

TUUCW
Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, February 18, 2025

Present at the meeting:

Board & Minister: Beth Cliff, Felicia Keeton, Brian Lasher, Stapley Emberling, Anita Pfluger, Rev. Alan Taylor, Mark Corcoran, Jon Gage, Ravi Sankar (went offline from 7:45 to 8:09 p.m.), (absent: Alexa Marshall)

Observers: Eileen Belmont, Chris Place, Allison Smith, Ken Vernon, Ruth Fontilla, Sharon Poole (music committee & governance council), Ken Vogel (construction committee & governance council, arrived 7:12 p.m.), Lyn Kobsa (governance council, arrived 7:42 p.m.)

7:02 p.m. - Meeting was called to order by Beth Cliff

Beth opened the meeting by acknowledging Reverend Alan's recent letter to the congregation regarding his decision not to serve a third term as senior minister. On behalf of the Board, she thanked him for his amazing contributions over the past 18 months, and added how appreciative the Board and congregation were that he was committed to helping us with the searches going forward. She led everyone in the room in a standing ovation to recognize his gifts to us. Following this she covered observer protocols before the chalice lighting. The board checked in and the observers introduced themselves.

Consent Agenda

Motion: To approve the 1/22/25 meeting minutes. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Minister's Report and Discussion:

Reverend Alan shared that activities have been paused for the Peter Yarrow Voices Café tribute celebration given allegations that recently surfaced. A decision on whether to move forward will be made by March. He encouraged everyone to read his comprehensive monthly report, and added he had nothing more to add unless there were questions. There were none.

Treasurer's Report and Discussion:

Jon Gage reviewed his written report starting with the auditor's report.

- **Final approval of independent auditor's report:**
 - **Motion:** After summarizing his write-up, Jon made a motion that the Board endorse the Audit Committee's approval of the independent auditor's report and instruct the Treasurer to sign the auditor's "letter of representation" and tax-filing authorization. There was discussion and clarification that the Audit committee reports to the Board (i.e., the audit report goes directly from the Finance committee to the Board, not through the Treasurer).
 - The motion passed unanimously.
- **Audit related recommendations:**
 - Jon summarized the recommendations from his written report regarding the audit. In the interests of time, Beth suggested we allocate time at a future board meeting to discuss them including:

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- Resume annual auditing - today we pay \$14,000 for audits over 2 years (\$6k + \$8k), and the auditor suggests we resume, due to rising fraud, yearly audits which increase this budget by \$2,000, or \$16,000.
- Remove financial siloes to ease information flow between the various teams that are involved in our financial management.
- Mark suggested that at a later time the Finance committee invite an Endowment committee representative to review the specific recommendations.
- **Financial update and budget re-forecast discuss highlights:**
 - The budgeting process takes about 6 months. The first draft of the 2025-26 budget will be ready in March, second draft in April and final in May.
 - Despite revenue losses – bus charging, home school meeting house rental, no fall fundraiser – it’s forecasted we’ll be ahead of this year’s budget by \$11k (note: we’re still running an overall \$99k deficit).
 - The Finance committee needs to model financial scenarios for a range of staffing and compensation requirements and how to pay for them. Beth highlighted, as we think about new ministers, she has learned from research that top driver is their compensation.
 - Jon then suggested setting up a team that’s focused on how we’ll raise revenues.
 - Beth shared that there was a team in 2022 that hired a consultant which resulted in a 5-year report, written by Brian, to address revenue shortfalls.
 - Jon and Brian will connect on that plan and discuss if and how we can move to execute some of the recommendations.
- Beth and Jon raised the issue of moving our board meetings to the last week of the month so the Finance committee, which meets the 2nd Thursday, has more time to produce the monthly reports. Finance will come back to the Board with a recommendation.

Active programs and workstreams:

In the event a written report or plan was submitted, the notes below reflect any discussion not captured in these documents which Board members reviewed prior to the meeting.

