

First Unitarian Church of Oakland Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

August 24, 2021, 6:45 - 9:00pm

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

Present: Daisy Quan, Kathy Radez, Lucia Savage, Debby Kaplan, Claudia Morgan, Meri Lane, Dan Wright, Rev. Theresa Soto Absent: Guests: Noemi de Guzman (COWSM), Janet McFarland (Accompaniment Team), Katrinca Ford (Accompaniment Team), Megan Wachspress (Accompaniment Team), Amy Carlson (Accompaniment Team), Stefan Schneider, Carlton Elliott Smith (Pacific Western Region), Dick Bailey, Melissa James (Pacific Western Region)	
Meeting Chair: Kathy Radez Timekeeper: Claudia Morgan Process Monitor:	RACI chart: Dan Wright Readings: Daisy Quan Communications Facilitator:
Board Officers 2021-2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> President: Kathy Radez Vice President: Dan Wright Treasurer: Debby Kaplan Secretary: Meri Lane 	Board Partners and Champions 2021-2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operations Team: Claudia Morgan Program Council: Daisy Quan Policy Review and Revision: Lucia Savage Nominating Committee: Kathy Radez Software Transition: Dan Wright Stewardship: Dan Wright

Approx. Start	Approx. Time	Item	Name
6:45	15 min	Open Comment Period All members and friends welcome. 3 minutes per speaker. Secretary reads aloud comments sent via email.	<i>Kathy</i>
Janet McFarland: attending as part of the Accompaniment Team to support the grant proposal. Amy Carlson: Also here to support the grant application for our accompanied guest E. who truly needs the grant.			

Katrinca Ford: this grant would be in keeping with our church's commitment to racial justice on behalf of someone harmed by our government's racist actions and policies.

Claudia Morgan: appreciates the Accompaniment Team's patience and perseverance as they've worked through the process.

Megan Wachspress: also here to support the grant proposal. Our freely given support without expectations and conditions would demonstrate our respect for the inherent worth and dignity of our accompanied guest.

Noemi de Guzman: nothing would show our commitment to transformation beyond more than support for this proposal. As a member of the Committee on Wellbeing and Shared Ministry (COWSM) concerned with the well being of our community, Noemi recommends the development of clear policies that will streamline this process in the future.

Stefan Schneider: here on behalf of the Reopening Team. Stefan sent an email earlier to the board president stating that current data doesn't support reopening. The Reopening Team recommends that we don't reopen in Sept. and that we put reopening on hold until the data is right. Due to our preparations, we will be ready to reopen on a week or moment's notice. Per the Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) recommendation, we will have mask and vaccine mandates, but, thanks to a generous gift, we will provide a livestream for persons unable to attend due to the mandates.

Pastor Theresa expresses gratitude to Stefan and others for their attention to reopening.

Dick Bailey: here to observe and to report back to Bev Smrha who isn't able to attend tonight.

7:00	5 min	Chalice Lighting and Reading	<i>Daisy</i>
<i>Feel That</i> , by Gwen Matthews			
7:05	5 min	Welcome and Preview of Meeting Agenda and Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductions - Meeting roles and process - Goals for tonight 	<i>Kathy</i>

7:10	5 min	<p>Consent Agenda: action and reporting actions taken since previous meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions taken since previous meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approved minutes of July 25 Board Meeting via Basecamp - Reports Received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grant Proposal Accompaniment Team Aug21 - Executive Session document 1 - Executive Session document 2 - August 2021 Minister's Report - Operations Team Report - August 2021 – Financial Health and Clarity Report - UUA Endowment Funds YTD July 2021 Financial Activity - Policy review report Aug 2021 BoT - FUCO Policy Analysis - Not on Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stewardship Report 08.24.21 <p>Board member(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May “pull” a doc from consent agenda if they believe further discussion (not already on agenda) should occur during “For the Good of the Order”; • Moves to approve the consent agenda and receive August reports. 	ALL
<p>Motion by Claudia to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Meri.</p> <p>Dan pulls the Stewardship report for discussion during “For the Good of the Order”.</p> <p>Lucia inquires regarding the motion to approve the consent agenda in that board members did not have sufficient time to review all “Reports Received.” Clarification is made that the motion serves solely to: 1) report actions since previous meeting; 2) acknowledge receipt (but not necessarily approval) of reports; and 3) provide opportunity to approve agenda and pull documents for discussion.</p> <p>Motion to approve consent agenda passed unanimously with usual abstention by board president.</p>			
7:15	10 min.	Grant Proposal for Accompaniment Team	<i>Claudia</i>
<p>Claudia: The grant application answers the questions we asked the Accompaniment Team. We learned through the process that we need to clarify policies and procedures, and we appreciate the patience and perseverance of the Accompaniment Team. The Operations Team supports the proposal and believes that the grant application is sufficient.</p> <p>Motion by Claudia to approve Grant Application: Proposal by Accompaniment Team. 8/18/21. Seconded by Lucia.</p>			

Debby: thanks to everyone who got us to this point. The team preparing the proposal did an excellent job. It is important that we follow policies in pursuit of social justice. As we come out of the pandemic, it is important that we speak through our actions what our values are. One way to show seriousness about our values is to make policies, procedures and responsibilities clear.

