

*First Unitarian Church of
Oakland* **Board of
Trustees Meeting
Minutes**

Tuesday, March 25,
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:

Nicole Fitzhugh, Outgoing President
Janet McFarland, Ops Team Liaison &
Incoming President

Chris Palm, Incoming VP

Marilyn McMahon, Outgoing Secretary

Debby Kaplan, Treasurer

Patsy Wood, Incoming Secretary

Judith Hunt, Board member

Kate Lenhardt, Incoming - Ops Liaison

Michael Schafer, incoming member

Chris Palm, Incoming VP

Dennis Rowcliffe, outgoing

member Evalyn Seidman, outgoing
member

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

Guests:

Rev. Laurel, Contract Minister

Jef Melcher, Director of RE

Jorim Rhee, Administrator

Meri Lane, Social Justice Pat
Banker

Dick Bailey

Bill Blakely

Pat Banker is working to insure that LGBTQ+ immigrants and vulnerable individuals who are living in red states can resettle in a safe place. They have appealed to the local Bay Area UUSC but found it not so responsive. She proposes working with an alliance of Bay Area churches to help provide transportation and housing. Reverend Kevin was recommended as a resource given that, in his anti-racism work, he is working with a number of local churches who might be interested in offering help for this effort. Pat was provided with Rev. Kevin's contact information for next steps.

“Deep Chair” discussion 6:45pm (15 mins) **Rev Laurel** Each of Board members talked about our wind and what was on the other side of our desert (in reference to the fable Rev. Laurel mentioned in her sermon two Sundays ago. Many emphasized the importance of the church community and love as the wind that keeps us going.

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

MEETING

Welcome and preview of meeting 7:02pm (5 mins) **Nicole** Nicole reviewed the purpose of the meeting and key highlights

Consent agenda 7:07pm (3 mins) **Nicole**

Both our February minutes and minutes from the February Executive session were approved:
MOTION to approve February minutes: Marilyn, 2nd: Dennis - PASSED MOTION to approve minutes from the February Executive Session: Patsy, 2nd: Debby - PASSED.

Welcome and install new Board members 7:10pm (5 mins) **Nicole**

Our new Board members, Kate Lenhardt, Chris Palm and Michael Schafer, were all welcomed and installed as our new trustees.

Election of new officers 7:15 pm (10 mins) **Janet**

Motion was made to elect Janet as President, Chris Palm as VP starting May 1st, Debby as Treasurer, and Patsy as Secretary. MOTION: Patsy, 2nd: Kate. PASSED

Kate Lenhardt will be liaison to the Ops Team

Ministers Report 7:25 (10 mins) Rev. Laurel

1. Considering broadening responsibilities of the Nominating Committee to form the Leadership Development Team
2. We need a full picture of our finances in order to prepare for a new minister. *Stewardship for Us* is a program that provides a map to do this. Janet had suggested a viewing party where we could all watch and then discuss.
3. Our Justice Committee is really coming into its own. Question in leadership: should Steering Committee be in charge or leave leadership up to the congregation where the Steering Committee is an umbrella for a series of congregational initiatives. Currently we have an Immigration group and a LGBTQ group which could be under the Justice umbrella.
4. We need a process in order to choose where the half plate donations go. Ordinarily a Senior Minister would make these determinations but this is unclear with a part-time minister. It was decided that it made sense for Rev. Laurel to make the selection for the remainder of the year and then we could come up with a process for the fall. **MOTION: Have Rev. Laurel designate where half plate donations go. Motion: Kate 2nd: Patsy - PASSED**

Administrator's report 7:35 pm (10 mins) Jorim

1. Continues to work at over capacity. Looking for volunteers to help and trying to determine what roles can be downsized.
2. In terms of tech platforms, Jorim needs additional help. Has worked with Clark in the past but he has been less available and help from a contract tech person is needed.
3. Working with Bill to update member list on Breeze. Trying to determine an official list.
4. Need to do an internal audit of church's retirement contributions. Many staff are unaware of these benefits so looking at ways to improve the system.
5. Umbrella insurance policy was renewed.
6. Still working on getting new policy for property insurance. Past vendor discontinued because they are no longer covering historical buildings. Working with trusted agent who is securing quotes.
7. There is a strong need to have signage on church property that designates "public" and "private" spaces to protect those seeking sanctuary (because ICE would need a judicial warrant to enter private spaces). The signs have been created and Ops Team has approved them. They go up this coming Sunday. The main focus of the signs is on "know your rights"

and immigration team is considering doing a possible training. 8. New person hired to provide technical support.

Religious Education Report 7:45 pm (7 mins) Jef

1. On April 26 there is an upcoming Youth Retreat. It came out of the Coming of Age program and the youth retreat done in January. Since not getting enough sign ups have decided to make it for all members of the Coming of Age group. Merit badges will be provided for participants.
2. Started a K1 OWL program.

