

First Unitarian Church of Oakland Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

October 26, 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: Kathy Radez, Debby Kaplan, Claudia Morgan, Meri Lane, Dan Wright, Rev. Theresa Ninán Soto, Daisy Quan Absent: Lucia Savage Guests: Janet McFarland (Journey Toward Wholeness “JTW”, Justice Team, General Assembly “GA” delegate), Bill Blakely (Finance Team), Dennis Rowcliffe (JTW), Noemi de Guzman (Committee on Wellness of Shared Ministry “CoWSM”), Bev Smhra (CoWSM), Sherry Weston-Vigil (GA delegate), Stefan Schneider (Operations Team)	
Meeting Chair: Kathy Radez Timekeeper: Dan Wright Process Monitor: Dennis Rowcliffe	RACI chart: Dan Wright Readings: Debby Kaplan Communications Facilitator: Claudia Morgan
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 2021-22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>
Bill Blakely relates the sad news that Anna Foss has died. Tamara Hall is in touch with Anna’s daughter and will provide information on a celebration of life tomorrow. Pastor Ninán states that they are also in touch and will include a remembrance in Chalice Chatter.			
Noemi de Guzman celebrates entering our 3rd year of shared ministry with Pastor Ninán and looks forward to continuing work on CoWSM, including work with the congregation.			

Kathy welcomes Dennis Rowcliffe as this evening's process monitor and commits to locating more people to serve in this important role as the task has fallen too often to Dennis.

Stefan Schneider responds to Janet McFarland's questions regarding reopening plans: When the church reopens for services, the building will also open for smaller meetings such as covenant groups, restricted to 15 people at a time, with proof of vaccination and masking requirements. Food will not be allowed. It will be the responsibility of whoever calls the meeting to check participants' vaccination status. We will eventually keep centralized vaccination records that can be checked off at each meeting, but that's not in place yet. Our requirements may loosen up over time.

Bev Smrha is joyously welcomed back to the board meeting.

7:00	5 min	Chalice Lighting and Reading	<i>Debby</i>
Reading from Erik Walker Wilkstrom			
7:05	2 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>
7:07	3 min.	Consent Agenda: action and reporting actions taken since previous meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions taken since previous meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approved minutes of September 28 Board Meeting via Basecamp - Approved motion to approve October 5, 2021 Request to Amend the Grant Application by Environmental Justice Associates - Motion to Review at November board meeting changes to scope and timelines set forth in Policy Review Report presented at August 2021 board meeting - Reports Received: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On Agenda: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report from Delegates to General Assembly 2021 - October 2021 Minister's Report - The Clarity of Hierarchy - Religious Education Staffing Proposal - RE Transition Coordinator, Salary Breakdown - 2021.09 Staffing Budget Proposal - 2021.10.15 Reopening Team Plan Letter - Comments by Lucia Savage regarding Proposal in Oct. 15, 2021 Reopening Team Letter - Not on Agenda: 	<i>ALL</i>

		Board member(s): <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”; • <i>Moves to approve the consent agenda and receive October reports.</i> 	
Motion by Claudia to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Dan. Claudia requests time to discuss the previously approved Environmental Justice Associates grant proposal during “For the Good of the Order.”			
Motion to approve consent agenda passed unanimously with usual abstention by board president.			
7:10	11 min.	Update from GA Delegates	<i>Janet McFarland and Sherry Weston-Vigil</i>
<p>Janet McFarland offers to take questions, but states that the virtual format this year made her attendance possible and demonstrated well the many UUA resources available to our congregation. Janet recommends that everyone view the service, which centered on lifting up the 8th Principle. It was profound to hear Paula Cole Jones say that in all her years as a Unitarian Universalist, this was the first time she felt that the service was for her. Sherry offered input in the Statement of Conscience workshop. We need to back statements with action.</p> <p>Sherry Weston-Vigil was shocked that there was support for a UUA board candidate whose purpose was to oppose the 8th Principle. Sherry would be willing to go again, although this year’s online format was a technical challenge. UUOakland could have a bigger impact on the broader system if more people went to GA. There is so much available that we’re not taking advantage of. Our lack of participation doesn’t help us. We’re re-creating things that have been done by others, and there are more UUs of color at the national level. There were, e.g., workshops that would’ve been useful to the Worship Committee, and Sherry learned about connections between the UU faith and Islam. The board should also grasp what it means to be fully involved with consistent participation. There is, for example, something happening at the Pacific region that isn’t good, and we need to find out more about what’s going on. Things are happening at the national and regional level without our input.</p> <p>Sherry agrees to be available for further conversations at Dan’s request.</p>			
7:21	19 min.	Minister’s Report/Operations Team Report	<i>Rev. Soto</i>
<p>Pastor Ninán requests an Executive Session at the end of the meeting to discuss personnel matters.</p> <p>Pastor Ninán states that with the reopening, worship coordination will shift from Jef Melcher back to them, the worship associates and the music team. Board members should contact Pastor Ninán with worship coordination questions.</p> <p>Pastor Ninán moves to approve reopening plan. Seconded by Claudia.</p>			

