

**First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee**  
**Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**April 26, 2022**

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

The meeting was conducted with some people attending in person and others joining via video conferencing (Zoom). The meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Ben LeFort.

**Policy 4.3 – Staff Compensation & Benefits for 2022-23 (Rev. Jennifer)**

Rev. Jennifer provided four options (ranging from no increase to varying degrees of increase to account for cost of living and coming closer to meeting UUA guidelines for compensation in our geographic location for our congregation size) for staff compensation changes.

There was much discussion, including the question, “How much of a deficit is acceptable in the budget?” Concerns expressed were: 1) retention of good people; 2) losing people and the cost associated with replacing them at possibly higher cost; 3) inflation; 4) possible cost of having critical vacancies at a time like this and that if there is any time that we would want to carry a deficit, it is now. The Board did not support the no action option.

Motion: To endorse the option that proposes minor increases in compensation recommended for the 2022-23 church year (total of about \$21,000). Tony moved; Jane seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Monitoring Policies 4.4 (Financial Planning and Budgeting) & 4.5 (Financial Condition) (Jean and Noreen)**

Jean said that the projected income decreased by \$10K, due to lower pledge amounts, and there was an increase of \$40k in expenses, due primarily to higher FUSM health insurance costs, as well as some operational expense increases.

The question was raised, “Is the current budget an anomaly or is this the future of the budget going forward?” Noreen replied that it depends on pledges received; however, most expenses are level.

Rev. Jennifer said that people will eventually return to services and become engaged again. However, she warned that often in capital campaign years, there is less of an increase in pledges, as people are essentially doubling their giving. She also mentioned the effects of generational wealth giving and that the baby boomer population, for instance, is growing older, their lives are changing, and eventually they are dying, which all influence giving.

There was a question on the sabbatical fund. Jean advised that \$50k was approved and that it accrues at \$5k each year.

A question of urgency for structural deficit was asked. Jean replied that income has not kept up with expenses. Tony expressed appreciation for the work that Jean and Noreen do.

We decided not to vote on the budget tonight but will vote on it at the board meeting in May.

Noreen expressed optimism for future market conditions and the positive effect that may have on investments. It was noted that pledges are coming in ahead of budget.

Rollie noted that there seems to be a continuation of what we have been doing—there seems to be no deviation; we are not in financial jeopardy, and we are following Monitoring Policies 4.4 and 4.5. Noreen said that, overall, we have had a good year financially. Mark thanked Noreen for the work that she does in providing us with reports with clear perspective. Rev. Jennifer acknowledged that the pledge campaign, albeit flat, went well, and that a flat pledge drive is good in comparison to how some other congregations are faring in the pandemic.

Motion: We are in compliance with Monitoring Policies 4.4 (Financial Planning and Budgeting) & 4.5 (Financial Condition) and that the Senior Minister and staff are in compliance, as well. Rollie moved; Pat seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Rollie expressed enthusiasm in hiring Celia Groshek, as FUSM nursery coordinator.

Motion: To approve the minutes of the March BOT meeting with minor changes made by Tony in real time. Jane moved; Tony seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **General Assembly Delegate Nominees (Ben)**

Bruce Wiggins asked the BOT to approve (6) delegates to General Assembly (GA). Rev. Jennifer noted that the board can dictate to the delegates how to vote on items at GA or can allow delegates to vote on their own accord. Rollie does not recall that the BOT has ever told GA delegates how they should vote.

Rev. Jennifer said that a Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) by-law like Article II (but not the same) will be voted on this year at GA. We will discuss this more at our May board meeting. Deb Solis will attend as staff. Rev. Kimberlee plans to attend as a ministerial delegate.

Motion: To approve the following slate of delegates to GA: Jeanne Durnford, Rollie Hanson, Jessie Moffat, Jeri Percy, Terry Wiggins, and Bruce Wiggins with the addendum that Rev. Jennifer and Bruce Wiggins can add members as they see fit. Pat moved; Mark seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Annual Meeting Planning and Agenda (Jane & Ben)**

Jane will moderate the annual meeting. Tony will be the note taker. There may be a run through meeting for presenters. Strategic Planning and Pledge drive reports will be a part of the meeting. Ben and Mark will cover technical aspects for Zoom participants.

### **Proposed BOT Officers (Ben)**

Ben presented the proposed BOT officers for the 2022-23 church year which are: Ben LeFort – President; Patricia Geenen – Vice President; George Bledsoe – Secretary; and Tom Briscoe for one more year as Treasurer. Strategic Planning Team BOT representative will be determined over the summer.

**Consent Agenda: Sr. Ministers Report (Rev. Jennifer)**

Motion: To accept the consent agenda. Tony motioned; Rollie seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Other Business**

Mark presented the name of the Nominating Committee's new nominee, Ann Alexander.

Motion: To nominate Ann Alexander to the Nominating Committee. Mark motioned; Tony seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Reverend Jennifer will be in sabbatical starting in mid-February 2023.

**Executive Session: Senior Minister Performance Evaluation & Compensation (Jane)**

The Board discussed a change to the Sr. Minister's compensation in light of the Senior Minister's performance evaluation. How long has the SM been at the current compensation level? Answer+ at least several years. Our SM's salary is below UUA guidelines. It was noted that it may be unhealthy to go long periods of time without an increase in the SM's compensation.

Motion: To give the SM the same proposed COLA increase as staff members. Pat motioned; Mark seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment** at 8:06 p.m.