

First Unitarian Church of Oakland BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING MINUTES October 22, 2024 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. <i>Adopted by the congregation on March 18, 2019</i>
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Present: Dave Ruede, <i>President</i> Debby Kaplan, <i>Treasurer</i> Dennis Rowcliffe Evalyn Seidman, <i>Vice President</i> (chalice and readings, task list) Janet McFarland (timekeeper & comms. facilitator) Judith Hunt Marilyn McMahon, <i>Secretary</i> Patsy Wood Absent: Nicole Fitzhugh	Guests: Jorim Rhee, <i>Congregational Administrator</i> Jef Melcher, <i>DRE</i> Bill Blakely for Building and Grounds Jodie Mathies for Finance Team Heather MacLeod for Earth Justice Associates Corless Smith Dick Bailey Hester Green Katrinca Ford (Spark Team)
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Open comment period - 6:45 pm Corless suggested holding a crafts fair on Dec. 8 after worship service, and volunteered to organize it. People would sell baked goods, craft items, textiles, photos, books, or whatever they like. Dave and Judith were enthusiastic. Dave wants lots of donations of baked goods and also suggested donuts and cider. He thought vendors from outside our church community could participate but that the church should receive 10% of their sales receipts. Katrinca spoke in support of Jef's work building our programs for children and families, and of the Spark Team, now becoming a committee. Janet clarified that it would not be a committee of the Board.	<i>Congregation</i>
7:00 Meeting began Chalice lighting and opening reading	<i>Evalyn</i>
Welcome and preview of meeting	<i>Dave</i>

<p>Consent agenda</p> <p>A. Updates on Board activity and reporting actions taken since previous meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved minutes of September meeting • As Stewardship committee, kicked off pledge campaign • Set new dates for the last two 2024 Board meetings: Thursday evenings, Nov. 21 and Dec. 19. <p>B. Quick action items</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Approve final draft of Operations Team charter - As Board members had not seen the version to be approved, this item was postponed until the November meeting.</p> <p>As Dave requested, Jorim will henceforth add the agenda and zoom link to each Board meeting on the church calendar. Marilyn will help her assure that the agenda link works for everyone (i.e., that everyone has access to it).</p>	<p><i>Dave</i></p>
<p>Minister's report</p> <p>Dave reviewed selected points of Rev. Laurel's written report.</p> <p>Rev. Laurel continues to press us to synchronize the church's fiscal year with our program year. Accordingly, the stewardship pledge campaign should take place in February, March, or April, and the annual meeting should be moved to May and include a congregational vote to approve the budget. Jodie suggested that interested parties meet in January to discuss what this requires and how to do it.</p> <p>Rev. Laurel also recommends hiring another person to assist Frank and Jorim in handling rental events. Dave asked Jorim to look at this possibility; she will, along with the Operations Team.</p>	<p><i>Dave</i></p>
<p>Administrator's report</p> <p>Jorim has been working with Rev. Laurel and the Community Connections team (Maria Bielass) to improve the membership process and records and the onboarding experience for new members.</p> <p>There have been two recent break-ins at our building, one through the side patio and the other through the front door which was not fully closed. Jorim is working to retrain renters, congregation, and staff on lock-up procedures and building security. Also working with Bill and BAG team to get all the doors secured.</p>	<p><i>Jorim</i></p>
<p>Treasurer's report</p> <p>Most of the financial report will be given in the budget discussion.</p> <p>Thanks to Hester for compiling all the endowment-funds information into one document.</p> <p>As the Reinhardt Social Justice Endowment nears its threshold for withdrawals, the Board needs to make a plan, including criteria, for disbursing those funds.</p> <p>Dave mentioned that Steve Thomasberger has volunteered to be on a social justice committee, and suggested that the Board meet with interested congregants.</p>	<p><i>Debby</i></p>