Meri suggests friendly amendment to include reference to 2021.10.15 Reopening Team Plan Letter in board packet and proviso to address Comments by Lucia Savage, also in the packet.

Discussion about how to address confidentiality concerns raised in Lucia's comments. Distinction is made that vaccination status is not HIPAA protected information. Pastor Ninán suggests that persons would submit photo of vaccine card ahead of time to be confirmed and entered in record, then photo would be destroyed. Claudia notes that methods to address privacy concerns are an operational matter and not a board level decision.

Amended motion made by Pastor Ninán to approve Reopening Plan set forth in 2021.10.15 Reopening Team Plan Letter, with the proviso that we address privacy concerns set forth in Comments by Lucia Savage regarding Proposal in Oct. 15, 2021 Reopening Team Letter. Seconded by Claudia.

Stefan states that congregation will be informed of reopening plan following board approval.

Amended motion passed unanimously with usual abstention by board president.

7:40	20 min.	COWSM Charter and Membership	<i>Rev. Soto</i>
<p>Pastor Ninán wants a team to focus on the wellbeing and health of the congregation. The team will be focused more on conversations with the congregation than on reports. The proposed team members are Noemi de Guzman, Sarah Letson and Bev Smrha. They have been meeting regularly to support everything we do as a community. In the coming weeks, they will continue to meet to determine next steps and adding members.</p> <p>Motion by Pastor Theresa to confirm Noemi de Guzman, Sarah Letson, and Bev Smrha as members of the interim Committee on Wellbeing of Shared Ministries, pending approval of a revised charter. Seconded by Claudia.</p> <p>Discussion of whether interim CoWSM members should be appointed again after a new charter is in place, as well as adequacy of motion language to sustain interim appointments until completion of nomination process under revised charter.</p> <p>Amended Motion by Pastor Theresa to confirm Noemi de Guzman, Sarah Letson, and Bev Smrha as members of the interim Committee on Wellbeing of Shared Ministries, until approval of a revised charter and the confirmation process under the revised charter. Seconded by Claudia.</p> <p>Pastor Ninán states that CoWSM will provide a prioritized list of nominees for additional members. They are concerned about the revisiting piece; going forward, where possible they would like to avoid revisiting.</p> <p>Amended motion passed unanimously with usual abstention by board president.</p>			
8:00	5 min.	Break	
8:05	8 min.	Update on Healthy Congregations	<i>Daisy</i>
<p>Daisy: there was a meeting with Pastor Ninán and Noemi, so she will ask them to fill in more later. Thanks to everyone who assisted with language in the Statement of Work. As we are near consensus, we've shared the language on Principles, Goals and Background with Rev. Sarah Millspaugh of the Pacific Western Region, with Noemi and Pastor Ninán present. Next steps: Rev. Millspaugh will send a list of potential consultants, and we'll</p>			

all be reaching out about availability. We need to find a process to finalize the Statement of Work in order to send it to potential consultants before next meeting. Daisy hopes to present a proposal for a vote at the next board meeting, but can't commit that it will be ready by then.

