

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Board of Trustees Meeting  
Wednesday, April 3, 2024**

**Meeting Conducted via Zoom Video Conference**

**Minutes – Approved**

**ATTENDEES**

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

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

Visitors: Lynn Hammond, Paul Hudson, Albert Kueffner, Jane Lundin, Cordell Sloan, Marta Tobey, Michèle Voillequé

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

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Helen noted the agenda for today’s meeting was amended earlier today and was posted on the UUCB discuss list and posted on the website. The changes were as follows: 1. A correction of dates and times for the 2 budget information meetings. The correct dates and times are Sunday April 14th at 9:30AM during Personal Theology, and Monday April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30PM.; and 2. Inclusion of a statement of right relations. However, Helen reported the board decided earlier today to remove the 2<sup>nd</sup> item (the Statement of Right Relations). This statement will be included in the May Board meeting instead.

**A motion for the amended consent agenda (M \_ Helen Tinsley Jones\_/S\_ Michael DeWitt\_) passed unanimously:**

- Approve amended agenda see notes above)
- Approve March 2024 Board Meeting minutes
- Accept monthly Freestone Oversight Committee report
- Approve for congregational affirmation the Nominating Committee members for 2024-25: Anita Mermel (continuing), Sandy Portillo-Robins (continuing), Andrew Swan (continuing), Bill Brown (new), Suzette Anderson-Duggan (new), Liz Der (new), Randall Hudson (new), Carissa Orwig (pending), Cordell Sloan (pending)

## **MINISTER'S REPORT**

Rev. Marcus reported that the following three individuals signed the membership book last month: Justin Hardy, Nora Piehl, and Marsha Lanier. Easter Sunday went very well; over 100 children came for the Easter egg hunt. Rev. Marcus thanked everyone who helped with the Easter service and festivities with a special shout-out to especially Michael Armstrong for organizing the egg hunt. A joint discussion regarding proposed Article 2 changes was held by UUCB, UUSF, and the Walnut Creek UU church. Cheryl Walker who offered the draft of article 2 that is being considered at GA attended this discussion. It was a wonderful opportunity to have conversations across congregations. Rev. Marcus reminded us that the April 21<sup>st</sup> Installation is a celebration of our shared ministry at UUCB.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS/LISTENING**

### **Board or Staff Announcements:**

- Budget Education Meetings led by Tess will occur on the following days and times
  - Sunday, April 14, 2024 @ 9:30AM during Personal Theology – on Zoom & in the Fireside room
  - Monday, April 22, 2024 @ 6:30PM over Zoom <https://zoom.us/j/99027634430>

[Installation Updates and RSVP Reminder](#) RSVP is requested. Click on link for opportunities to volunteer to help.

**Report from Board listening presence:** Michael Armstrong reported many people expressed appreciation for the ability to welcome new members. There was also a comment that it is hard sometimes to identify guests at UUCB and suggested that we have another way to do this, in addition to the purple mugs. The hope is to identify guests so we can do more outreach to them.

### **Congregants who wish to speak to the Board:**

Paul Hudson stated that he came to the meeting for the Statement of Right Relations pertaining to the issue on reconciliation that was postponed to the Board's May meeting. He encouraged the board to continue in the process of healing while being open and honest, with love for everyone in our community, for those of us who have felt hurt and need reconciliation. Paul shared his view that the board's next step vis a vis this issue of reconciliation should be a first step in a longer process. .

Helen responded to Paul's comment by letting him know that the board takes seriously its responsibility to care for our community, which is why the board is proceeding with attention and care.

## **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS:**

- a. Approval of Change in Priorities for Endowment Projects Fund Expenditure: Hardware Replacement for Sanctuary, Social Hall, and Fireside Room Doors (Jane Lundin)

Jane Lundin, Chair of Buildings and Grounds Committee, reported that due to complications, the B&G is recommending that priorities for the Endowment Projects funds be shifted from replacing the music room furnace to addressing a left-over safety issue related to the atrium tri-fold doors, as well as the tri-fold doors between the social hall and the Fireside Room. The Fire Department notified UUCB that due to operational difficulties some of these doors may no longer provide adequate emergency egress. Problems with these doors were first noted as a fire safety item during the last capital campaign, but repairs were never done. The Endowment Oversight Committee recommends approval of this recommendation by the B& G Committee. (The recommendation from the Building and Grounds Committee is included at the end of these minutes.)

**Motion.** Beth Pollard made a motion to approve the recommendation from the Building and Grounds Committee regarding the change in funding priorities. Helen Tinsley-Jones seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

- b. May Congregational Meeting Agenda Preview (Pier Sun Ho)

Pier shared a draft of the agenda for the May Congregational Meeting and invited comments from the board. The board will vote to approve the agenda at the May board meeting.

### **Discussion/Questions**

Helen Toy will check with the Social Justice Council to see if they want to give a report at the May congregational meeting.