Human Library Event 7:52pm (8 mins) Janet

1. Leslie Schipa wasn't present but Janet presented the proposal that Human Library would put on an event on a Saturday to bring people together to hear "books" talk about their histories of living with marginalization and difference. The event would be open to the community and Leslie will supply the "books" as long as we can provide Wendte Hall and the Starr King Room as well as snacks and refreshments. They would also appreciate a donation ranging from \$400-1500. We have \$3000 to disperse of Social Justice funds through the end of the year. It was proposed we donate \$500 to the event. **MOTION: To provide \$500 from Social Justice Funds for the event: Motion: Patsy 2nd: Chris - PASSED**

Break 8:00 pm (5 mins)

Personnel Committee 8:05 pm (5 mins) Nicole

In the past the Executive Minister has provided supervision to Head of RE. Jorim is supervised by Rinda as Head of Personnel Committee but the Board has been Jef's supervisor. Michael Rothhammer, a longtime member of the church, school principal who also supervises and advises school administrators, has agreed to assume responsibility for this role. This would give Jef someone who he could collaborate with and get guidance from around his goals for the program. The Personnel Committee is writing a job description for Jef that should be complete by May.

MOTION: For Michael Rothhammer to supervise Jef. Motion: Patsy 2nd: Judith. PASSED

Nicole is stepping up to be on the Personnel Committee.

MOTION: for Nicole to join the Personnel Committee. Chris. 2nd: Michael. PASSED

Social Justice 8:10 (10 mins) Marilyn

There are two separate motions to decide on. The first would approve money from the Social Justice funds for three different expenditures: \$150 for expenses already incurred for poster materials for march on Martin Luther King day, etc.; \$200 for banners on the plaza and \$150 for

emergency kits that we can provide to unhoused neighbors, for a total of \$500. **MOTION: to approve \$500 in funds from Social Justice funds for Social Justice expenditures**
Motion: Patsy 2nd: Chris PASSED

The second motion involved the process for approving the text that would go on the banners that would replace the current Ceasefire banners in front of the church. It was proposed initially that after an announcement at the church this Sunday there would be a table in Wendte Hall where people could endorse the wording they would like. The point was made that this was a narrow sample of our congregants and that an effort should be made to reach a broader audience. So it was decided that the Justice steering committee would delay the vote for two weeks and post a notice in the Chalice Chatter both weeks with the text so that congregants could email the Justice steering committee their vote. The banners proposal will also be displayed in Wendte Hall the next two Sundays. An announcement in the service would be made both weeks to encourage congregants to weigh in. The text would need a two thirds vote for approval.

Donate \$500 to DRUUMM 8:20 (10 mins) Janet

We have an agreement with Reverend Kevin for him to be our representative for racial justice in the work he does. Currently he is doing work for DRUUMM and has requested that we donate \$500 out of our Social Justice funds to DRUUMM so that they can use the funds as they see fit.

MOTION: To approve a donation of \$500 to DRUUMM.

Motion: Patsy 2nd: Chris PASSED

Increase Budget Deficit to bring Staff up to a Living Wage 8:30 (10 mins) Janet

The MIT Living Wage Indicator determines a livable wage by county. Currently for Alameda County the living wage is \$29/hour. This is more than the current UUA salary guidelines. First Unitarian is committed to paying a livable wage to our employees and staff. To get there Jody has provided us with guidelines that will transition us to paying a living wage to all our employees. The following employees will get immediate pay raises: Zach, the other AV tech, London and other Senior Nursery staff, and Adult Nursery Staff. Zach is also guaranteed 15 hours of work every two week period. Jody promises to do a review and adjustment on the status of this in every annual budget.

MOTION: to allow an increase in our budget deficit in order to increase salaries to provide our staff with a living wage and increase Zach's hours

Motion: Debby. 2nd: Judith. PASSED

Operations Team 8:40 (10 mins) Janet

The Ops Team was founded this last year with a limited charter. It consists of Jody, Janet, Jorim, and Evalyn. The work has gone well and they are currently in the process of revising their charter. They have not had spending parameters in the past and want to propose this. Jorim has \$5000 spending limits - the Ops Team could use those same parameters. As Janet is stepping down as the main Board liaison, Kate has agreed to step up into this role. She has attended

meetings and will report next month on a proposed revised charter for the team.

Community Forum 8:50 (5 mins) Janet

We held a Community forum on March 2 to announce the raising of Rev. Laurel's time to three quarters time and to increase pledges in order to have the funds to do so. We are holding another meeting of the membership on June 1st that is a special meeting - like an annual meeting. We will be voting on bylaws changes that have been approved by the Board, reviewing the budget for 2025/6 and the status of pledges to increase Rev. Laurel's hours in the fall. We will end with a big fancy lunch. Debby suggested having performers provide music during the lunch so we'll see if we can find interested musicians.

Board Planning Retreat 8:55 (5 mins) Janet

We need to have time to have fun and get to know each other and also to do some onboarding for our Board members. We can look into where each of our passions lie, decide if we want to meet in the summer, think more about the guidance from Hope for Us delving further into areas of conflict resolution, shared ministry and anti-racism work.

Michael has volunteered his community room at Swan's Market and has reserved the space from 9am to 3pm on Saturday April 26th. Rev. Laurel said she can attend in the morning. So our first retreat is set. Janet asked for volunteers to help plan the event; Patsy and Debby volunteered to help out.

For the Good of the Order Janet

Thank you to Pat Banker for the great translation job they did this past Sunday and for their upcoming work with our church. Patsy

Patsy to contact Leslie to schedule Human Library Event

Extinguish chalice and adjourn meeting Patsy

Bike Rack:

Formation of Leadership Development Committee

Stewardship for Us workshop

Safety Committee

Policy statement from Immigration Group

Proposed revised charter for Ops Team and proposed spending parameters

Prep for June 1st meeting

Results of CoSM survey

Status of K1 OWL program