

Unitarian Universalist Church of Chattanooga

Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting

Minutes, March 21, 2013

Members Present: Wendes Jones, Frank Caperton, Alan Larson, Elaine Hill, tom kunesh, Buck O'Rear, Rev. Pam Rumancik, Elaine Watkins

Absent: Jim Welborn, Nicky Ozbek

Guests: Leslie O'Rear, Linda Helton, Daidee Springer, Greg Oberschmidt

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm. Rev. Pam lit the chalice and gave opening words from "A House for Hope" by Rebecca Parker and John Buehrens.

Check-in asked the question, "What does it mean to live a life of service/how do we serve the community as BOT members?"

tom moved that the corrected minutes from February be accepted. Frank seconded. Minutes were accepted.

The interim ministry report was discussed. Frank expressed concern that the report gives the lingering impression of an adversarial relationship between the church leadership and Rev. Pam's interim ministry. This has been an ongoing topic of discussion since late last fall and the report was revised at least once before it was submitted to the UUA. In its latest form, the report still expresses these concerns but in such a general way that it offers nothing specific enough to be constructive. In view of the fact that the search for a settled minister is about to be launched (slate to be elected March 24), this could be a stumbling block.

Rev. Pam said that the report has a very limited audience at the UUA and is only the first of several. However, as Frank pointed out, the next one won't be turned in until September. Pam maintained that characterizing the conflicts among the leadership is not exaggerated – they represent a deep and long-term set of problems that seems to stretch back several years and will continue unless it is faced up to. However, she acknowledged that there has been improvement since the report was first written, and attributed a good deal of that to the decision of Wendes and tom to meet with Les Kertay last month and hash out some issues. A similar approach to the rest of the Board might be a very good idea.

Buck O'Rear moved that an outside consultant be hired to work with the Board. Elaine Watkins seconded and the motion passed. This was a general resolution to obtain a consultant's services, but it remains to choose the right person, based on qualifications

(specializing in conflict resolution and healthy congregations). Furthermore, it would have to be determined how many sessions and for what purpose – Alan and Elaine W both felt it would be useful to have someone work with the Board in the current church year and then with the new one after it is elected. As to the cost, Pam said the UUA can provide grant money for this. Daidee requested that the transition team be kept apprised of the process.

Pam amended her Minister's report to include the grief workshop held the night before, saying it was successful and would be held again in the fall. She expressed the hope that next time some men might attend, since this session turned out to be women only.

Alan gave a Treasurer Report, saying that revenue is keeping up. Some pledges are now paid in full. Numbers are looking better, close to on-track. If there is a pledge shortfall in the next month or two, it is projected not to be more than 5%. Buck provided a comprehensive report from the Finance Committee.

Wendes conducted a Board exercise, asking us to think about which qualities we most value in Pam, so that we can keep these in mind as the search for a settled minister gets underway. Among the attributes noted were *personable, approachable, good listener, patience, open-mindedness, commitment to social justice, and making Sundays "feel more like church."* Pam reminded us that we should make full use of her interim ministry and consider it a gift to ourselves.

tom kunesh moved that Monique Lewis, Greg Oberschmidt, Wendy Sapp and Elaine Watkins be approved as the DRE search committee (or more precisely, a task force formed to aid the Personnel Committee for a specific purpose). Buck seconded the motion and the motion passed. The updated job description was discussed – Susan Kennedy had suggested some changes to eliminate irrelevant items or things that might cause legal problems, such as physical requirements. The next step is posting the job with LREDA (Liberal Religious Educators' Association), and locally.

tom also gave an update on the Creating a Beloved Community workshop to be led by Mark Hicks. The Production Committee was listed on the agenda, but in Nicky's absence the discussion was tabled, since so far it has been a matter of verbal interest and nothing more.

Next topic was a policy for records retention – how long documents need to be retained, where and in what format. It was agreed that seven years is an appropriate length of time for all but the most vital records. However, Daidee said that she and Lynna Ruth Standridge have been conducting a survey of the files and records that Chris has in her office, and a formal recommendation from the Finance Committee will be available for the next Board meeting.