Lucia: apologizes to the persons who worked on this because we didn't provide good guidance on how this process should work. Question: would it be difficult to provide opportunities for more congregants to engage in this particular work?

Janet McFarland responds on behalf of Accompaniment Team regarding the number of congregants already engaged: the core Accompaniment Team (Janet, Noemi de Guzman, Katrinca Ford, Megan Wachspress and Amy Carlson), plus the 6 member second circle: Nancy Breslin, Helen Duffy, Sherry Weston Vigil, Claudine Tong, Emily Stoper and Leslie Brandt. Plus Dick Bailey invited people to give to this cause for his birthday celebration. Also, Ann Thompson. We have also received \$500 in donations from the congregation and have more ideas, but need to be respectful. We have, e.g., put notices in the listserv and Chalice Chatter regarding the opportunity to hire E. for housekeeping.

Lucia clarifies, however, that her question concerned whether the Accompaniment Team is prepared to respond to congregant interest in opportunities to serve via the Congregational Accompaniment Project for Asylum Seekers program.

Meri: states that her father escaped Japanese American internment due to the accompaniment of people of faith from the American Friends Service during World War II. After Executive Order 9066, they helped him flee the evacuation zone to Salt Lake City where they met his train and helped find him a place to stay and work as a hospital orderly. He then saved enough money to travel to Philadelphia, the home of the Quakers, where they helped him continue his medical school education. My family has never forgotten their accompaniment. This is the work that people of faith can do for persons harmed by racist government actions. Thanks to the Accompaniment Team for continuing this work.

Unanimous vote to approve the [Grant Application: Proposal by Accompaniment Team, 8/18/21](#) with usual abstention by board president. Motion passed.

7:30	35 min.	Executive Session	<i>All</i>
Board members and Pastor Soto went into Executive Session, requesting others to wait in the Zoom waiting room for 30 min. No decisions were reached during the Executive Session.			
8:05	10 min.	Minister's Report	<i>Rev. Soto</i>
<p>Pastor Soto refers board to items in Minister's Report.</p> <p>Dan: appreciates Jodie and Claudia who did a wonderful job managing operations during the summer. Bill Blakely also helped with mail.</p> <p>Board will send thank you notes to those who kept operations running over summer (to be arranged over Basecamp).</p> <p>Kathy speaks to Pastor Soto's question about how the board will respond to the COWSM's July report to the</p>			

board: the board discussed the topic during our July meeting. We need to work on how the board relates to COWSM back and forth.

Pastor Soto: wants to discuss Stefan serving on the Operations Team (OT) due to the difficulty recruiting congregants. He has wanted to be included in OT meetings.

There is discussion regarding the March 2019 Policy Governance Structure document statement that “the OT will consist of the Church Administrator, the Parish Minister, and one, two, or three lay leaders designated by the Board.” Can paid personnel other than CongAdmin and Minister be on OT?

Dan: let’s not be pedantic about a document needing congregants to be on the OT. Do we need to change the document to get the work done?

Lucia: for policy governance to be effective, structures need to be stable, as illustrated by how difficult it was to get the Accompaniment Team grant proposal done. Documentation and stability regarding who is on the OT is fundamental for the congregation.

8:15	5 min.	Break	
8:20	10 min.	Operations Team Report	<i>Claudia</i>

Claudia: the terms “Executive” and “Executive Team” should be clarified. Claudia also believes that lay persons should be on OT from a democratic perspective, e.g., someone from the Journey Toward Wholeness team could contribute their knowledge about the impacts of OT decisions. Also, the OT should have a covenant about how they work together, what’s important and also how they relate to the board.

Lucia: Policy should be written in a way that is clear to all, including to us. Our paperwork, e.g., should reflect our organizational chart. Claudia suggests that there could be concentric circles of advisors to the OT, but then a smaller executive group that actually makes the decisions.

Kathy: Is there a request to change the composition of the OT or just to bring in persons to attend the meetings?

Claudia: Will pursue the meaning of terms “Executive” and “Executive Team” with the board outside this meeting.

Pastor Soto: The question of whether it would be fine for Stefan to be on OT as an advisor is a different question than whether paid staff should be on OT.

Debby: It’s hard to recruit for the OT, etc. when we’re not meeting in person, something that could, e.g., happen during coffee hour.

Kathy moves to approve Stefan Schneider as member of the Operations Team. Motion seconded by Claudia.

