

UUCSR Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda

August 20, 2020 (via Zoom)

MINUTES

Voting Members Present: Natalie Brundred (President), Mike McGirr (Vice President), Jane DeYoung (Treasurer), Larisa Ashley, Paula Hammett, John Mason, Paul Brockmann, Sean Freese, Andy Levine.

Voting Members Not Present: Joe Como, Cathie Wiese (Corporate Secretary).

Non-Board Members Present: Rev. Chris Bell (Minister), Era Capone (Director of Religious Education), Linda Stabler (Human Resources Committee Chair), Susan Thollaug (Recording Secretary). Congregants: Debby Belansky, Kristen Olney, John and Mary Louise Jaffray, Catherine McBride.

EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:35 - 7:00 PM

Regular Meeting called to order: 7:02 PM

Chalice Lighting, Covenant, Opening Words: Rev. Chris and Natalie

Agenda review: No changes.

Minutes: July 2020 minutes were approved as submitted.

Welcome to Era: They described their background which includes teaching preschool for over 4 years and having studied developmental psychology. About 18 months ago, Jen recruited them to apply for an RE staff position. The Board welcomed them enthusiastically. (Era's pronouns are they/them/theirs).

Open Mic: *Paula:* We need to reconstitute the Membership and Stewardship committees, and form a committee to work on developing a policy for re-gathering as a Congregation when the pandemic is under control. This will be put on the agenda for September's meeting.

Treasurer's Report: Jane DeYoung, Treasurer
The first month of our 2020/21 fiscal year showed a net income of about \$31k over expenses. This was an unanticipated - but welcome - way to start the year, especially because this year's budget is a lean one. The spike in

income may be related to the change in fiscal year accounts and may even out over the year.

Minister's Report - Rev. Chris

The Worship Associates are taking on more responsibilities to reduce demands on Rev. Chris. Rev. Chris, Rev. Dara, (UU Petaluma) and Rev. Marcus Liefert (UU Marin County) are developing a plan to share worship duties once a month. Marin does a live service with some recorded elements, and records the whole thing so people can watch it later. Petaluma does a full recorded service and then watches it together live. Rev. Chris is exploring that and the associated technical challenges. We also want to invite members of Marin's and Petaluma's congregations to join our choir under Sadie Sonntag's leadership.

There will be a Unitarian Universalist North Bay Revival meeting on Sunday October 4 at 10:30 am, with three preachers, live online.

Finalize and approve Rev. Chris's 2020/21 Covenant of Ministry

This describes where the minister intends to apportion his energy in the coming year. Several suggestions were incorporated:

Rev. Chris attend to self-care and take time off. The first goal is to hold everything together until we can come back together in person, but beyond that, to improve our online presence. We're under-posting and under-communicating.

"Supporting the congregation's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts" was added, as was "Working with the Board and Administrative Manager on improving the overall administration of the Congregation."

Neighborhood Group (NG) feedback: John Mason, Chair, NG Steering Committee

John requested approval from the Board for a memo he'd written to the NG leaders, detailing feedback from the NGs and the responses of the Board and staff. The Board gave its full support for sending the memo out as submitted.

Update on Reopening Committee Progress

Paul Brockmann and Susan Thollaug (both with public health backgrounds) have formed a Task Force to create protocols that are safe and consistent with county and state guidelines.

In the event of an emergency where we might need to open up the building, we need to have protocols in place so we can do it safely. Ops Team wants to be a part of it.

Realm Implementation: Paula Hammett

The implementation process has four priorities, with benchmarks and timelines assigned to each:

- 1) Entering member profiles. These are key to the REALM system. We'd like to get the giving information in the best shape possible before launch.
- 2) Group structure. This is now in good shape.
- 3) Religious Education. Era, Kayli and Sean see promising features in REALM.
- 4) Support, training, and ongoing maintenance. This includes bringing a new Administrative Manager up to date.

In the following couple of weeks, they'll launch the basic package and introduce it to members. They'll start simple to avoid overwhelming people. Zoom sessions are in the works to cover basic topics. A support team is being organized. The team will roll out additional features over time. RE may lead the way. Era and Kayli will work on with families to get the kids in the new system.

There will be a problem with older operating systems on phones and computers — in some cases they won't work with REALM. They'll work with people to deal with that.

Anti-racism work: Paul Brockmann and Mike McGirr

The Board has embraced working on issues of systemic racism and what surrounds that, as well as providing spaces for the Congregation to do so.

The Board and members of the Diversity Project will participate in a facilitated three-part workshop on racism in September.

Some questions for the Board to ask itself in deconstructing the way the Board works currently:

What comfort, privilege, and power do we exercise? What changes are we prepared to make? Who has power and influence here?

Whose voices and experiences are the basis of our work? Whose voices and experiences are missing? How can we amplify the voices of those who are marginalized or missing? How can we include those who are not here? We seem to be an all-white, all English-speaking group. Who's missing? What are we going to do about it?

Is the very way we operate as a Board keeping people out? What are we willing to do to deconstruct systemic and unconscious bias? What will we do in terms of processes, communications, actions to change the structure and culture of the Board?

We could craft some guidelines for the NomCom to develop a "pipeline" for new leaders. The "soft culture" of decision-making spaces is important. We prioritize the written word, the schedule, the agenda, action items. Those are tied to white culture. We should be cognizant that not every group does things that way. Maybe we can learn and adjust the ways we structure our meetings. If we wait until there's more diversity in the Congregation to widen the leadership, we'll hamper bringing more diversity into the Congregation.

For people who are in the Congregation now, we want it to continue to be a welcoming home. People who look different is one thing, but diversity is deeper. There's a fear that this moment will pass with a lot of discussion but no change.

One avenue would be to amplify our links to North Bay Organizing Project. Someone besides Rev. Chris could participate in the leadership council and task forces. This might be a great time to communicate to the Congregation the opportunity to be more involved.

Update on hiring

Era has been hired.

The process of interviewing and selecting a new Administrative Manager is well underway, and we hope to have someone hired soon.

Annual Report revision: Voting Item

The Board voted unanimously via email to revise the contents. Henceforth, it will be composed of only of articles submitted by: Minister, Board President, Treasurer, Director of Religious Education (this year Rev. Chris will include it in his report), Administrative Manager, and Advocates for Social Justice. It will be distributed via Constant Contact, by the time of the Town Hall.

Meeting adjourned: 9:15 pm

Next Board Meeting: September 17, 2020, via Zoom

Respectfully submitted by Susan Thollaug, Recording Secretary