This led to a discussion of physical space in the church and how it is to be used. Paul Adler had proposed converting the space currently used by Kay McCurdy to a storage area for sound equipment, paper files and other items, and moving the DRE's office to a

created space in the nursery. Estimated cost for this would be about \$700. However, tom asked that this item be tabled until a new DRE is selected, since his/her needs might not be met with this suggested arrangement. Frank believes the issue of space is much broader and it is unwise to invest any substantial amount of money in piecemeal fixes. He said "people space" needs to be considered along with storage space, and that meeting rooms are in short supply on certain high-traffic nights when small groups and church committees are all present at the same time. Any plans for re-purposing rooms should involve projections of 2-3 years ahead. Pam agrees that an elevator or other major expansion of the building is becoming a critical need. Alan recommends a task force or ad hoc committee to examine this in depth. Wendes said that even a rented storage locker offsite might be a better solution at this time if we really need a place to keep old records. tom recommended that Buck and/or Frank contact our architect in an effort to come up with some workable ideas.

A few months back, the Church of God, which currently rents the church on Saturdays, had requested a space in which their pastor could conduct counseling sessions. At that time, it was tentatively planned that Chris' office would be renovated to make the space more efficient for her and to create a separate area for the Church of God. Daidee expressed the concern that if the COG needs a totally soundproofed type of area, this would conflict with Daidee and Lynna Ruth's use of the office for bookkeeping, which has been done on Saturdays. Pam thought some area downstairs might be available, but because there are so many interconnected problems, the Board agreed to table the discussion at least until Buck and Frank can talk to the architect.

Next item was the recommendation from a recent financial audit that Sunday offerings be counted by someone other than the Office Administrator and/or the Treasurer. While a Board Rep in some other position could handle this task, that individual will have numerous other responsibilities, and it was suggested that since there is a fairly large rotating slate of greeters, one or both of those individuals could have counting of offering money included in their duties. Alternately, the Board Rep could supervise the greeters with items such as providing the necessary form and signing off on the count. Elaine Watkins was asked to create a formal policy, since Greeter function falls under Membership, which is an Outreach committee. Wendes said that this would also entail changing the outlined procedure for Sunday Board Rep duties. Elaine said she had already been in talks with Maurine Olin and Susan Kennedy, who agreed that the plan is feasible. Elaine Hill suggested that Membership re-think planning out the entire greeting schedule for the year, since by mid-year there have typically been so many changes due to people leaving the church or working different job shifts, that the schedule becomes meaningless and confusing. Elaine W said she would relay this to Susan and Maurine.

The upcoming General Assembly in Louisville was discussed. We can send three delegates. Frank said he would like to go. Daidee said that she, Steve Hollingsworth and Mary Hunter have typically gone as delegates every year, but mainly because no one else had been willing or able to go; she said she and Steve would be more than happy not to be delegates anytime others can be found.

Buck talked about the current Stewardship Campaign, saying it had a good kickoff with the Leadership dinner at the Derricksons' earlier this month. Many pledges have already been increased, as well as separate pledges made for solar panels. The Endowment Committee has promised to buy a panel if our operating budget goal is reached. Any money received for panels will go into a separate savings account. The cost is \$1400 per panel; goal is 12 panels, to make UUCC the first church in this area with solar power.

For the next month, through April 18, stewards will be calling on members of the congregation, and he will meet with committee heads for updates on budgeting.

The Ministry Search Committee will be officially elected Sunday March 24. Currently, there are 8 nominees but only 7 slots, per the by-laws. After the votes are tallied, Chris will send out an email.

The progress of the weapons debate was discussed. April's newsletter will include the agreed-upon wording to both sides of the debate, as well as a clarification of the "no-policy" policy. These items will be available in the May and June newsletters as well, so that members will have plenty of time to consider them before voting at the Annual Meeting on June 9th. Tom inquired as to how this method of deciding the issue was arrived at, whereupon Elaine W reviewed the process, which arose from the sentiment that the issue was too important and broad-ranging to be finalized by the Board in a single session and more appropriately left up to the congregation. We are still hoping to conduct a covenanting process; Sue Sinnamon from the Southeast District will send more information about this. We need to see how it meshes with our current Agreement for Fellowship.

During check-out, Elaine Watkins asked about the "Hopes/Wishes/Dreams" white boards that were created last year for the 60th anniversary. They were in the sanctuary for awhile and a few people wrote on them, but they were moved to the Forum room. Elaine would like to see them put back in the sanctuary, especially if the timeline is soon to be retired.

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm, after the chalice was extinguished and Wendes read closing words from Martin Luther.

Respectfully submitted,
Elaine Watkins