

**First Unitarian Church of Oakland  
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

August 23, 2020, 12:00-2:30 pm, Zoom

## Our Mission

We, the members of the First Unitarian Church of Oakland, unite to build a beloved community within and beyond our walls. Guided by individual conscience and wisdom from many sources, we gather in worship and service to nourish the spirit, work for justice, and celebrate the divine in all.  
– Adopted by the congregation on March 18, 2019

<b>Present:</b> Rinda Bartley, Hester Green, Tara Noone, Alanna Kelly, Meri Lane, Rev. Theresa Soto, Steve Thomasberger <b>Absent:</b> Dan Wright, Kathy Radez <b>Guests:</b> Bill Blakely, Leslie Brandt, Bev Smrha, Judith Hunt, Noemi de Guzman	
<b>Timekeeper:</b> Steve and RACI chart <b>Process Monitor:</b> all <b>Minutes:</b> Meri	<b>Opening Reading:</b> Tara <b>Closing Reading:</b> Rinda <b>Communication Facilitator:</b> Alanna

Time	Duration	Item	Name
12:00	15 min	Open Comment Period All members and friends welcome. 3 minutes per speaker.	<i>Alanna/Steve</i>
Minutes for Open Comment Period: Leslie Brandt in favor of year round stewardship; willing to be assigned to any month, e.g., July which may be less active; some folks will wait until year end to know what they can give; Leslie hopes that groups are mixed by giving/income level - not \$ segregated. If handled well, it is a growth opportunity to demystify talking about money in small groups Bill Blakely says year round stewardship has pros and cons with change of work load Bev Smrha thanks board for welcome and availability of agenda to congregation.			
12:15	5 min	Chalice Lighting and Opening Reading	<i>Tara</i>

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*Note: Board's six Priorities: Items should be put on the board agenda and time allotted only if they need Board attention this month, as determined by the "Champion". If not, time will be ceded to other priorities, and information can be shared with the Board via a report to the Consent Agenda. Champions should request agenda time by the third Friday of the month by informing the Steering Team of the topic/s to be discussed or decisions to be made. Order of items will be rotated periodically.*

2019-20 goals/priorities included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- #1 Financial Clarity and Health</li><li>- #2 Ministerial Transition</li><li>- #3 JTW Assessment</li><li>- #4 Stewardship</li><li>- #5 Policy Governance Transition</li><li>- #6 Strategic Planning</li></ul>			2020-21 goals/priorities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Financial clarity and health</li><li>- Rev. Soto installation</li><li>- Stewardship</li><li>- Annual Meeting</li><li>- COSM reconstitution</li><li>- Learning goal - within, among, beyond</li></ul>		
12:20	5 min	Board duties this month <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Chalice Chatter Board News &amp; Notes Article<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- August: Meri</li><li>- September: Dan</li></ul></li></ul>			Rinda
Minutes for Board Duties: Rinda: next month September: Kathy - timekeeper; Meri - open and closing readings; Steve - communications facilitator					
12:25	25 min	<b><i>For the Good of the Order</i></b> (questions, brief planning, items outside of the 6 Goals, spontaneous items, items pulled from consent) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Farewell and thank you to Tara</li><li>- Kathy taking a time out until Sept. 15</li><li>- Alanna</li><li>- Meri shift in Board duties</li><li>- Assigning “Champions” to all board goals and initiatives</li></ul> Definition of “ <b>champion</b> ”: A member who reports on projects at board meetings and tracks, reminds and communicates with team members regarding the project between meetings. The champion requests time on a board meeting agenda if needed, submits a written report, or both. A facilitator, in			ALL

