

*First Unitarian Church of Oakland*

## **Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes**

Tuesday, April 22, 2025  
6:30-9:00 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*

### **Board of Trustees:**

Janet McFarland, President  
Debby Kaplan, Treasurer  
Patsy Wood, Secretary  
Judith Hunt, Board member  
Kate Lenhardt, Board & Ops  
Liaison  
Michael Schafer, Board  
member

Chris Palm, Vice President  
was absent

### **Guests:**

Rev. Laurel, Contract Minister  
Jef Melcher, Director of RE  
Jorim Rhee, Administrator  
Rinda Bartley, Personnel  
Frances Kendall, Sanctuary  
Reilly Hirst  
Jodie Mathies, Finance Team  
Michael Rothhammer,  
Personnel  
Nicole Fitzhugh, Personnel  
Marilyn McMahon, Justice

**6:30 pm Open Comments Period:** (15 mins)

No community members were present wishing to speak.

**6:45 pm “Deep Chair” discussion** (15 mins)

**Rev Laurel**

The theme of this month's Soul Matters was Joy. Rev. Laurel supplied a series of questions about joy that we would address. Each Board member talked about what question they chose and why they chose it.

**7:00 pm Chalice Lighting and opening reading (2 mins)**

**Patsy**

## **BUSINESS MEETING**

**7:02 pm Consent agenda (3 mins)**

**Janet**

March meeting minutes

Rev. Laurel's Report

**7:05 pm Minister's Report (20 mins)**

**Rev. Laurel**

1. Raised issue of choosing half plate recipients over summer months of July & August. Discussion ensued. Rev Laurel will continue selecting the organizations until another process is established.
2. Rev. Laurel has experienced a lag in reimbursement of her professional expenses.  
***Kate on the Finance team will look into what has been submitted and what the status of each report is.***

**7:25 pm Administrator's report (10 mins)**

**Jorim**

1. Continues to work at over capacity. We discussed various ways to relieve her workload.
2. Clark is offering an online training into our systems. ***Patsy will coordinate setting this up should the Board be interested in pursuing this training after our upcoming retreat.***
3. What is needed is to hire a part time tech person to manage these technical issues or if Jorim does it, it needs to be included in her formal job description which would involve removing other current duties she is responsible for.
4. A part time outside rental person has been hired.
5. Zak has been approved more hours and is transitioning to being the room reservations contact person for all events.
6. Jorim is taking three weeks off and leaning on Rinda to help her delegate more of her work and find ways to streamline the job so it's sustainable.

**7:35 pm Religious Education Report (5 mins)**

**Jef**

1. Working to comply with AB 506 which involves live scans on staff working with children.
2. London is becoming the childcare scheduler.
3. The Youth Advisor is leaving so need to hire a new advisor in June. Heather has volunteered for this position.

4. K1OWL program going well.

#### **7:40 pm Personnel Committee (15 mins)**

**Rinda**

1. Michael Rothhammer elected to Personnel Committee.  
VOTE: Patsy motion; Judith 2nd - passed.
2. Completed Jorim's evaluation. Jorim has inherited three jobs: that of Facilities Manager, Administration and Rentals work. Some of this work was done by volunteers in the past but volunteers less available so all this work has been on Jorim's plate and it's unsustainable. Right now Rinda makes 2 requests:
  - a. That everyone in the church, when making requests of Jorim, be sensitive to the workload Jorim is carrying in terms of the timelines Jorim is managing. Find ways to help Jorim juggle all the work in order to reduce the pressure of the job.
  - b. Longer term we need to develop a staffing plan that considers the most important positions that we can add in order to cover the existing workload.
3. Personnel Committee needs a Board liaison who can coordinate their requests with the Board. ***Michael Schafer might be interested and will let her know after Saturday's retreat.***

#### **7:55 pm Break (5 mins)**

#### **8:00 pm Budget Proposal (10 mins)**

**Jodie**

1. We will have a new budget in July 2025 but the final numbers depend on the results of the Stewardship drive.
2. The drive is going well - Jodie has started calling members but we need to call members so we can wrap this up by May 4th.
3. A number of big ticket items are up in the air. One is our property insurance which was canceled so Jorim is working to find other policies to cover this. The new cost is likely to be increased substantially over what we were paying. We are also increasing Rev. Laurel to three quarters time so need to cover that. And professional expenses are rising - we need separate guidelines for non-ministerial staff members.
4. Susan doing a presentation at the UU Music Conference in GA on pop up choir. The Board needs to approve this \$900 item. Janet will ask Susan to resubmit her request for approval.
5. So the plan going forward is to wrap up Stewardship by 5/4 - then produce a draft of the upcoming budget by the May Board meeting so it can be approved and then presented June 1st at the Special meeting.