<p>Religious Education report</p> <p>The Spark Team is still working on its mission statement and goals, and proceeding toward becoming a committee.</p> <p>Jef refers us to the full RE nUuz (see link in Chalice Chatter).</p> <p>Jef is pulling together a multi-congregation coming-of-age event in the spring, and predicts, “If we build capacity, families will stay.”</p>	<p><i>Jef</i></p>
<p>Operations Team report</p> <p>The OT discussed policy for use of the church by members for memorial services and other life events.</p> <p>There is a question about the relationship of Building and Grounds (BAG) to the OT: Given that BAG is a committee of the Board, it is answerable to the Board and not to the OT. Is that what we want?</p> <p>Dave: BAG takes careful meeting minutes and tracks its work, and shares info with Jorim (who’s on the OT), so the OT is well informed of BAG’s projects.</p> <p>The OT also is working on setting the financial amounts that the OT can spend with, and without, Board approval.</p> <p>Jorim asked who on the Board has keys to the building. (Dave, Janet, Dennis, and Nicole do; Nicole plans to return hers to Jorim).</p> <p>Dave urged adding a (non-Board-member) congregant to the OT.</p>	<p><i>Janet</i></p>
<p>EJA: Application for “BUILT” grant (heat pumps)</p> <p>It’s a good thing that the Board did not already fund the heat pump project, because now there’s a grant that may pay 80% of the costs for two heat pumps!</p> <p>The church has eight furnaces. All eventually will need replacing, and we want to stop using methane (natural gas). We are starting with the ones for the 2nd and 3rd floors of the east wing (where the offices are), so we can heat and cool our staff and tenants.</p> <p>We currently have an application pending for a grant that will help us determine what is needed to become a community resilience hub.</p> <p>We have a bid of \$60,000 for two heat pumps, of which the BUILT grant would pay 80%, making the church’s contribution \$12,000. We would like to add costs for replacing leaky windows, which would add a few thousands to the church share of costs. So we’re asking the Board to commit to paying 20% of project costs if we get the grant, to a maximum of \$20,000. We sent the Board a sample text for the letter.</p> <p>Many pieces for the application – due Nov. 12th – are all in place: the grant-writing team (Heather MacLeod, Reilly Hirst, Sylvia Ndusha) and the project team (Tom Smith, Tyler Compton, and some other candidates).</p> <p>Discussion of the grant program’s purpose: To advance the mission of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and if so how does our project advance our mission? The grant program’s purpose is to help 501(c)(3) nonprofits to stop using fossil fuels. Our use of the money for heat pumps accomplishes both, because it directly reduces our fossil fuel use, and the</p>	<p><i>Heather</i></p>

<p>grant money would free up for our mission some money we'd otherwise have to spend on replacing furnaces.</p> <p>How does the \$20K included in this year's budget figure into this? Jodie: We are needing to spend substantially on facilities needs, so that money has been used for other urgent facilities needs. It was not set aside. (A budget is an estimate, expressing best guesses and intentions about how we will spend money in a given year.)</p> <p>MOTION to approve signing a letter of commitment to provide 20% of the cost of two heat pumps and replacement windows, up to \$20K, if the EJA grant application is successful (Patsy, 2nd Dennis) - PASSED. (6 in favor, 2 absent)</p>	
<p>Stewardship pledge drive</p> <p>We will end the stewardship campaign and have a celebration luncheon on November 3, although we will not have reached our goal yet.</p> <p>Pledges are coming in, and some people have increased theirs. Still, like last year, we'll probably have to keep making calls through the end of the year to reach those who haven't yet pledged.</p>	<p><i>Dave</i></p>
<p>BREAK (5 min)</p>	
<p>2025 budget and priorities</p> <p>Jodie reviewed the status of our endowments, noting that the Wendte Endowment allows the Board to withdraw 4.5% to 6% each year, and that withdrawals can be made from the Social Justice Endowment when it reaches \$250K, which will be soon.</p> <p>Jodie reviewed the 2024 budget against actual income and expenses. Our interest income is higher than anticipated, and our spending has been lower than budgeted, largely due to our previous administrator being part-time for several months. Jodie forecasts that we will end the year with a smaller deficit (about \$9K) than that in the budget (\$37K).</p> <p>The Finance Team has drafted two 2025 budget alternatives. Both include a 3% COLA (cost of living adjustment) for staff, as well as some of the additional RE staffing Jef wants. The facilities budget was increased because we know that there are building maintenance needs.</p> <p>Janet commented that the budget does not include higher pay for Rev. Laurel, which we had hoped to be able to afford, given that she volunteers so many hours of her time.</p> <p>Jef summarized current staffing of our growing Families and Children (or "Lifespan Religious Education") programs. The attendance of children ages 4-10 is increasing, and we'll soon need more staffing so we can split the groups. He desires another hire, of a RE Assistant, and/or a Spirit Games Leader and a Young Adult Facilitator.</p> <p>Our budget team includes some Board members (Debby, Nicole).</p> <p>Dave directed all Board members, in preparation for further budget discussion, to look carefully at Jodie's budget spreadsheets, Jef's report and staffing requests, and the job description for RE Assistant.</p> <p>In the interests of time, Bill agreed to postpone his budget presentation until our November meeting.</p>	<p><i>Jodie, Jef</i></p>

“For the good of the order” (Questions, brief planning, spontaneous items, or pulled from consent agenda) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board thank-you’s – Corless for organizing project of re-upholstery of seat backs (Marilyn) • Review task commitments • Check rotating tasks signups & worship welcome signups 	<i>Dave, Evalyn</i>
Extinguish chalice & closing reading	<i>Evalyn</i>
END OF MEETING	

BIKE RACK (Topics saved for future meeting)

- Program Council
- Posting Board agendas and minutes
- Website maintenance