

Attending: Deb Garskof, Beth Cliff, Luke Garvey, Stapley Emberling, Jen Gerometta, Brain Lasher, Wendy Levy, Ravi Sankar, and the Rev Alan Taylor (ex-officio)

Absent: Steve Grathwohl

Observers: Eileen Belmont, Linda Lubin, Linda Hudson, Emily Sherwood Staub
(Meeting conducted remotely via Zoom)

Agenda/Topic	Discussion	Motions & Votes (M/S/V); Actions
Opening	The meeting was held remotely and was called to order at 7:02 pm, with Deb Garskof presiding. She welcomed observers, thanked them for coming, and read aloud the Observer Statement.	
Check-In & Opening Reading	Board members and guests checked in. The virtual chalice was lit; L Garvey shared a reading on Gratitude from the “This I Believe...” series.	
Consent Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Approval of Minutes for the October 17, 2023, Board Meeting. 2) Approval of housing allowance allocation (as per IRS tax requirement) for Senior Minister for 2024. 	<p>M/S/V: To approve the Consent Agenda, as specified:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Approval of Minutes for the 10/17/2023 Board Meeting. PASSED. 2) Approval of the housing allowance allocation for Rev Taylor at \$45,000 for calendar year 2024. PASSED.
Proposal on Behalf of Rev. Ed Thompson	Proposal submitted by Sharon Poole on behalf of Rev Edward Thompson to approve a housing allowance allocation for our Minister of Music, for tax purposes (with no financial impact on TUUCW).	<p>M/S/V: Be it resolved that the amount of the Ministerial Housing Allowance, as a portion of the total salary, for the Rev Ed Thompson shall be \$18,850 (i.e., \$725 per pay period) effective January 1, 2024. This allocation shall remain in place in subsequent years unless it is modified by Rev Thompson and such modification is approved by the Board of Trustees. PASSED.</p>
Sr. Minister’s Report	Rev Taylor shared the November 2023 Sr. Minister’s Report (now posted on the website, with a link also found in SOUNDINGS). He reported that he has made good progress on building his volunteer teams and he now has commitments from several congregants to join the new Transitions Team, the Conflict Transformation Task Force, and the Capital Campaign Construction Task Force. There was further discussion about whether the Congregation can handle all the different committee work focused on the business of running the Congregation that is being considered. Rev Taylor gave an update on other teams/committees that he had highlighted last month for special	

	<p>attention (i.e., Stewardship, AI, Legacy, and Faith Formation). A few Board members are still concerned about the difficulty in recruiting so many volunteers to do all this work and how hard it might be to widen the pool of those willing to participate. B Cliff asked about the role of the Transition Team and how they would work with the Board and with the Congregation, including what their charter and boundaries would be. Rev Taylor said the Transition Team that he appoints will have no governing authority but would serve for him in a purely advisory capacity.</p> <p>With regard to the continued examination of Policy-Based Governance (PBG), Rev Taylor commented that the Process of governance is more important than the immediate Outcome.</p> <p>Rev Taylor also reported on the status of TUUCW in consideration of Priority Ends 1.1.2, 1.2.1, and 1.2.4, with special focus this month on 1.1.2.</p>	
<p>Treasurer’s Report</p>	<p>In S Grathwohl’s absence, the November Treasurer’s Report was given by B Lasher. See S Grathwohl’s written report, posted on the website and thumbtacked on the bulletin board in the foyer. Highlights include a review of the status of Stewardship, Board Succession in regard to the position of Treasurer, the annual shortfall of almost \$175K in the budget, an update on the Financial Sustainability effort, and the Year-End/Holiday Appeal.</p>	
<p>Communications Subcommittee</p>	<p>The Board’s Communications Subcommittee, comprised of B Cliff, B Lasher, and D Garskof, gave an update on activities, and B Lasher presented his Motion to use the money allocated for new marketing ventures in the budget (\$20K) to hire a Communications consultant to assist the Board in how best to communicate with the Congregation to promote healing, show transparency of actions and intentions, and build trust. Several Board members expressed concern with spending money on another consultant at this time when TUUCW has been operating with a major financial shortfall for the last several years. B Cliff suggested tabling discussion of hiring a consultant for the time being, wanting to check in first with Rev Taylor, as CEO, and indicating that it might be more cost-effective to have support doing the actual work rather than hearing advice from a consultant. She also suggested work on the website might be more valuable at this time. A few other</p>	

