

First Unitarian Church of Oakland
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
MINUTES

January 24, 2023 6:45 - 9:00 pm

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:

Barbara North, President (*chairing meeting*)
 Debby Kaplan, Treasurer
 Nicole Fitzhugh (*timekeeper*)
 Claudine Tong
 Marilyn McMahon, Secretary

Absent:

Zia Swim, Vice President
 Rev. Ninán Soto (medical leave)

Guests:

Noemi de Guzman, Operating Team rep
 Dennis Rowcliffe, Process monitor

6:45 pm	<p>Open comment period (15 min.)</p> <p>Steve T. and Lucia: Disappointed that the Board plans only the 360° review by COWSM, not the professional ministerial evaluation a group of us recommended, which we see as distinct from the 360° review. Want clarity on what review will be done, by whom, and when. Rev. Soto has been our minister for over three years, yet still no evaluation. Steve asks why communication with the Board has to be the back-and-forth that has been going on for months, rather than a dialog. Lucia mentioned that she has yet to receive the outreach phone call Board planned to make to every church member.</p> <p>Barbara: The Board’s plan is based on our interpretation of the relevant documents (Personnel handbook, Rev. Soto’s 2019 contract, charters of the Personnel committee and COWSM). Accordingly, under our plan, COWSM will conduct a 360° review or “full body scan” of the minister and the congregation. The Personnel committee (once populated) will oversee the lead minister in performing staff reviews. There is no timeline for the Personnel committee reviews, since it is not yet staffed. The Board invited Steve and other to discuss their concerns with us last summer.</p> <p>Corless: I will join any committee who will do the ministerial evaluation. I haven’t heard anyone except the Board calling for a 360° review, while a number of us have called for a professional ministerial evaluation. Why does the Board want the 360° review?</p> <p>Nicole: I support the 360° review. The pandemic altered everything in church life. Many activities were shut down.</p>	Congregation
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	Reviewing our minister in 2020 would have been neither possible nor fair. I support COWSM conducting the assessment described in their charter.	
	Opening reading	
	Welcome and preview of meeting	<i>Barbara</i>
	Consent agenda (Reporting actions taken since previous meeting, and quick items.) MOTION to approve minutes of December 2022 board meeting. (Marilyn; 2nd. Claudine) PASSED.	
	Operations Team report Noemi reviewed highlights of the written OT report. The sump pump needs repair and we are seeking a contractor but they are pretty booked after all the recent rains. Two new members were admitted to the church on Sunday, and two more people plan to sign the book soon.	<i>Noemi</i>
	Budget proposal review and approval Debby shared proposed budget on screen, will send out soon. Biggest issue is staffing after Stefan's retirement. (Deep appreciation to Bill Blakely who has set up a team to handle some facilities task.) Three options: 1. Beef up our rental-seeking capacity, 2. or our membership-expansion capacity, 3. or both. Debby recommends #3 (both). Board discussed whether now is time for taking risk of higher spending for the opportunity of increasing our rentals, which bring income and offer a community service, and/or of expanding our congregation. Our contribution to the UUA as budgeted is less than UUA wants us to give, but we may be able to add the \$7000 budgeted for professional congregational services if we don't use it. Earth Justice Associates' heat-pump project (to apply for government grants to install heat pump, preparing to be a community Resilience Hub) is exciting, but too speculative now to include in this year's budget. Should share proposed budget with congregation, elicit feedback, before Board votes whether to approve in February.	<i>Debby</i>
	Recruiting of Board candidates The Nominations Committee has been seeking recommendations of candidates. With the annual meeting and Board election less than two months away, there are three people currently considering becoming candidates (one "leaning Yes"). The committee is following up additional recommendations. It would be best to have people with board/leadership experience assuming the one- and two-year terms so they can hit the ground running, each perhaps taking on just one task.	<i>Laurel Egenberger</i>

	Barbara noted that the Board is short on experience and continuity, as well as under-staffed. We will have only three (3) continuing trustees, and, with Debby's term ending, there will be none with more than one year's experience. If the Board ends up with fewer than the bylaws' minimum of nine (9) members, we will need to adjust the congregation's expectations accordingly.	
	Prep for Annual Congregational Meeting Debby will reach out to Dan Wright to mentor someone on planning and running the annual meeting (March 19).	
8:09	BREAK (5 min.)	
	Heat pump project / Sustainability grant proposal This will be a big step toward greening our building. But there are many unknowns, so we need to collect questions to pose to Earth Justice Associates, in order for Board to be ready when asked to approve expenditures. Debby be the board's liaison to EJA and will keep the necessary parties informed (Board, Finance Team, etc.)	<i>Barbara</i>
	COWSM staffing, Personnel committee formation - Board champion needed Barbara and available Board members will meet with COWSM next Tuesday. Board champion to Personnel committee needed. Nicole asked Noemi to consider whether it makes sense for Nicole, as OT liaison, to do it.	<i>Barbara</i>
	"For the Good of the Order" (Questions, brief planning, spontaneous items, or pulled from consent agenda) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board thank-yous Laila, for assisting Jef M. with the Christmas pageant (Nicole). Worship associates who did the EJA service on Sunday (Barbara). Those who volunteered to teach and work on OWL program (Nicole). Stewardship, also Stefan – we'll do something special, for ex., thank them in Chalice Chatter, present a potted plant at annual meeting. A congregational appreciation of Stefan before his retirement: Claudine thinks that a June 3 party is being planned. ● Review RACI chart Debby: Ask Dan W. to be mentor for annual meeting, send out budget and make available to congregation, discuss grant proposal with Tom Smith and get answers to Board questions. Barbara: Make list of Board liaison gaps, plan who we'll thank at annual meeting. Nicole: Thank-yous. Marilyn: Meeting minutes, move forward on facilitated conversations, do announcements this Sunday. 	
	Process monitoring comments	<i>Dennis</i>

	Closing words	
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The meeting was adjourned at 8:56 pm and the Board went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.

“BIKE RACK”

- Plan for orientation and trainings for trustees to be elected March 2023
- Policy review and updates
- Mission/Vision assessment per conversation in UUA training earlier this year
- Work with Program Council to focus efforts if staffing for justice work and internal teams remains insufficient to drive our mission and ends
- Check that sump pump is repaired by October