

**First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee  
Minutes of the Meeting of the BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**August 27, 2019**

**Present:** Mark Bishop (President), Mark Bender (Vice-President), Jeremy Koenen (Secretary), Chris Aiken, Jane Cliff (minutes), Diana Dentino, Mark Miller, Jane Peterson, Melinda Vernon

**Also present:** Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom (Senior Minister), Noreen Gilbertsen, Jean Johnson, Bruce Wiggins

**Called to order:** 6:06 p.m. CT

**Opening words:** Jane Peterson (words from author Toni Morrison on love and God)

**I. Consent agenda** (Mark Bishop)

- a. Review and discuss May BOT meeting (May 14, 2019) minutes
- b. Review and discuss May BOT post-annual meeting (May 19, 2019) minutes
- c. Received monthly staff change report from Rev. Jennifer
- d. Moved to approve items a, b, and c above (Jane Peterson / Melinda Vernon); approved unanimously

**II. Board Secretary transition/election** (Mark Bishop)

- a. 2019-20 church year BOT Secretary Diana Dentino needs to step down from her role as 2019-20 church year BOT Secretary due to other commitments. Jane Cliff agreed to serve as secretary.
- b. Motion to approve item a above (Mark Bender/Chris Aitken); approved unanimously

**III. Renewal of Covenants** (Mark Bishop)

- a. Read and sign Board of Trustees covenant
- b. Read and sign Board of Trustees/staff covenant
- c. There were no questions or concerns about either items a or b above, and all present individually signed a master copy.

**IV. General Assembly report** (Bruce Wiggins, Mark Bishop)

- a. Bruce submitted a written report; highlights include:
  - UUA continues to tackle issues of white supremacy and institutional racism.
  - Questions of congregational growth and membership were discussed, primarily in workshops (see UUA website for more info).

- Rev. Jennifer noted that nationwide, adult membership is stable (+/- 1-2%), but religious education attendance is declining nationwide.
- FUSM, with 750 members, was allocated 15 delegates (1/50 members).
- GA 2021 will be in Milwaukee; expect 3,000 - 5,000 attendees; probably will be at Wisconsin Center downtown; will need many FUSM volunteers to support event. Planning committee to visit Milwaukee January 2020 (GA requires 18 months of planning). Bruce has expressed interest in being on volunteer planning group—there is an application process.

**V. Year-end financial review** (Noreen Gilbertsen, Jean Johnson)

- a. There was a \$4,000 shortfall in Feast for Funds proceeds collected vs. bids received; therefore, some people aren't paying. Suggestion was made to identify non-payers and speak to them individually.
- b. Investment income decreased 10% from last year, due to including management fee expenses.
- c. Apartment income was 19% above planned level.
- d. Total income projection and received were at 100%.
- e. Total expenses were lower than planned due to staff vacancies; lower DRE salary and corresponding decreases in taxes, health insurance, retirement contribution, professional development, and programming costs; no Morter Lecture event in 2018-19; church committees not spending as planned.
- f. Total expenses were almost 5% less than planned.
- g. Income net of operational expenses is just over negative \$45,000 (42% less than our goal of zeroing out).
- h. FUSM received a generous bequest from Bettie Zillman for \$273,689. It was noted that we can't continue to rely on bequests to fund the organization—that our financial situation is more of an income issue rather than an expense issue. A question was raised--would it be beneficial to plan by program area (and tie them to Ends Statements), to make the financials more visible to the congregation, and thus generate more support.
  - i. There was discussion about why the sabbatical accrual line item didn't increase between FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19; response was that we should plan an annual amount to build the fund.
  - j. Total FUSM assets increased from \$1.75 K to \$1.96 K (2%) in FY 2018-19.
  - k. The balance sheet position is very strong.
  - l. We will spend more time on the financials at the October BOT meeting so new Bd. members gain understanding. Homework: study and ask questions.

**VI. Monitoring** (Mark Bishop)

- a. It was noted that compliance on FUSM board policies 4.4 and 4.5 are "baked into the budget process;" the BOT asks to be informed if staff sees any significant changes on the horizon (i.e., is there anything that would cause us to re-budget?).
- b. It was noted that BOT was informed at January and March 2019 meetings of inaccurate forecasts of pledges.
- c. Rev. Jennifer and Jean Johnson will present their interpretation of "material deviation" from board policies at the October BOT meeting; it was noted that percentages would be useful, if possible.

- d. Moved to approve the financial report and that the senior minister's implementation of FUSM Board policies 4.4 and 4.5 policies is in compliance with Board policy limitations.  
(Melinda/Jane C.).
- e. There was discussion of continuous operations plans in the absence of key staff (FUSM Board policy 4.7). These plans identify who performs necessary functions and who covers them during an (extended) absence. Rev. Jennifer said she was very comfortable with the continuous operation plans for the Associate Minister and the Director of Administration. All plans will be modified using a continuous improvement process, and may include back training and use of interim positions in future revisions.
- f. There was discussion about the usefulness of a future continuous operation plan for facilities.
- g. Motion to accept the staff interpretation of FUSM Board policy 4.7 and to find it in compliance (Melinda/Mark Miller); approved unanimously.

**BOT retreat follow-up** (Mark Bishop, Rev. Jennifer)

- a. Mark Bishop asked Jeremy and Mark Miller to start planning how to build a link with FUSM youth, and bring information to a future BOT meeting.
- b. Will need to make a decision on youth representation on and/or observation of BOT in near future. Mark Bishop talked with new DRE Kimberlee and she recommends having two youth in whatever role is decided upon (less intimidating; provides backup).
- c. Rev. Jennifer agrees to check with a few UU congregations that have a youth board member and share her findings at Sept. BOT meeting.
- d. Mark Bishop requested BOT member attendance at upcoming Journey to Membership class on Sept. 21, 2019. He will send out sign up document for ½-hour slots a week ahead of the class.

**VIII. Senior Minister's report** (Rev. Jennifer)

- e. Rev. Jennifer provided a written report. In the interest of time, we agreed to skip any discussion now, and read the report and ask any questions at the September BOT meeting.
- d. **Zillman bequest** (Rev. Jennifer)
  - a. Will discuss more at September BOT meeting.
  - b. Rev. Jennifer suggested that we not re-invent the process, but build some combination of the Krug and Zillman bequests, while honoring both donors.
  - c. Rev. Jennifer's vision is to have the "Ends" implementation plan reinforce and support the long-term financial plan, and we'd end up with a strategic plan to guide operations.

**Motion for adjournment:** 8:07 p.m. CT (Chris/Mark Bender); approved unanimously

**Next meeting:** September 24, 2019

**Assignments:** Words/snacks—Jane Cliff; Minutes/Chanticleer article--Chris