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		other words.	
<p>Minutes for For the Good of the Order:</p> <p>Tara Noone: this is last board meeting. Needs to step back due to pandemic and needs of family and parenting, including identity change in understanding of selves as family that needs help. It has been an honor to serve on board through every iteration with extraordinary contributions from every single person board and nonboard alike, e.g., Leslie, Biil, Judith and Bev who are so invested in our community. This was last commitment Tara let go of and regrets leaving with so many ongoing projects personally invested in. Tara hopes to return when possible.</p> <p>Rinda: Kathy taking time out for family reasons, consistent with our earlier commitment that each of us should be able to step back as needed.</p> <p>Meri: stepping down as acting co-treasurer. With the absence of a finance background and despite support of Hester and Finance Team, Meri doesn't feel can develop competence to serve as sole treasurer once Hester terms out March 2021. Hopes we can find someone else who can grow into treasurer position by then. Meri commits to help Hester with special projects to which she is better suited, beginning with commitment to research and develop endowment policies for Aurelia Reinhardt, First Unitarian Operating and Wendte endowments.</p> <p>Alanna resigning due to move to Wisconsin. Moving based on what's best for her family with shelter in place order, family in Wisconsin and cost of living. She plans to leave within 60 - 90 days with no specific departure date yet. Alanna is open to continuing on board as much as possible until then subject to demands of moving and family. Honored to have served; will be here for Sept. meeting, but maybe not Oct.</p> <p>Members of the board shared appreciations of Tara, Meri and Alanna.</p> <p>Steve raised Leslie Brandt's chatbox comment: "Meri, would you stay as co-treasurer if we could find someone w/ more financial acumen to co-treasurer w/ you?" Meri wil consider.</p> <p>Rinda asks for feedback on continued role of Champions; suggests that board let go of projects without champions.</p> <p>Rev. Soto suggests that we need another board person on OT to help with administration during first half of year; Rinda asks if Jodie could be another person to report at board meetings.</p> <p>No process monitor today. Rev. Soto will add form for process monitoring in chat. [Note by MNL - not done by end of meeting, but Rev. Soto emailed form next day ]</p>			
12:50	10 min	<b>Consent agenda (action) and reporting actions taken since previous meeting</b>	<i>ALL</i>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approved July 2020 minutes</li> <li>- Received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beyond Our Walls Key Questions</li> <li>- Operations Report</li> <li>- Ministers Report</li> <li>- FUCO YTD as of 6/30/20</li> <li>- FUCO YTD fin. Activity compared...</li> <li>- Goal 1 Financial Clarity and Health Narrative</li> <li>- Year-round Stewardship Motion and Information</li> <li>- 2020 Annual Meeting Discussion Doc</li> <li>- Board RACI chart July 2020 (Responsible, Accountable, Communicate, Inform)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Board member: <b><i>Motion to approve the consent agenda and receive August reports</i></b></p>	
<p>Minutes for Consent Agenda:</p> <p><b>Steve pulls operations report for discussion later, but otherwise moves to accept consent agenda and to receive documents. Alanna seconds the motion. Unanimous approval.</b></p>			
1:00	15 min.	<b>Minister's Report</b>	<i>Rev. Soto</i>
<p>Minutes for Minister's Report:</p> <p>Rev. Soto notes that when we have had speakers different from dominant culture, they get comments that speakers should be informed more ahead of time about the culture of our congregation.</p> <p>Pastoral care has been hard when physical proximity isn't possible. The pastoral care team continues to adapt, getting info where it needs to be so people know what they need to know</p> <p>Administration: we continue to refine how people get support and who needs to do what. We need to tell truth that we need to address environmental justice concerns and questions of safety plus capacity.</p> <p>Questions: Steve asks re congregational mood. How to assess people's mood? Rev. Soto feels that on any given day 70% of persons are struggling and the other 30% were struggling the day before. Some are struggling for their lives each day, and some a lot. Pastoral care team is</p>			

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tops at reaching out and hearing back. Loss of regular daily life is significant. Two responses: You're not weird when you have feelings of struggle; and 2) we're sticking together no matter what.

Rinda: we are going to ask congregation to step forward to help with things needed to keep the institution going, before, at and after congregational meeting. How should we do that while honoring what people are going through? Rev. Soto's has similar task keeping admin and pastoral teams going with same challenge. Good to ask people to do things they really care about.

Hester: need for more one on one conversations for pastoral care re job loss and unpredictability

Meri: asks re Rev. Soto's comments re congregants' reactions to guest speakers from nondominant culture. Rev. Soto: we should set expectations about hospitality around differences in culture; we can help people understand how to respond when they're not accustomed to things, e.g., with time, kindness, flexibility, paying attention; same practices around multiple truths. We need specific development around that.

Alanna supports Rev. Soto's comments about improving hospitality around differences with purposeful development on how to address situations.