#### **8:10 pm Sanctuary Project (10 mins)**

**Frances**

1. Wants us to sign onto the national sanctuary movement sponsored by the Sanctuary Team for Human Integrity. This would put us in solidarity with sanctuary teams across the country.
2. We will also offer physical support to other churches that are offering physical sanctuary in terms of providing meals, advocacy and other support as needed.
3. We will also be involved with explicit support to migrants including deportation defense, know your rights, provide advocacy and public witness.
4. Her proposal will be presented at the Community forum after the service on 5/4.

#### **8:20 pm Reilly's Circle of Change proposal (10 mins)**

**Reilly**

1. Reilly is proposing to offer a 13 week Circle of Change group in the fall that would involve 8-14 members. This group has a 13 week established curriculum.
2. Reilly participated in these groups in the past and found them to be very powerful. They are based on the work of Linda Stout, a Quaker, who is bringing groups together across race, class and religious beliefs. Reilly first participated in an 8 week group that was very diverse and that ended up continuing for another two years.
3. The curriculum engenders a spirit of inclusivity based on UU principles 2 and 6 and would allow us to get a clearer vision of our social justice and anti-racism work going forward by empowering 8 to 14 people, creating a facilitation team.
4. The Board enthusiastically endorsed Reilly's proposal.
5. Other church members who are interested in anti-racism work at the church include Ingrid Mittermaier, Lucia Savage, and Annette ??

#### **8:30 pm Preparation for June Special Meeting (10 mins)**

**Nicole**

1. The proposed By-Law changes must be published by May 11th and announced from the pulpit on May 18th and 25th.
2. Nicole volunteering to be Secretary, Laurel Egenberger to be Moderator, and Mark Savage to be Parliamentarian. /
3. We need registration recorders (greeters and online), Bill or Jorim to generate the member list, 3-4 people to be vote counters, presentation of the budget, and a coordinator to organize the food afterwards along with set up and clean up crews.

#### **8:40 pm Lack of Committee Volunteers (15 mins)**

**Janet**

1. There is a lack of volunteers for many committees we need filled including a Safety committee, a membership committee ( Maria to step down in June for hiatus), BAG is trying to get going, and we need a communications committee.
2. It was suggested that since we have a new 5 person Nominating Committee that they could either nominate themselves to serve on these committees or look for

members in the congregation who could step up and serve. Rev. Laurel wants to get the Nominating Committee who she has met with twice to become a Leadership Development Committee in the fall to take on some of these roles.

3. Daisy Quan is also available for administrative work so she might be able to help.
4. In terms of communications, Clark Sanford sent out a comprehensive email about the need for a greater vision for our website - Kate to send out to all of us.
5. Michael Schafer recommended that we might draw from former Board members such as Dan Goss who might be interested in serving. Other former Board members who might be possibilities include Meri Lane and Katrinca Ford.
6. Patsy recommended we look at Carol Layne's organization chart that details all the existing committees and who is serving on them to look at other options. She will send it out to everyone.

**8:55 pm Rev. Laurel's extra time (10 mins)**

**Janet**

1. Currently Rev. Laurel is in the pulpit 2x a month, directs the worship associates including helping to oversee the summer program.
2. Some of the activities she has suggested include doing more Adult RE - developing the Program Council. Is also involved in coordinating with CoSM which is doing neighborhood councils in the fall to assess how the church is doing. From these efforts a transition report will be developed. Rev. Laurel would like to rebuild the Program Council to meet 3x a year.
3. Kate suggests more ongoing executive oversight is needed. One suggestion was to create an executive team. Steve Thomasberger and Rinda Bartley might be interested. Also consider Meri Lane and Marilyn McMahon. Janet suggested taking a look at the governance documents in the governance folder in our Board drive for ideas.

**9:05 pm Upcoming retreat planning**

**Janet**

1. We will meet at Swan's Co-Housing at 9am. It's at 930 Clay Street.
2. Patsy to coordinate lunch - Janet to bring OWL for Judith to participate virtually.
3. Nicole to do onboarding at 10; Marilyn to do google drive training at 11.
4. Strategic planning discussion in afternoon - end at 2:30pm.

**Bike Rack:**

Prep for June 1st meeting

Results of CoSM survey

Finalize By-Laws and distribute

Approve Budget

Who makes the Executive decisions?

