

**First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee**  
**Board of Trust Meeting Minutes Final**  
**October 26, 2021**

**Present:** Jane Cliff (President); Ben LeFort (Vice President); Tony Panciera (Secretary); George Bledsoe, Patricia Geenen, Mike Hogan, Mark Miller, Dianna Dentino and Rollie Hanson. Also present: Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom (Senior Minister), Jean Johnson (Director of Administration), Noreen Gilbertsen

The meeting was conducted via videoconferencing (Zoom) due to Covid-19 concerns, and was called to order by Board President, Jane Cliff at 6:04 PM

**First Quarter Financial Report** (Noreen and Jean)

FUSM pledge fulfillment is doing well and looking strong. Expenses are hovering at 25% which is on target for the first quarter of the church year. Feast for Funds is tentatively set for spring 2022. The focus and format will be simplified and focus on auctioning-off vacation home stays.

**Monitoring Limitations 4.4 & 4.5 Financial Planning and Budgeting** (Jane C)

We have met the safety-net requirement.

Motion: Rollie moved to approve that we are in compliance with Ends 4.4 (monitoring limitations) & 4.5 (budgeting). Pat seconded/approved unanimously.

**Monitoring Limitations 4.1 Relationships with the Congregations** (Rev Jennifer)

Rev. Jennifer reported that while we are still in the midst of the pandemic, some of these proposed measures will not happen until the pandemic is over. There are a high number of safety policies currently being discussed by the Covid Response Committee. She stated that the FUSM Covid Response Committee will be creating a comprehensive safe return plan as the Covid numbers decrease. Currently, staff is adapting and working towards getting members back to church safely. Rev Jennifer reports staff members are doing double the work. Tony requested that a timeline be edited in regarding the timing of the implementation of the safety policies.

Rev. Jennifer also reported that modifications/edits were made to the FSUM member conflict and complaint resolution procedure document, dated Oct. 2019. Jennifer suggested that the BOT consider developing its own grievance procedure for handling complaints about the senior minister.

Motion: Rollie moved to include the senior minister's interpretation of the limitation on policy 4.1 incorporating Tony's suggested edit (including a time limit for obtaining metrics) and Jane's edits (for the conflict and complaint resolution procedure) as reasonable. Mark seconded/approved unanimously.

**Conflict of Interest Form for BOT** (Jane C)

Jane noted that per BOT policy 2.8.3 the BOT must avoid any conflicts of interest. No sign-offs by Board Members on this policy have occurred since 2014, thus, we are currently out of compliance. Tony

offered to take the lead on fine-tuning a conflict-of-interest policy and form and George offered to work with Tony. Tony stated he would aim to have it completed by our next BOT meeting.

### **Review/Consent Agenda (Jane C)**

Motion: Mike moved to approve the consent agenda, which consisted of Sept. 28, 2021 BOT meeting minutes. Tony seconded/approved unanimously

### **Review 2020 FUSM Survey Results (Ben & Rollie)**

Rollie noted the survey represents a mosaic of our community. Ben shared some highlights from the Dec. 2020 FUSM survey. There were 160 replies. Responses reflected an older demographic of replies and fewer families replies compared to the 2018 FUSM survey. The survey focused on FUSM Ends Statements and how they are perceived by the congregation, and if we as a community feel that progress towards these Ends is evident.

Ends Statement 8 (Create accessible, courageous, and innovative welcome to people who might find a sense of belonging and a spiritual home with us) and Ends Statement 3 (Follow the leadership of people most affected by injustice, partnering to move the Milwaukee community toward justice) have the largest gaps between importance and progress, and thus provide the most room for improvement.

The Ends Statements seemed to speak more strongly to community members in 2020, when compared to responses from the 2018 survey. Discussion included: 1) 'As a result of the survey information, as a Board, where should our focus lie? In 2018, Ends Statement 3 did not rank as high as the 2020. Ends Statement 8 ranked second, as it did in 2020; 2) How to address the low familiarity with the Ends Statements? Only 26% for the survey respondents said they were familiar with our Ends, and a significant number (41%) aren't sure or not familiar with the Ends at all. 3) Appreciation for the ministers including references to the Ends Statements during the Sunday services as a way to increase awareness and help our community members make connections; 4) It was posited that there was some difficulty with the word "Ends" itself, and perhaps the language itself is a barrier. Others agreed with that observation. Some referenced the Ends Statements as our ideals and noted the survey reflects this as well; 5) Including something about the Ends Statements in the Chanticleer is another strategy/recommendation to help our community gain familiarity with them; 6) Is there more outreach we could/should be doing? Racial diversity in our FUSM community is low. It was noted that one step we are taking as a Board is our plan for more training regarding race and racism.

Survey data is collected in an Excel Spreadsheet document which then needs to be interpreted into an accessible format for Staff, BOT and FUSM Community members. Pat & George offered to help Ben design and conduct this church year's congregational survey

### **Sr. Minister's Report (Rev. Jennifer)**

Rev. Jennifer highlighted anticipated modifications in FUSM Covid protocols as Covid numbers change and as FUSM begins to safely reopen. The FUSM Covid Team has been trying to adapt to the on-going pandemic numbers. Covid numbers in Milwaukee County are dropping, but not significantly. Preliminary discussions to returning to face-to-face services include a projected three-step process:

**Phase 1** Face-to-face meet-ups with staff-led teams, including the BOT; possible start date: November/December 2021.

**Phase 2** Face-to-face member-led ministries; possible start date: January 2022.

**Phase 3** In-person worship (limited attendance/service to 100 people). The details/system protocols of how to do this still need to be created; possible start date: February 2022.

Safety protocols for all three phases will include: Vax cards or test results within 72 hours of meeting, plus other safety protocols to include masking, limited numbers of people gathering, appropriate distancing, etc.

All phases will offer virtual participation options as well. Staff workload is expected to increase. Rev. Jennifer expects this transition to be challenging.

### **Other Business**

The Strategic Planning Committee has been interviewing consultants for our major fundraising campaign and hopes to have names to put forward at the BOT November meeting. (Ben)

November 14th another outdoor FUSM service will be held in Lake Park. Preregistration required; this is a chance for the BOT to connect with our Sources of Authority. (Jane)

Board covenants are signed and uploaded to Dropbox. (Jane)

Need a Board liaison to work with the FUSM Nominating Committee (Jane); Mark Miller volunteered.

Please fill out monthly BOT self-assessment survey. (Jane)

### **Adjournment**

Motion: Mike made the motion to adjourn at 8:07 pm/Ben seconded/unanimous.

**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, November 23rd, 2021, 6 PM