	<p>Board members agreed that more work on this proposal needed to be done. After discussion, the Motion was tabled so that the Communications Subgroup could consult with Rev Taylor and come back to the Board in December, perhaps with a recommendation that might be smaller in scope and fit more closely with Rev Taylor’s needs.</p>	<p>The Motion to hire a communications consultant was tabled. The Communications Subgroup will meet with Rev Taylor and report back to the Board with a reworked proposal.</p>
<p>Proposed Monitoring Schedule</p>	<p>R Sankar introduced the Monitoring Schedule draft, revised 11/6/23 by the Monitoring Subcommittee of S Grathwohl, R Sankar, and D Garskof. A discussion followed concerning schedule and overall purpose, but further decisions were deferred until December, when S Grathwohl will be present. The Board plans to invite the COM to participate in this discussion in December.</p>	
<p>Policy Manual</p>	<p>B Cliff and D Garskof presented their proposed edits for the Policy Manual, which capture changes that were a result of their communications proposal from the October 17th Board meeting regarding observers at Board meetings and the opportunities for congregants to share their points of view in various settings. Discussion continued on Policy #2.5.10 (on the bottom of page 11 of the current Policy Manual, which was approved 9/28/2022), which stated (before B Cliff and D Garskof strengthened the language):</p> <p><i>“Employment of Members: Without prior approval of the Board, a member may not apply for or accept employment with TUUCW or be paid for services to TUUCW. A member may resign their membership contingent upon employment.”</i></p> <p>L Garvey pointed out that this may no longer be consistent with changes Rev Morehouse had made to the HR Manual that is currently in place and on the website. He said he would check with the Governance Committee to determine how best to handle this in the future, since some would argue that it is not appropriate for the Board to have a policy on any hiring issue, since hiring staff is under the purview of the CEO/Minister. Others argue that a potentially controversial hire is a fiduciary matter, and the Board should have a say. L Garvey will report back to the Board in December.</p>	<p>L Garvey will check with Governance Committee regarding the hiring policy, especially the hiring of members for the staff. B Cliff and D Gardkof will make further recommendations for the Policy Manual, as needed, based on input from Governance Committee.</p>
<p>Bagels with the Board</p>	<p>J Gerometta reported on what was learned from the 11/4/23 session. The program generally seems to be well-received by those few who come, and by others who do not attend but say they appreciate the concept.</p>	

<p>Information Reports</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Linkages. W Levy and J Gerometta reported on plans for Congregational engagement through the Bagels with the Board discussions. B Cliff suggested that a good focal point would be a discussion with the Congregation on the Ends, since “Linkage” refers to how the Congregation and the Board are linked on the priority Ends that are selected each year for special focus and attention. The group agreed that assigning one priority End to be the discussion point for each session of Bagels-and-the-Board would be a good way to keep the Congregation and the Board aligned. 2. Safer Congregations Committee. W Levy stated that the SCC has safety concerns at TUCCW to discuss, but this topic was deferred until December. 3. AI Team. Rev Taylor referred the Board to the recent report from the AI Team, reviewed in October, cataloging the results of its work and research on healing and resilience at TUCCW. The AI Report is available on the website under the heading “The Healing and Resilience Task Force,” which is under the green tab named “About Us.” 4. Capital Campaign Construction. Rev Taylor reported that there is now a 5-member Capital Campaign Construction Taskforce in place: John Turmelle, Jay Lubin, Rob Laug, Holly Jaffe, and Elena Rockman-Blake. The next step will another meeting (tentatively 12/17/23) following a Sunday Service, to present the Congregation with the estimates for the next phase of work and the details of exactly what can be done for the money we have left. There is concern that the new look that is being suggested for the floor and windows is very different from the look we had before. We do not have enough CC money left to replace what we have now. A very rough estimate of what it might cost to have the look we like and are used to in the Sanctuary replicated is \$2K. Rev Taylor announced that 4 monitors have now been installed in the sanctuary: 2 for the congregants seated in the sanctuary and 2 for the choir. They have not yet been hooked up. He has heard no reaction or commentary from congregants concerning this new development. 	
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Generative Discussion	The discussion was deferred, due to time constraints, but B Cliff posed questions for Board members to consider for the December Board meeting: How do we, as a Board, think about Family Faith Formation, and how does it fit with our priority Ends? Do we believe that kids' and family programming is an integral part of our value system? What does that mean for how we live out these values together?	
Executive Session	There was no request for Board-only discussion.	
Check-Out and Assignments	On December 2, Rev Taylor will be facilitating a mini-Retreat for the Board to reconfirm our Board Covenant, foster deeper connections between Board members, discuss goals for next year, and find a way to bring joy back into our Board work. J Gerometta and B Lasher will work with Rev Taylor on an Agenda.	The Board will hold a mini-Retreat on December 2.
Process Observer	B Lasher reported that the meeting covered a lot of ground, and that everyone had participated. S Emberling stated that she had raised her hand (electronically) several times but was not called upon. It was discovered that her "raised hand" emblem was obscured by background images, and thus could not be seen by other Zoom participants.	
Closing Reflection	Skipped, due to time constraints.	
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 9:18 pm.	
	Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, December 19, 2023	

