



# First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting – March 23, 2021 6-8 pm

**Present:** Mark Bender, President; Jane Cliff, Vice President; Mike Hogan, Secretary; Dianna Dentino, Mark Miller (Recording Secretary), Ben LeFort, Rollie Hanson, Jane Peterson, Melinda Vernon. **Also Present:** Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom (Senior Minister); Mark Chambers (Pledge Drive Captain), Dave Becker, Julie Bock.

The meeting was conducted via videoconferencing (Zoom) due to COVID-19 concerns and was called to order at 6:03 PM by Jane Cliff.

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## Strategic Planning Team (SPT) Recommendations (Julie Bock / Dave Becker)

Dave Becker provided results of Listen & Learn sessions attended by about 200 members. There was a lot of interest in growth among the participants of the listen and learn sessions. But growth alone, will take a lot more work than first prioritizing the financial considerations.

At the congregation's annual meeting, the SPT will present three scenarios to address FUSM's financial situation: 1) cut the budget; 2) continue to draw from financial reserves until they run out; and 3) make a significant and sustained effort to close the gap between expenses and income.

We need to be clear with the congregation about the consequences of each scenario. We have multiple sources of income and we are taking an all-of-the-above approach with pledge increases leading the effort. We have to consider how to reach members that are not reached by the traditional campaign methods. We'd like to raise funds over two-three years for an endowment for operations, using the interest only and protecting the principle. We'll ask for a congregational endorsement at the May annual meeting for: 1) increased pledge income; and 2) a special endowment fundraiser.

There was considerable discussion among board members regarding option to increase income beyond annual pledge drive and concern expressed about how to gain acceptance from the congregation.

People would likely support the idea of their money going into an endowment rather than current year's operations.

Increasing pledges annually is a given, but that won't fill the income/expense gap. And the board may have to continue to supplement that annual budget from the unrestricted funds. Ultimately, an endowment fundraiser is needed to close the gap. Yes, we need to grow the congregation and increase pledges, but this is a one-time project to ensure this congregation thrives.

Motion by M. Hogan "Following a presentation at the annual meeting of the Strategic Planning Team results and a presentation of the 3 options outlined, the BOT humbly requests that the congregation express support for pursuing option 3, to grow FUSM's income, and to affirm that the Church shall begin taking action to meet these goals. Bender 2<sup>nd</sup>. Approved unanimously.

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**Review/Consent Agenda** (Jane C) In the February BOT meeting minutes, Melinda would like to see that verb tenses are more consistent. And, the word "sabbatical" seems to be missing from one sentence. Ben LeFort moved to approve with changes; Jane Peterson 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Approved unanimously

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## Monitoring 4.3 Compensation & Benefits (Jane C / Reverend Jennifer)

SM Jennifer presented information showing that we are out of compliance with the UUA recommendation of being within 15% of large church salary standards and presented a plan for salary adjustments to begin bringing the congregation into compliance with these

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goals. Paying fair market wages is a matter financial integrity and is consistent with our values and public image. We have worked very hard to try to maintain or at least balance them both. Numbers have been provided.

SM Jennifer's plan is to bring salaries into compliance with some of the values questions assuming a 3% increase in the pledge goals. Need a long-term plan for compensation compliance perhaps along with strategic planning. Jennifer will come up with a plan to go along with our strategic plan.

Jane Cliff moved that we are asking Jennifer to come up with a plan for compliance that is aligned with our strategic plan. We recognize that we are out of compliance and accept Rev. Jennifer's proposal to present a plan over several years to come back into compliance. Rollie 2<sup>nd</sup> Unanimously carried.

#### **2021-2022 Compensation & Benefits** (Reverend Jennifer)

**Rev.** Jennifer shared her spreadsheet proposal for 2021-22 salary adjustments. She explained the detail for salary change proposals given upcoming vaccination rollouts and the consideration of returning to in-person services later this year.

Board members held a wide-ranging discussion including current income stream questions such as, are receiving money from people seeing us online. SM Jennifer says "yes" but does not have numbers tonight.

The Board feels that we should pay people a fair salary, and that the options put forth offer a path to move us in the direction of compliance with UUA stated salary goals.

In general, Jennifer feels it would be inconsistent with our values and to our church community to cut any positions at this time. SM Jennifer's proposal hinges on at least 3% pledge income increase. Further discussion postponed until this question is answered in April.

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#### **2021-2022 Board Nominees** (Jane C)

Three new board candidates have been put forward, as well as those for the nominating committee. These will be presented to the annual meeting.

Jane Peterson moved to accept nominations. Melinda 2<sup>nd</sup> Approved unanimously

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#### **Anti-Racism Experience in Potential Board Members** (Mark B)

Delayed until future meeting

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#### **Senior Minister's Report** (Reverend Jennifer) - Closed Captioning for Zoom

Not discussed, but expected to read

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#### **Youth Board Observer, Feast for Funds Update** (Reverend Jennifer)

Delayed until future meeting

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#### **Other Business**

Rev. Jennifer said the board might be asked when FUSM is reopening. We don't know yet. A policy is forthcoming. Hoping to have a draft policy for the annual meeting.

Jane Cliff submitted a notice for the annual meeting in the Chanticleer.

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#### **Adjournment**

Mark Miller moved that we adjourn. Dianna 2<sup>nd</sup>. Approved Unanimously

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Meeting ended 8:13

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**Next Meeting:** April 27, 6 pm

**Chair:** Mark B | **Words:** Rollie | **Minutes/Chanticleer Article:** Ben

nurture. engage. inspire.