Steve T comments on Operations Team Report:

- First item on report - use of FUCO name; earlier policy too complicated; now simplified to submit request to Ops Team, with assessment and response, because FUCO name should be able to be used if it doesn't violate mission and purpose. Steve will put new policy in Chalice Chatter and add to RACI chart. Rinda supports this.

Steve on Marilyn Beach trust: board should discuss how bequest should be used; no apparent restrictions

Rinda: Marilyn Beach was school teacher and congregant when Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs were at FUCO. Left \$100,000 bequest. Rinda will ask Finance Team to put forward proposal on how to use bequest.

Meri will attend court hearing on Oct. 1 and report back on bequest status. Period to challenge bequests still open and whether estate is sufficient to satisfy all bequests is unknown.

1:15	15 min	<b>* Annual meeting Sept. 20</b> <b>- Planning document</b>	<i>Rinda</i>
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Minutes for Annual Meeting:

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Rinda: only actual business is to vote on slate of board candidates (current acting members Kathy, Meri and Alanna), followed by goodbye to Alanna. Other work: State of the Church, e.g., discuss finances and who we are as a church. Kathy prepared research on holding annual meeting; now in process of following up on planning, e.g., quorum 25% of membership count.

Rinda: Will prepare agenda and revise annual report with info on Individual group updates, revised midyear budget, news on year round stewardship, installation on Oct.11. Announcement will be during service for 2 weeks before meeting as required in bylaws. Service on Sept.20 meeting date will begin with 20 minute morning reflection by Rev. Soto and worship associates, with congregational meeting starting at 10:50 a.m.

Alanna asks re ability to hold meetings virtually - Rinda says UUA has document on how to do this; not prohibited. Will membership be based on last Feb. or August? Ops team not aware of change in membership changes from Feb. to now.

Alanna asks re being voted in and then departing; she would prefer not to be voted in due to imminent departure. Question: do we need congregational approval of acting board members to ratify prior board votes in acting capacity. Alanna requests that this concern be explained during meeting.

Rinda would like video to share at 2 prior worship about Annual Meeting, and attached to Chalice chatter. Will keep votes private via raise hands function on zoom viewable only by person tallying votes.

Annual Meeting Team: Dan and Rinda (with Kathy coming back later as she becomes available)

Meri will look into bylaws re whether virtual meeting allowed

Rinda: moderator suggestions?: Jane Voytek, Wes Radez, Piper (Per Bill Blakely in chat, she's expecting baby mid-Sept.)

Hester suggests we include finance reports for Jan - June 2020 for Annual Report; Rinda supports whatever Hester thinks best, but does want to include midyear revised budget with clarity that there have been no changes in staff compensation or hours.

Steve will send out announcement to request addenda for annual report; also requests something on Transformation Within, Among and Beyond Teams

Annual Meeting champion: Rinda believes Dan will take on this role

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1:30	10 min	<b>Goal #1 Financial Clarity and Health</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Adjusted budget 2020 communicated to office/staff?</b></li> <li>- <b>Is the bookkeeper aware of the schedule of financial reports?</b></li> <li>- <b>Quarter 2 financial statements Q/A</b></li> </ul>	<i>Hester</i>
Minutes for Financial Clarity and Health:			
1:40	5 min	<b>Break</b>	
1:45	15 min	<b>Churchwide Learning Goal selection for church year 2020-21: Transformation Within, Among and Beyond</b> Champion: Meri Teams: Within - Dan, Meri, Rinda Among - Alanna and Kathy Beyond - Steve, Hester	
Minutes for Learning Goals: Hester: Budgeted amount of income is lower than what board approved at July 26 meeting due to discovery of error that had doubled payment in lieu of FICA for minister; Actual deficit for 2020 Jan - June is higher than scaled 6 month approved midyear budget partially due to higher expenses that won't be repeated in 2d half of year (e.g., PPP loan bookkeeping, Shining Start start-up costs); Hester will talk with OT to understand overbudget amounts spent on housing allowance for Rev. Sheri, Stefan's salary, and facilities maintenance. Good news, increase 34,000 from Clarabelle Hamilton fund over anticipated \$27,000. There might be staff cost reductions because may not need funds allocated for ministerial development due to hire of Alex Haider Winnett as p/t RE director. Also, deficit going forward will be decreased by midyear stewardship increases not reflected in June 30 reports.  Steve: OT believes that contribution for Alex HW should stay in budget; doesn't know re benefits  Rinda: We need to confirm that recent \$14,000 payment for denominational support is credited to FUCOs 2020 UUA contribution. Board should revisit 2021 contribution before June 2021 (end of UUA fiscal year); Rinda requests that Hester investigate for next board meeting reason for approx. \$16,000 difference between actual to budget in payroll costs.			

