

First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee
Minutes of the Meeting of Board of Trustees
Tuesday, September 13, 2025

Present: Mark Chambers (Meeting Chair), Kathy Donius (Recording Secretary), Stacy Koenen, Deborah Conta, Andrew Whitver, Stacey Thieme,

Attending via Zoom: Ryan Pawlowski, Dana Brooks, Elizabeth Hayes

Also Present: Rev. Jennifer Nordstrom

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 pm

1. Opening Sequence (Deborah)

2. Review/Consent Agenda (Mark)

Moved to approve the consent agenda, August 27, 2025 Meeting Minutes with spelling corrections and September 3, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes.

Moved: Stacy Koenen, Seconded: Kathy Donius

Passed: Unanimous

3. Policy Monitoring (Mark)

Motion: To Approve updates to Policy 4.1 Relationship with Congregants

Moved: Stacy Koenen, Seconded: Stacey Thieme

Passed: Unanimous

Motion, based on the evidence presented and subject to a further report to the Board in March 2026 to approve compliance with updated Policy 4.1.

Moved: Stacy Thieme, Seconded: Andrew Whitver

Passed: Unanimous

Work currently is being done regarding a proposal to install an integrated fire prevention and emergency communication system and the development of the Safe Congregation Plan. The Board also requested that a procedure be developed that would be followed if a data breach is reported under the Database Software Security Policy. In approving compliance with Policy 4.1, the Board asked for a report on these outstanding items at the March 2026 Board Meeting.

4. Material Deviation for External Audit: New Employee 4.5.2 (Jennifer)

Motion to approve a material deviation to allow for an external financial review.

Moved: Ryan Pawlowski, Seconded: Andrew Whitver

Passed: Unanimous

In 2022, in connection with Policy 4.6.2, the Finance Team recommended to the Board that a comprehensive review of financial procedures be undertaken every five years or when key personnel changes, and that an audit be conducted when a concerning incident occurs. An external review was conducted in 2016. Such an external review is not included in the budget for the current church year but is indicated given the time that has elapsed since the last external review, the recent retirement of Rev. Dena McPhetres and the upcoming retirement of Director of Administration Jean Johnson

5. Housing Allowance: Kimberlee Tomczak Carlson (Mark)

Moved: Andrew Whitver, Seconded: Deborah Conta

Passed: Unanimous

6. Memorial Trust Fund: Closing and transfer to FOF Endowment (Ryan)

Moved: Deborah Conta, Seconded: Andrew Whitver

Passed: Unanimous

Ryan Pawlowski and Andrew Whitver will be working with the finance team to develop and execute on the step plan to close the Memorial Trust Fund and transfer the funds to the Forge Our Future Endowment. Although there is not a pressing deadline to complete this transfer, the Board hopes to conclude it by the end of the 2025-26 church year.

7. Fire Alarm System Update (Rev. Jennifer)

8. Air Conditioning System Update (Rev. Jennifer)

Rev. Jennifer updated the Board on the efforts of the Building and Grounds Committee to review plans and options and secure quotes for an integrated Fire Detection and Emergency Communication System and for the installation of air conditioning in the Gathering Room and the Sanctuary. The Board briefly discussed the necessity of the integrated system and the desirability of an air conditioning system and plans to meet with the subject matter experts that are working on these projects and review both proposals further after the quotes have been obtained.

9. Senior Minister Report (Rev. Jennifer)

The Administration Team worked hard to prepare for ingathering Sunday. Attendance at ingathering Sunday was strong and attendance in our Sunday Faith Formation Program for children and youth also swelled in September. Rev. Chris Long has been settling into his life here in Milwaukee and into his position. The Irma Morter Lecture team will welcome poet James Crews to First Church on September 27 and 28. The Anti-racism Team has moved its uncovering implicit bias workshop to October 26 so as not to conflict with the workshop being given by Menominee musician and storyteller Wade Fernandez on October 12 (Indigenous Peoples Sunday).

10. Feast for Funds: BOT Entry

The Board event will be in early February. Stacy Koenen will get the information to Scot Henry for the Silent Auction program.

11. Task Group Follow-up (Mark)

Board members are working on their assigned task groups. Nothing more new to report.

12. BOT Housekeeping (Mark)

The Board's BLUU (Black Lives of Unitarian Universalism) box subscription has not lived up to expectations. Dana will review with the Anti-Racism team and a decision will be taken in October regarding continuing it.

13. Other Business

None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm