

**First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee
Minutes of the Meeting of Board of Trustees**

Tuesday, August 27, 2024

Present: Stacy Koenen (President and Meeting Chair), Mark Chambers (Vice President), Joe Riepenhoff (Secretary), Sarah Richards (Recording Secretary), Dana Brooks, Amy Wilbourne, Elizabeth Hayes, Ryan Pawlowski.

Via Zoom: Noreen Gilbertsen, Steve Sieck

Also Present: Jennifer Nordstrom, Jean Johnson

Not Present: Stacey Thieme

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM

1. **Opening Sequence** (Stacy)
2. **Review/Consent Agenda** (Stacy)
Minutes of May 16, 2024, Meeting
Minutes of Short BOT Meeting to elect officers
Monthly Staff Change Report

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda, with Minutes of Short BOT Meeting removed and Monthly Staff Change Report removed.

Moved: Mark; Seconded: Joe

Passed Unanimously.

3. **Review Monitoring Schedule** (Stacy)

Motion to adopt Mixed monitoring schedule as written and presented by Stacy.

Moved by Joe; Seconded by Dana

Passed Unanimously.

Discussion: There are certain Policies/Ends on the monitoring schedule that cannot be moved/changed. Stacy presented three options for a revised Policy Monitoring schedule. A few questions were asked, and details were clarified. The “Mixed schedule” is preferred by Rev. Jennifer.

4. **2023-24 Fiscal Year Q4 Financial Report** (Noreen)

Discussion: Acknowledgement of new Board members and inclusion of “big picture.” Noreen stated that FUSM’s financial position currently is not in a sustainable spot, much like the past few years. Total assets almost \$3M. Income Net of Operations is \$165,000 (difference between income and expenses). FUSM continues to be very fortunate to be able to close the gap by taking what we need each year from the General Fund (investments in UUCEF), but this is not sustainable.

A question was asked about where cash reserves are shown in the financial reports. Jean explained that cash reserves are shown in the two CDs that are the non-Endowment CDs. Last year, with Board approval, we moved half the funds from Krug to replenish our Capital Maintenance Fund. Overall, we did better than what we budgeted for, but we need to continue to improve.

5. Policy Monitoring (Stacy)

Motion, based on the evidence presented, to determine compliance with policies 4.4 and 4.5.

Moved by: Ryan; Seconded by: Dana

Passed Unanimously.

Discussion: Background was provided for new Board members about the policy monitoring language as well as a summary of policies 4.4 and 4.5, pertaining to Financial Planning / Budgeting and Financial Condition & Activities, respectively. Questions from new Board members were answered by Jean and Noreen.

6. Nelson Kading Bequest and Weiss Gift – Communication and Planning (Jennifer)

Rev. Jennifer informed trustees that we have a huge windfall from the Nelson Kading Bequest. FUSM is the beneficiary of one half of \$1.2M. Rollie Hanson has been acting on behalf of FUSM as probate lawyer. From the Weiss family, we have received a generous donation of \$100K. It is now up to the Board to decide how we want to use these funds. Rev. Jennifer has provided information about the previous Board’s policies regarding short-term, medium-term, and long-term projects. Jennifer recommends considering a high-profile capital (not program) medium-term project for the reasons outlined in her report.

Communications are needed to the congregation very soon. Jennifer has outlined a draft communications plan, including holding all of this in confidence until Sept. 26 when there is planned a full congregation e-blast.

In the next month, the Board should determine priorities and spending caps.

Short-term project could be to fill the gap and award staff bonuses.

Medium-term project could be a capital project – the Board could consider A/C in Sanctuary and/or Common Room.

Long-term project could be to put significant funds in the Endowment Fund.

Board members have requested a report from Rollie Hanson about the specifics of the Kading Bequest. Board agreed tonight to investigate options for high-profile capital medium-term

projects. Board agrees to come to September meeting ready to discuss specific capital projects and decide how to move forward.

Motion to approve Staff Compensation Option B as outlined in Rev. Jennifer's report with use of Weiss Gift funds.

Moved by: Joe; Seconded by: Mark

Motion withdrawn/tabled based on desire for additional information about the tax implications of bonuses for staff. No vote at this time.

7. Anti-Racism Update (Amy & Sarah)

Update: New AR Team members as of August 1 include: Janine Chambers, Maree Britt-Sharpe, and Alexis Fielek. At their August meeting, AR Team members reflected on the Juneteenth service and prepared for the AR Team training on August 22.

Upcoming events include: the movie *Bad River* will be shown Oct. 13. It is requested and recommended that Board members attend the movie screening. On Nov. 24, Wisconsin Poet Laureate Dasha Kelly will lead an interactive and engaging workshop at FUSM.

Motion to begin BLUU Box subscription and pay for it with Board of Trustees' discretionary funds.

Moved by: Sarah; Seconded by: Joe

Passed: Unanimously.

Discussion: Paying for the BLUU Box would reflect our values and would help support the AR Team. Highlights from our learnings can be included in our monthly Chanticleer article, *Splinters from the Board*, to increase transparency and visibility of the work. Using BLUU Box would enable us to form an additional connection with our Sources of Authority.

8. Senior Minister Report (Jennifer)

Rev. Jennifer highlighted several points of her written report, including: the robust flow of visitors this summer and upcoming Journey to Membership class; Social Justice Council and Defend Democracy team preparing for shared priorities related to upcoming elections; and upcoming events related to voting, climate change, Indigenous Peoples' Sunday, and more, which are summarized at end of her report. Jennifer will be gone Sept 3-6 and completely off-line for personal reasons.

9. Housekeeping and Retreat Follow-up (Stacy)

Board meeting and agenda setting dates have been set and responsibilities have been outlined. Contact info has been shared. The role of Liaisons to the Board was reviewed, to include that liaisons give a brief report at monthly Board meetings.

Board liaisons have been designated as follows:

Anti-Racism Team: Amy

Nominating Committee: Ryan

Endowment Fund Trustees: Mark & Joe

Feast for Funds: Sarah

Task Force groups are as follows:

Survey team/ Engagement with Sources of Authority = Dana, Stacey

Ends = Joe, Stacey, Stacy

Role of Treasurer = Ryan, Stacy, Mark

Youth Representative = Elizabeth, Stacey, Sarah

10. Other Business

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58PM.