2:00	15 min	<b>Stewardship - Year-round stewardship motion</b>  <b><i>Motion: For the 2021 and 2022 Stewardship Years, UU Oakland moves to a year-round stewardship model as a trial. Recommend that a decision be made in June 2022 regarding staying with year-round (or a modification of year-round) or returning to a traditional “Stewardship Season” model.</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Champion?</li> <li>- Plan for congregational education and recruitment of a planning team</li> </ul>	Rinda
<p>Minutes for Stewardship Committee Proposal:</p> <p>Rinda references material in report and contacts with churches in Palo Alto and Rogue Valley and the UUA re year round stewardship, especially with smaller, more urban congregations like ours.</p> <p>Essential to decide whether to adopt year-round process before recruiting stewardship team.</p> <p>Rinda makes motion. Meri seconds:</p> <p><b><i>Motion: For the 2021 and 2022 Stewardship Years, UU Oakland moves to a year-round stewardship model as a trial. Recommend that a decision be made in June 2022 regarding staying with year-round (or a modification of year-round) or returning to a traditional “Stewardship Season” model.</i></b></p> <p>Alanna thinks we’re in good place to do this.</p> <p>Rinda confirms that proposal will entail online ongoing contributions.</p> <p>Steve wants attention to process of establishing pledge groups; board should work in concert with stewardship team on decision regarding stewardship circles: how to constitute groups, what is minimum activity, what additional steps needed to develop community?</p> <p>Rinda’s concern: other churches have said that year round increases work for administrator. We need to be clear about delineation and documentation of who does what on a year round basis.</p> <p>Vote Taken: 5 votes in favor; none against and no abstentions. Quorum is majority of whole board (which includes 7). Motion is passed.</p>			



Stewardship team recruitment: Rinda requests that each board member come up with one recruit for stewardship team. Board <del>will discuss recruitment further before next meeting.</del> (change to Board will receive materials to begin Stewardship recruitment so that each member will recruit at least one Stewardship Team member prior to the September meeting)			
2:15	10 min	<b>Housekeeping</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- * RACI (indicates who is <b>R</b>esponsible, <b>A</b>ccountable, to be <b>C</b>onsulted, to be <b>I</b>nformed) - Steve</li> <li>- Next meeting agenda items (Rinda)</li> <li>- Calendar review - duties/events for Board participation in the coming month (all)</li> <li>- <b>Confirm date of next meeting - Sept. 22 (Tues) or 27 (Sun)</b></li> </ul>	ALL
<p>Minutes for Housekeeping:</p> <p>RACI: Dan writing board update report for Chalice Chatter</p> <p>Steve: contact programs for annual report addenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Announcement re use of church name</li> </ul> <p>Rinda - record announcement re Annual meeting</p> <p>Annual Meeting Team (Dan, Rinda, Kathy when ready):</p> <p>Everyone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- consider transformation team members</li> </ul> <p>Meri: will research by laws on restrictions on online congregational meeting</p> <p>Rinda asked re scheduling meetings on Sundays or Tuesdays. Most voice preference for Tuesday evenings. Next meeting Tuesday, 9/22 at 7:00 p.m. with comment period at 6:45 pm</p> <p>Other dates for calendar: Annual meeting Sept. 20; Rev. Soto installation Oct. 11</p>			
2:25	5 min.	Process monitoring	ALL
Minutes for Process Monitoring:			

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### Minutes for Process Monitoring:

- Meri notice ambiguity around process for comments and questions from guests after Open Comment period
- Hester: procedure went well, no major glitches
- Alanna: hopes that individuals feel welcome to make comments beyond their presentations; suggests zoom chat window offers good opportunity for guest participation during meeting, but asks consideration of guest participation once we return to non-zoom format
- Steve: went well, understands that other organizations have more difficulty with zoom format; would be good to make clear at beginning meeting ability of participants to speak; bylaws state that visitors don't participate except when board makes exceptions; we can call on them especially when guests offer needed expertise
- Rinda: meeting felt more spacious, less hurried.

