If there's an update on Freestone, Rev. Michelle will report on that.

Motion to approve the agenda and authorizing the Board president to make changes as needed.

Pier moved; Dave seconded. The motion passed unanimously with no abstentions

4. Treasurer's Report

Beth asked Lenore and Tess when the Board might get a budget report with year-to-date numbers and asked for a status report on how UUCB is doing vis a vis its 2022-23 budget.

Response from Lenore and Tess:

- Getting through the audit was a huge effort and a lot of progress has been made.
- Having difficulties with the offsite accounting firm getting info to us in a timely way.
- UUCB is transitioning with a new accounting firm that has experience with Fund EZ, the accounting system UUCB uses. In the next 4-6 months, the transition will be complete.
- The assets are now listed on the balance sheet, removing the dependence on spreadsheets.
- In February, Tess will have YTD numbers through 12/31/22.
- Per Tess, the actual vs budgeted income and expenses look to be pretty close at this time.
- Tess is willing to do a financial training for new board members, which can be opened up to the general congregation.
- Carolyn James was introduced. She is part of the deposit team and has agreed to take over as treasurer when Lenore steps down in February. Carolyn is trained as both an accountant and auditor. She has been shadowing Anne Greenwood and Lenore. We are lucky to have her!

Questions from the Board

Q: Will the February report include projections for revenue and expense?

A: In February, Tess will provide a cleaned-up balance sheet, and budget comparison report. She has the data for projections but is not sure how to make it accessible and will work with Randall on that.

Q: In past we encouraged members to donate electronically. How's that going? Is it easier for staff? Can we as board help continue with that process?

A: It's good that it's announced in our service that we can give via QR code. We do see electronic payments coming in. It's convenient but we don't mind putting checks in the bank. The Board can encourage people to log in to Breeze. Even though there are some fees associated with donating electronically through Breeze, the fees are reasonable. More importantly, it saves on staff time and reduces data entry errors. Lonnie has a plan to create a video tutorial on Breeze for people who aren't comfortable using it and would like to learn.

Dave encouraged board members to give through Breeze and to pledge early.

BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

1. Monthly Ministerial Search Committee report

In December the MSC finalized neutral pulpit dates & locations. They did a mock interview with Rev. Michelle to build their set of questions. Candidate names were released by UUA on Jan 2nd. In January, the MSC will review packets, schedule virtual interviews, and doing initial reference checks. The MSC stressed that all of their activities are confidential. They will share our process but no names or other details.

2. Stewardship. The stewardship committee asked all board members to pledge early when early pledging begins in February.

3. Other reports from Board Liaisons/Board members of Board committees

Michael reported on the youth holiday gathering on youth met 12/17. It was a small but fun group. Next year, they'll try to get announcements out early & maybe have the event earlier as there are some many competing events during the holidays.

We adjourned in memory of Jane Eisenstark who recently passed away. Cordell and Helen shared a short visual tribute highlighting Jane's involvement in social justice and other projects at UUCB. We had a moment of silence to reflect on Jane E.

Adjourned at 8:36PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

UPCOMING EVENTS AND BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

February Beacon (due January 15): **Dave**

January Listening Presence: **Pier**

February Listening Presence: **Randall**

Next Board Meeting: 2/1/23