Pastor Theresa: most of the things that happen in OT meetings affect Stefan directly and he can offer great info on the topics. Pastor Soto will offer paragraph for addition to the minutes.

[Here is Pastor Theresa's paragraph as emailed to board secretary 9.6.21:

In considering the composition of the Operations Team, Rev. Soto confirmed that for most teams in Unitarian Universalist congregations, staff members are part of the team. The Facilities Manager and Co-Choir Director Stefan Schneider is a natural addition to the team, not only because of his staff position, but specifically also because the decisions that the Operations Team makes directly affect Mr. Schneider in his work. He is also a good resource for advising as to effective implementation of processes. There are a few open positions on the Operations Team for lay leadership, but they have remained open for over a year. Building operational strength by having staff people who are already accountable lean into the task will allow support of the mission in action.]

Four votes in favor of the motion, one vote against, plus one abstention based on insufficient information, in addition to usual abstention by board president. Motion passed.

8:30	10 min.	Financial Clarity and Health	<i>Debby</i>
<p>Debby: we are managing to stay abreast between income and expenses, even though we don't have detailed info, which is an ongoing problem. Discussions with Shining Star continue, but we may look for a replacement bookkeeper. Their work is delayed and it takes the Finance Team's time to work through the problems. Our full year of UUA dues has been paid. Also, money had not been contributed to our TIAA Cref employee retirement accounts, but that's been corrected. We have enough in reserves to cover several months of operating expenses. We are not in a dire situation. We know what our big expenses will be. We have the ongoing support of our members and our endowments. It's not comfortable to end the year with a deficit but we're in good shape. The Finance Team is magnificent, which gives Debby calmness about our financial situation. If we had a problem, they would know it and they would tell us. We also anticipate forgiveness of the PPP loan. Not meeting in person at least means not having the expense of replacing the furnace.</p> <p>Lucia: Bob Schultz (sp?) died and left a bequest to UUOakland of around \$62,000. It's not known if those are for an endowment or otherwise restricted.</p> <p>Kathy: How does \$20,000 payment to TIAA Cref affect the deficit for this or last year? Pastor Theresa responds that they don't know about the accounting, but the "bottom line" as they see it is that we have \$20,000 less than we thought.</p>			
8:40	1 min.	Policy Renewal Plan	<i>Lucia</i>
<p>Lucia gives her time back to the agenda. Will continue with her plan as previously submitted to the board with further communication via Basecamp and google forms, etc.</p>			
8:41	10 min	For the Good of the Order (questions, brief planning, spontaneous items, items pulled from consent agenda) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monthly Board Tasks for next month - Review Church Calendar for major events that deserve / need Board presence - Next BoT meeting Sept. 28, 6:45 - 9:00. Agenda items? - Review RACI (Responsible, Accountable, to be Consulted, to be Informed) Chart (Dan) 	<i>ALL</i>

Kathy: We will review board trasks, church calendar and RACI chart on Basecamp.

Dan on Stewardship: The Stewardship Team had made plans based on the assumption that the church would reopen in Sept., but that's now delayed. Pastor Theresa is planning small group get togethers in October and November, so the Team proposes that first stewardship groups meet in Nov. so that the first small group meetings aren't about money. Dan will follow up on Basecamp for board input on questions. Meetings might be in person or online depending on covid developments.

Pastor Soto: would like to discuss a hiring proposal on Basecamp, but if unanimity can't be reached online as needed, they request that the hiring proposal be on the agenda for the next board meeting. So there's no need for an executive session now.

Lucia suggests that the question be framed in a way so as to reach unanimity online, e.g., requiring a yes or no answer.

Kathy requests that board members look out for scheduling requests for a Fall Board Retreat in October, including policy as one of the topics.

At Lucia's suggestion, Daisy agrees to communicate with the Program Council about policies and procedures for future grant proposals and plans for using the \$22,000+ in funds in our Designated and Restricted account for Social Justice.

8:51

5 min

Process monitoring*All*

Claudia: apologizes for the way she communicated with Pastor Soto, for "white idiocy". Pastor Soto expresses appreciation of Claudia.

Debby: noted tension during meeting; appreciates Pastor Soto finding a solution to lack of time for a second Executive Session

Kathy: notes that the board typically votes with unanimity and expresses discomfort about the first time lack of unanimity on a motion. Lucia states that transparent disagreement is a sign of a healthy democracy. Claudia agrees.

Pastor Soto: if the vote had been closer to half, they would have asked for a pause.

8:56

5 min

Closing Reading and Adjourn*Daisy*

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.

Bike Rack:

- Report on Children and Family Ministries from Alex Haider-Winnet
- How board can support JTW in 8th Principle educational campaign (August)
- Q&A on GA (August)
- Stewardship
- Software transition
- Leadership development (see 2021 annual report update)