

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

March 24, 2020

Draft

Present: Mark Bishop (President), Mark Bender (Vice President), Jane Cliff (Secretary), Jeremy Koenen, Melinda Vernon, Dianna Dentino, Jane Peterson, Mark Miller (recording secretary). **Absent:** Chris Aiken. **Also Present:** Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom (Senior Minister).

The meeting was on video conferencing (Zoom) because of COVID-19 concerns, and called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Mark Bender.

1. Consent Agenda (Mark Bender)

- Minutes of December BOT Meeting: Several wording clarifications were made.
- Monthly Staff Change Report (none)

Moved to accept consent agenda (Bishop/Cliff); Passed: Unanimously

2. Safe Congregation Plan/COVID-19 Update (Rev. Jennifer)

Rev. Jennifer explained FUSM operations with the building closed due to the COVID-19 virus outbreak.

Specifically: 1) Director of Administration Jean Johnson visits the building regularly to check for any issues needing attention; 2) Church staff is making plans for different timeframes (short-, mid-, and long-range closure); 3) Senior minister's essential operational goals are to keep people safe, healthy, cared for, and help them find purpose and meaning; 4) Worship is continuing on Sundays at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. 5) Religious Education is happening on Sundays, with a 10 a.m. experience and 1p.m. youth group (RE weekly e-news has details); 6) Virtual coffee hour is at 10 a.m. on Sundays and will expand to a noon session this Sunday; 7) Chanticleer is being sent electronically only; 8) FUSM Facebook group is much more active. Facebook Live sessions are regularly hosted by Revs. Jennifer and Dena; 9) Applying policies (4.5 Financial Conditions and 4.5.1), Jennifer will alert the BOT if COVID-19-related operational expenses are more than \$5,000.

BOT asked questions about the possibility of going to one service on-line; if there are any issues with church staff working from home; implications of having no share the plate offering; and how to conduct the church's annual meeting.

3. Interpretation of Policy 4.3 on Compensation & Benefits (Rev. Jennifer)

Bishop said that policy 4.3 mentions “no jeopardy to financial integrity” but interpretation is silent on “public image.” How would this factor in? Rev. Jennifer noted that being in alignment with FUSM values & principles would cover that but she said she’d be happy to think about this more deeply.

Motion to Approve Interpretation of Policy 4.3: (Melinda/Jeremy); Passed: Unanimously

4. Compensation Policy During COVID-19 (Rev. Jennifer)

Rev. Jennifer presented her interpretation of policy 4.3.4 which states the “sr. minister shall not create inequitable situations.” This is relative to continuing salary through this church year for wage employees who cannot do their jobs because the FUSM building is closed. We will reassess circumstances when budgeting for 2020-21.

Motion to Approve Compensation Policy during COVID-19 and determination it is compliance with other FUSM policies: (Cliff/Melinda); Passed: Unanimously

5. Compensation/Initial 2020/2021 Budget Discussion (Rev. Jennifer)

Rev. Jennifer presented several options for BOT consideration. The BOT will discuss this topic in more detail at their April 28, 2020 meeting.

6. Congregational Survey (Mark Bender)

There was much discussion of the pros/cons of conducting a congregational survey at this time (given COVID-19 precautions and lack of in-person FUSM gatherings) and the BOT decided that we would not do the survey right now, but would seek ways to continue gathering information and suggestions from the congregation.

7. Kimberlee’s Request for Ordination – Receipt of Requirements (Mark Bender)

It was noted that Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson, FUSM Director of Religious Education, has submitted all her paperwork necessary to be ordained as a minister of religious education.

Motion to Approve Kimberlee’s Request for Ordination (Bishop/Cliff); Passed: Unanimously

8. Planning for Annual Meeting (Mark Bishop)

There was much discussion of how to conduct the congregation's annual meeting in May, given the possibility that in-person meeting restrictions may still be in effect due to the COVID-19 virus.

Rev. Jennifer will work with BOT secretary Jane Cliff, Jeremy Koenen, and others to determine how to conduct the annual meeting in a virtual format, assuring required posting of voting members, determining a quorum, voting procedures, etc.

Mark Bishop will draft an agenda for the annual meeting. At next month's BOT meeting, we'll consider the slate of three new BOT members, as well two new members for the Nomination Committee. There will be an FUSM annual meeting, as scheduled on May 17, 2020.

8. Monitoring Limitation of Policy 4.8: Sr. Minister Well-Being (Rev. Jennifer)

BOT members asked questions about the timing and frequency of senior sabbaticals (the UUA recommends every 5 years.)

Moved that operations are in compliance with limitations on policy 4.8 and the interpretation is reasonable: (Peterson/Melinda); Approved: Unanimously

9. Monitoring Limitation of Policy 4.9: Communication & Support of the Board (Rev. Jennifer)

BOT members asked for and received clarification on some wording in the interpretation of this policy.

Moved that operations are in compliance with limitations on policy 4.9 and the interpretation is reasonable: (Bender/Jeremy); Approved: Unanimously

10. Senior Minister's Report (Rev. Jennifer)

Jennifer reported that there were 1500 on-line views of our March 15 2020 service (1300/200 for 9am/11am services, respectively) and there were 700 views of the March 22 service. She further noted that these numbers of watchers reflect an increase of up to 500 people over attendance at the usual in-person services.

Jennifer also suggested that BOT members share links to FUSM services on our individual social media outlets.

11. Sr. Minister Evaluation—Next Steps (Mark Bishop)

Mark Bishop stated that we have compiled BOT feedback, using a 5-point scale and specific comments in evaluation categories. BOT officers, along with someone from FUSM's personnel team will discuss the evaluation with Rev. Jennifer, answer any questions, and get her feedback on the content and process.

12. Other Business (Mark Bender)

Mark Bishop noted we approved a youth member to participate in board meetings. He talked to Deb Solis about a candidate. She thinks we should implement in fall 2020.

Rev. Jennifer was asked about her current priorities aside from pledges. She noted high pastoral care requests and praised Rev. Dena's work in this area. Jennifer also said that worship and making sure the community is safe, healthy, and cared for. Are her priorities.

Jennifer reminded us that one member of the congregation has contracted COVID-19 more than 14 days ago; she also noted that public health experts follow through on tracing others who may have been in contact with this person.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm (Jeremy/Bishop); Approved: Unanimously

Next Meeting: April 28, 2020, 6:00pm; **Chair:** Mark Bishop **Words/Snacks:** Jeremy Koenen; **Minutes/Chanticleer Article:** Jane Peterson