Request made to save Zoom chat

2:30	5 min.	Closing Reading and Adjourn	Rinda
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Next Meeting Tuesday Sept. 22, 2020 6:45 p.m.

\* Indicates an item for which additional documents are to be filed on Team Drives / Board of Trustees / Meeting Materials/...

## Bike Rack Items

- ☐ Church name change proposal
- ☐ Professional/Office duties vs. Volunteer duties (Operations)
- ☐ Use of Zoom as a tool to increase access and promote equity

### **Policies to revise or create in the new year:**

- **Update** existing policy on sharing of collection plate.
- **Review and revise** existing policy on the management of endowments
- **Board policy or advisory** to support training locally when possible
- **Policy** on church sponsorship of ministerial candidates and what that entails. Rev. Soto/Dan Wright/CoSM
- **Policy** prohibiting hire of church members, except under certain circumstances
- **Policy around** financial support for community organizations, e.g., Boost

These are pending items for board action, to be considered when setting goals for 20-21:

- COSM reconstitution
- Policy writing and revision

## Ground rules:

- Phones on vibrate,
  - One person speaks at a time (stack process to be used),
  - No side conversations,
  - Start on time and if a need develops to go beyond 9:00, check with the group.
  - Stick to the agenda: items that run long will either be tabled for the next meeting or, if agreed to by the group, to stay late or table other agenda items.
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### Saved Zoom chat from FUCO BOT meeting August 23, 2020

From Bill Blakely to Everyone: 12:12 PM

I'm not going to stay for the whole meeting. When I leave, don't take it personally.

From Leslie & Roxie to Everyone: 12:12 PM

I'd hope that groups are mixed by giving/income level - not \$ segregated. If handled well, it is a growth opportunity to demystify talking about money within small groups..

From Alanna Kelly to Everyone: 12:13 PM

Awesome point Leslie

From Leslie & Roxie to Everyone: 12:24 PM

Thank-you Tara. I honor that you and your family recognize that your health comes foremost.

From Leslie & Roxie to Everyone: 12:34 PM

Meri, would you stay as co-treasurer if we could find someone w/ more financial acumen to co-treasurer w/ you?

From Leslie & Roxie to Everyone: 12:47 PM

Jodie works earning money. She does a TON of work for Fin Team. She has made it clear that she does NOT want to be an OT member.

She is willing to be the FT to OT LIAISON, only.

From Rinda Bartley to Everyone: 12:53 PM

Thank you Leslie

From Leslie & Roxie to Everyone: 01:16 PM

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About what I heard and responded to about Jodie's possible role in taking on an administrative-help role on the OT: I'm sorry for saying something about Jodie's role in a chiding manner and for not taking into account that Rev. Soto and Steve, of the OT, know the limits that Jodie has set for herself. I feel protective of Jodie since she takes on a lot because of her passion for FUCO and its functioning. And, I want us to be sure to look for other people with the skills.

From Me to Bill Blakely: (Privately) 01:18 PM

Bill, I missed your comment during open comment period on year round stewardship. Can you remind me so I can put it in the minutes.

From Leslie & Roxie to Everyone: 01:32 PM

What did Kathy determine about us being able to have a virtual annual meeting, or did she already address this last month?

Do we use the end of August membership? Or, do we still use the end of February list?

Do we need a bylaw change to allow the meeting?

From Leslie & Roxie to Me: (Privately) 01:39 PM

I'd sent info to Kathy to research. Check w/ her. I'll send the email to you.

From Bill Blakely to Everyone: 01:41 PM

Piper's baby is due mid-September

From Me to Leslie & Roxie: (Privately) 01:43 PM

That would be great. Thanks.

From Bill Blakely to Everyone: 02:05 PM

It's 2:00 time for me to go

From Leslie & Roxie to Everyone: 02:16 PM

How do we solicit interim pledges - January to their month?

From yudit to Everyone: 02:19 PM

thanks and farewell