Noemi and Bev do not have anything to add at this point. Pastor Ninán looks forward to what will unfold.

Daisy: It's difficult to predict the timeline. There may be a trade-off because the most appropriate consultants, according to Rev. Millsbaugh, may not have immediate availability, while other consultants may be available sooner.

Dan expresses confidence in and gratitude for Lucia and Daisy's work.

8:13	8 min.	Membership list and quorum for special congregational meeting	<i>Dan</i>
<p>Dan: Our bylaws require that: 1) members have made an annual pledge and signed the record book by a certain date to be eligible to vote at the Dec. 12th special congregational meeting; and that 2) we have at least 25% of eligible voting members in attendance to make quorum. Due, however, to our current software transition from Fellowship 1 to Breeze, we do not at present have a practical way to correlate pledge and membership data to prepare a list of eligible voters as set forth in the bylaws. A suggestion was made to waive the annual pledge requirement for voter eligibility, eliminating the need to correlate pledge and membership data, but that would unduly elevate the quorum needed at the meeting. Another suggestion is to reuse the eligible voter list from the March 2021 annual congregational meeting since it's highly unlikely that new members have joined since last March. The laborious process of hand correlating Quickbooks pledge information with our Excel membership list only to yield what is likely to be the same list as the one from last March is unwarranted. Dan therefore makes the following motion as a one-time accommodation. Daisy requests that the minutes include a clear record of the background for this exception to voter eligibility requirements for future reference.</p> <p>Motion by Dan Wright to use the membership list from our 2021 congregational annual meeting for the purpose of counting quorum and verifying voters for the December 12th special congregational meeting. Seconded by Claudia.</p> <p>Motion passed unanimously with usual abstention by board president.</p>			
8:21	10 min	For the Good of the Order (questions, brief planning, spontaneous items, items pulled from consent agenda) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Monthly Board Tasks</u> for next month - Review Church Calendar for major events that deserve / need Board presence - Next BoT meeting Nov. 16, 6:45 - 9:00pm. Agenda items? - Review RACI (<u>R</u>esponsible, <u>A</u>ccountable, to be <u>C</u>onsulted, to be <u>I</u>nformed) Chart (Dan) 	<i>ALL</i>
<p>Regarding the motion to Amend the Grant Application by Environmental Justice Associates approved over Basecamp, Claudia states that it appears that the application was amended so that the money would go wherever Lydia Macy went. Claudia questions the appropriateness of considerations like that in the future.</p>			

Discussion that the grant was amended so that Lydia could monitor the appropriate use of the funds. Another factor was the inability to send funds via check under the original grant application, while the amended application allows UUOakland to send funds via check to the Minnesota UU Social Justice Alliance.

Review of monthly board member task list for November meeting:

Timekeeper: Debby

Readings: Lucia

Communications facilitator: Daisy (Meri cannot manage this role while taking minutes)

Chalice Chatter board update: Claudia

RACI chart review by Dan

Also:

- Organizational work on Dec. 12 congregational meeting
- Shining Star: Debby is happy to work with the Operations team on this. She has requested a meeting with the Finance Team
- Ministerial Evaluations: Kathy and Meri working on process
- CoWSM: board members are requested to provide input on draft circulated via email

Kathy requests that we add appointing a UUOakland delegation to next year's General Assembly to the bike rack.

Pastor Ninán will report on Operations Team capacity in November

8:31	5 min	Process monitoring	<i>Dennis</i>
Dennis heard the board processing potentially delicate matters. It was not easy, but sounded well handled. He did not notice elements of white supremacy culture, although he was looking for them. Dennis welcomes other participants in meeting for process monitoring notes			
8:36		Executive Session	<i>Kathy</i>
Remainder of meeting in Executive Session. Non-board members depart.			
Action taken during Executive Session: Motion by Kathy to approve the Staffing Proposal for Religious Education Transition. Seconded by Debby. Motion is passed unanimously with usual abstention by board president.			

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:

- Timely appointment of delegates to UUA General Assembly
- Stewardship
- Software transition
- Leadership development (see 2021 annual report update)