**First Unitarian Church of Oakland**

**Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting**

**November 22, 2016, 7 P.M.**

*Present:*

*Board Members:* Rev. Jacqueline Duhart (ex officio), Laurel Egenberger, Michael Fitzhugh, Janet McFarland, Kenji Oshima, Lisa Rosene, Emily Stoper, Claudine Tong, Suzanne Van Houten, Kris Wedding Crowell (Chair)

*Absent:* Micheas Herman

*Visitors:* Bill Blakely, Donna Fujioka, Linda Hodges, Mark Watanabe

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. There was an opening reading and chalice lighting.

# Consent Agenda

On a motion by Lisa, seconded by Suzanne, the Board unanimously approved the consent agenda, which included Approval of the agenda and Congregational Approval of Sponsorship for Becky Leyser as a candidate for ministerial fellowship with the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Notification of Actions Taken Since Last Meeting

Approval of October 2016 Minutes (by email)

Approval by Steering Committee of $5000 in the Board’s Designated Account for Facilities Repairs to be Transferred to Facilities Manager Budget for Remainder of 2016

Decision by Steering Committee to Stop Paying for a Third Parking Space in the Valva Lot

Ministers’ Reports

Rev. Jacqueline offered the following comments in her role as Interim/Developments Minister:

“1.  Language used in the minister's contracts seems to be have created tension points - especially the phrase "coordinating teams.”  Rev. Sheri and I are inviting ministry teams to share in the work of ministry. Maybe our contracts need to be amended to reflect this.

“2. Language used in my contract and language used with the Collaborative Leadership Model that we are testing for one year seems to communicate that Rev Sheri and I are responsible for ALL programs.  Rev. Sheri and I do not have the capacity to manage ALL programs.  Retreats is one example of this.  We need to revisit contract language and clarify intent and current ministry needs/responsibilities.

“3. The current ET is ineffective and ties up valuable church resources. It longs for renewed purpose and direction. It is the BOT responsibility to evaluate the current need for an ET or something similar and to give it life. I recommend that we a focused conversation about the administrative structures that First Unitarian Church of Oakland needs NOW to shape it for its FUTURE.”

Rev. Jacqueline also mentioned that Rev. Sheri’s report, which was submitted in writing, bemoaned the difficult of obtaining volunteers to do all the many tasks.

President’s Report

Kris commented that during her 3 years on the Board she has appreciated having a partner team in the ET.  She also reminded the Board that, since it would be voting to approve the budget during the December meeting, members should use the time between now and then to familiarize themselves with the budget and to prepare themselves to prioritize expenses.

Executive Team Report

Linda Hodges referred everyone to an earlier letter from Linda Propert Sanford explaining her resignation from the ET.

She mentioned that Gail Schulz has resigned as the church’s stocks manager and that she has taken over the job of selling and recording stocks donated to the church, hopefully with help from Lisa Rosene and Molly Hermes.

Stewardship Report

Janet reported that we are about halfway to our goal of $500,000 in pledges, with a little over half the congregation having pledged. She questioned the accuracy of the list of members, but will soon ask Board members to make phone calls (from an improved list) reminding people to pledge. Automatic monthly withdrawals from people’s accounts will continue automatically, but it is important to contact people with this arrangement to get their permission for continuation and perhaps an increase. There will be a celebration on Dec. 4 of the success to date of the stewardship campaign, while efforts to obtain more pledges will continue afterward.

Selection of New Board Member

Laurel moved and Janet seconded approval of Kate Lenhardt to join the Board. Motion passed unanimously. Kate will serve from January 2017 to March 2018, replacing B Avalon, who resigned.

Approval of 2016 Health Benefits for Hodges Family

Emily moved and Michael seconded a motion to approve payment of health benefits for the month of December to Church Administrator Linda Hodges and her family. The motion passed unanimously. The amount, $1161.09, required Board approval because this expense was not in the 2016 budget.

Generosity Team Charter

Emily made and Janet seconded a motion to approve the proposed charter of a 3-member Generosity Team, which would work year-round to take a variety of actions to cultivate generosity in the congregation and to assist with fund-raising campaigns and events. Emily proposed amending the draft charter to add the phrase “take other actions as needed to cultivate generosity in the congregation.” After some discussion, the motion was defeated 3-4, with 2 abstentions. The main reason was reluctance to create a new team in view of the perceived shortage of volunteers to staff existing teams and committees. However, one of the “no” votes came from someone who felt the issue should be discussed more between meetings and another “no” vote came from someone who thought it was untimely to create the new committee during the stewardship campaign.

Plans for Revision and Renewal of Church Vision

This task, which is an important part of the church’s preparation for a new minister, will begin in the fall, according to Rev. Jacqueline. The mission and covenant will also be revised and renewed by the congregation.

Recommendations for Revisions to Church Bylaws

The Board went over a number of proposed changes to the Church Bylaws. The following changes were suggested:

Article II, Sec. 1 should read “The First Unitarian Church of Oakland shall be a member of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Since it is a congregational church, all power to act, unless otherwise specifically delegated in these Bylaws and Constitution, shall reside with the congregation’s membership when duly gathered in accordance with these Bylaws.”

Article II, Sec. 2: The word “ailing” should be replaced by “calling or hiring.”

Article IV, Sec. 1 should read “Subject to the criteria set forth in this Article, membership is open to any person 18 years or older or who has completed the Coming of Age program. All members must be sympathetic to or in accord with the purposes and the mission of the church and its values.”

Article IV, Sec. 2 and 3. There was considerable sentiment that the requirements for “member” (Sec. 2) and “voting member” (Sec. 3) should be the same and therefore that the two sections should be merged, so that there would only be one kind of member. Perhaps the requirements for membership should be a minimum pledge of $100 (or ministerial waiver, following Church policy to be specified elsewhere) and/or x number of hours of service to the church.

Article IV, Sec. 5. The provision to ask a member to resign has been invoked on several occasions in the past. Perhaps the words “out of covenant” should replace “out of agreement with the Mission and Ends Statements.”

It was suggested that the words “and Ends” should be deleted from this Article and throughout the Bylaws, since the Board no longer develops “Ends,” which are associated with the policy governance system that the Board no longer follows.

The Board will not give final approval to changes to the Bylaws, which can only be done by the congregation, but it will approve a set of recommended changes. There was insufficient time to complete the review of the changes. Laurel will redraft the sections mentioned above, so that this work may be completed at the next meeting of the Board on Dec. 20.

Closing

Donna Fujioka offered a process monitoring report.

Mark Watanabe, a new member who has belonged to many other UU churches, offered comments comparing our Board meeting to those at other churches.

Laurel offered closing words.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Stoper, Secretary