- c. 2024-25 Budget: Presentation of draft 2024-25 budget, for Board discussion and direction; Board action at May 1, 2024 meeting for May 19, 2024 Congregational Meeting (Tess Snook O’Riva)

Tess reviewed a draft categorical FY24-25 budget, highlighting some changes including some projected increases and decreases in revenue and expenses such as:

- There has been an increase in recent years in “other unpledged contributions”.
- The decrease in cottage rental reflects the fact that UUCB is now using a property manager to manage the cottage and Lexington Lodge.
- School building contract annual renewal has a 3% increase built into it.
- The amount allocated for consultants and contractors has increased to address IT work and work on the sound systems.
- Separated out guest musicians from guest ministers. Want to be sure we don’t burn folks out.
- Increase in funding for staff professional development and appreciation. Rev. Marcus and Tess would like to take some steps to increase staff engagement.
- Hospitality funding has been separated from small group ministries line item. Hospitality is asking for \$1000 more than the amount currently on the draft budget.
- Staff are looking to move away from the calendar system on the UUCB website to something more user-friendly and more attractive

## Discussion/Questions

Q: Why isn't the rental income higher for FY24-25 than FY23-24?

A: Tess responded that there is an effort to balance priorities to ensure that rentals don't impact congregants during peak times.

Q: Is there a 10% increase in our pledge amount to UUA each year?

A: Tess stated that UUA uses a complicated formula that is based in part on a congregation's spending; The annual increase will not exceed 10%

Q: After 12/1/24, will the UUCB budget still include Freestone budget items or will Freestone be able to pay its own expenses?

A: Freestone essential expenses (e.g. insurance and property tax) are included until Freestone becomes self-sufficient. Beth Pollard noted that the Freestone Oversight Committee's understanding is that per the Freestone resolution the requirement that Freestone has a minimal impact on UUCB's general budget will go into effect in 2025-25. Beth asked Tess to provide a list of Freestone expenses included in the general budget.

Q: What is a typical amount of excess/deficiency in UUCB's budgets?

A: Rev. Marcus stated that most churches aim for \$0 excess, and that they do a capital campaign approximately every 8 years

There was a discussion about priorities to fund if the pledge amount exceeds the initial goal of \$450,000. These priorities were identified:

1. **Increase staff salaries.** The Board supports using the UUA salary guidelines as a guidepost and work towards getting staff who have worked at UUCB for 5 or more years to the mid-point of the UUA guidelines. Biggest line item is staff salary and we always want to pay our staff equitably and fairly.

2. **Improve UUCB's technical capabilities** (e.g full livestream capabilities in the Fireside Room, improve sound in the sanctuary, get a monitor for the chancel)

3. Grant **Hospitality's request for an \$1000 increase in funding**

- d. Beacon Article (Pier Sun Ho) - David will write the article. Some ideas: perspective of watching a young person develop in the UU environment; installation; theme of spring – springing forward, springing forth, and new era with new minister.

## BOARD COMMITTEE MEMBER/LIAISON REPORTS

**Program Council (PC):** The PC will now send the Board the PC's meeting minutes each month. The PC raised the idea of replacing UUCB's 9 year-old website.

**Social Justice Council:** Helen Toy shared the following highlights: The World Peace Committee is sending \$2000 to the Palestinian Children's Fund; On April 27<sup>th</sup>, there will be a showing of a film with the pope speaking on climate justice; UU the Vote has been involving congregants in writing postcards to people who have faced barriers to voting.

Family Ministry: The posting for the Director of Family Ministry is live. Please spread the word.

### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

The co-presidents thanked congregants who attended the meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:35PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Selene Fabiano, Secretary

### **Building and Grounds Committee Recommendation re Change of Priorities for Endowment Projects Fund Expenditure**

TO: UUCB Board of Trustees

FROM: Jane Lundin, Chair, Buildings and Grounds Committee RE: Change of Priorities for Endowment Projects Fund Expenditure: Replacement for Sanctuary, Social Hall and Fireside Room Doors

DATE: 3/28/24

The Buildings and Grounds Committee think that replacing the currently functional music room furnace is premature because we are learning more about the possible use of batteries in combination with more solar panels to allow us to detach from the grid, and because PG&E has come up with a catch-22. They now say we must get a building permit before we can proceed with them, and we all know that no city or county will issue a permit for electrical work without detailed plans, which we cannot draw up without the cooperation of PG&E. Also, we had been hopeful about federal funding for energy saving work, but this is not yet available. Meanwhile the local fire department is urging us to correct the deficiencies in the multifold doors that separate the sanctuary and the social hall from the atrium and close off the fireside room, and we agree that they are not adequate as fire exits. In fact they were listed as a fire/safety item in the previous capital campaign (in 2011 or so) but the repairs were never done. We have bids for repairing the hardware for the central doors into the sanctuary (\$15,000) and for one of the sets of folding doors (\$10,000) and we want permission to spend \$40,000 of the previously approved \$65,000 and will use Ladd Griffith funds for the balance (which we will know more precisely once we have done the first set of bifolds). We are asking the Board of Trustees to approve this change in funding because the approval of such changes was delegated to the Board by a congregational resolution that was passed when it became clear that having to call congregational meetings was going to be cumbersome.