Respectfully submitted,
 Stapley Emberling, Secretary for the Board of Trustees
 For November 21, 2023

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES FOR CONGREGATION FEEDBACK AND INPUT

(The following includes minor wordsmithing made subsequent to the October 17th Board Meeting)

Preamble:

The Board recognizes that it serves the Congregation, and thus it is important that lines of communication are open, in “both” directions.

At the same time, the Board was elected and tasked with specific responsibilities that take up much meeting time and time in between formal meetings working on specific issues. For this reason, when it gathers, it needs to be focused and as efficient as it can be. It is rare that meetings don’t run well over the two hours allotted on the agenda.

In recognition of these two dynamics, the Board has a series of ways that congregants can formally discuss issues with its Board. It will be helpful to outline them here:

Anytime:

1. By email, either to specific Board members, or to the whole Board
2. In personal conversation, to specific Board members
3. In the “Perspectives” feedback folder/suggestion box in the foyer

On pre-scheduled occasions:

4. At gatherings that the Board arranges, including Town Halls, monthly Bagels with the Board, and other group discussions.

At Board meetings themselves, monthly.

5. Congregants are always welcome to observe Board Meetings as the Board discusses issues facing the Congregation. Meetings are in person at the Meeting House, 7 -9 PM on the third Tuesday of the month. We ask that observers let our secretary know that they are coming so we can set up the room accordingly and, if a large group is there, we can arrive early to have plenty of time to say hello. On occasion there may be confidential issues relating to, for example, staff salaries, that will be discussed in Executive Session. In such a case, observers are asked to leave.

For now, we ask that congregants be in person only, as opposed to ZOOM.

How to get an issue on the agenda, or to be invited to participate in dialogue in a monthly meeting.

The Board sets its agenda several weeks before the meeting itself, and it is typically chock full of items. Technically it is the responsibility of the President to set
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the agenda; in practice in our case now, our President Luke has set up a committee of four to make determinations on what should be covered each time. Those agenda planning meetings are usually the first Monday of the month, 5 PM.

Accordingly, congregants are invited to share their wishes to be included on the agenda any time before 5 PM on the first Monday. Suggestions on a topic to get on the agenda as new business, or for discussion as old business, are welcome. We simply ask that people write to the Secretary requesting time, and with a brief outline why this is important to consider at this time, and who wants to attend the discussion. The agenda committee will review the item and will consider it for placement on the upcoming agenda. If the request is made after the deadline, the proposal will be considered for placement on the following month's agenda.

Of course, in an emergency, exceptions can be made, but such exceptions will be limited to matters that involve the health, safety or welfare, including fiscal, of the Congregation.

What is the process of the Communications Subcommittee?

The Subcommittee (2-3 people; in our case now, Deb, Beth, and Brian) will respond to every email that comes in within 2 days to acknowledge receipt; this will take a burden off the Secretary.

It will then determine the best way to answer in a more substantive way. It will use its judgement on what needs full Board approval - which should be rare. Instead, it will respond, under the signature of the three subcommittee members, "on behalf of the Board."

The full Board will be sent a courtesy copy of the email, either directly before or shortly after sending, so that everyone is knowledgeable about what's been said.

If Board members hear individual things that warrant a response, they should let Brian, Deb, and Beth know – through a Bagel meeting, a conversation, an email, whatever. Then the Subcommittee will follow the rules listed above: 1) recognize receipt: "thank you; we hear you" 2) endeavor to respond within 2 weeks with substance; 3) share with full board as courtesy; 4) bring big issues up at next Board meeting.

If an issue can be resolved by a conversation rather than an email, the Subcommittee will make that judgment. In such a case, it will share any meaningful feedback to the rest of the Board, either via a quick descriptive email, or during the next Board meeting itself.

The Subcommittee has as an objective to keep formal written backs-and-forths to a minimum, so we can focus on the big issues at hand!