UU Website Refresh (Lead: Rev. Alan)

- This project is moving forward, under leadership of Chris Campbell. The team is currently focused on cleaning up the current website and doing a needs assessment for a future site.

Stewardship (Leads: Beth and Elena)

- Kicks off March 9th. Current focus is to develop a canvass structure of which the board members will participate. Board members will be asked to call on 5-10 people.

Large gift program wall plaques (Lead: Brian)

- Proceeding as planned with the plaques going up on the walls soon.

Congregational Survey. A plan to understand why people engage with our congregation (Leads: Brian and Alexa)

- Alexa finalizing the survey and, when ready, the board will do a trial run. Goal is to capture the voice of members beyond the core group that typically provides input.

Construction (Lead: Ken Vogel)

The Board-sponsored construction subcommittee (Ken Vogel, Brian Lasher, Mark Corcoran, Beth Cliff) has been discussing the impact of the capital construction project design in our space. The work is about ready to begin, with the sanctuary closed May 12- early September to accommodate the work.

One concern that has come up recently is the impact of the new chancel design on the music program. To that respect, the committee synthesized their findings and recommendations into four main decision areas. These Ken summarized in the pre-read handout, and verbally, in the meeting. He emphasized these decisions were not taken lightly, with multiple conversations and discussions on how best to serve the congregation at large for our future, and following a process that was designed to be inclusive and transparent.

The 4 decision areas:

- Whether to have a fixed ramp or seek an alternative, such as putting the ramp on the outside at the back of the chancel?
 - Recommendation to install the ADA compliant fixed ramp and railings as currently designed, to allow access for all to get up to the chancel and to embrace our vision as a welcoming congregation
- Whether the fixed ramp be designed to cut into the stage or further into the sanctuary?
 - Recommendation is to prioritize sanctuary over chancel space.
- How, at this stage of the process, can congregants share their own design preferences, or concerns about current design?
 - The execution plan all along, and as articulated in the March 2024 congregational meeting and accompanying FAQs, was that the congregation work would continue using the design recommendations of the general contractor and construction partners, including Turner, and the priorities as voted on by the congregation in March '24. Small discrete decisions - color of floor and chancel – will be voted on by the congregation, but the larger pieces, especially those with architectural and engineering implications, would be made by the experts we retained for that purpose. Congregants are always welcome to express their concerns and they will be heard and considered. The “go to” plan, however, is to follow the designs as Goody Clancy advises.
- Whether to select vinyl, a bio-based resilient tile or hardwood for flooring for the chancel?
 - At this juncture the committee, after considering matters such as durability, maintenance, and acoustics, is recommending hardwood. It acknowledged that Goody Clancy has not finalized costs and other factors, so the decision is not yet finalized.

Sharon Poole weighed in after Ken spoke with these related observations:

- An ADA compliant 9-foot ramp requires an additional 5 feet of space after the ramp thereby taking up 14 feet of space.

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- Today we have moveable steps which come in handy in moving the piano. A fixed ramp will require, the committee proposes, some long ramps to move the piano (which have to then be stored somewhere)
- Steps are needed to create a line of sight between choir participants and the conductor.
- With a fixed ramp there won't be as much space for risers.

In summary, the committee recommends continuing with the current renovation plan, which includes installing a ramp and railings on the left side of the stage for accessibility. If feasible, they propose using hardwood flooring instead of resilient tile for better acoustics, pending cost approval. The music committee's concerns about the ramp's impact on stage space and symmetry, and related suggestions, have been heard, and understood, and appreciated. Still, the committee maintains their original recommendation to prioritize accessibility.

Motion: Ken made a motion that the board affirm the current plan and recommendations, understanding that any changes could delay construction and affect costs. Stapley seconded the motion. In discussion, Jon admitted it is hard to make this decision and "take sides." Brian stated the recommendations will put us in the best position to attract a new minister and new friends and members, showcasing our commitment to be an affirming and welcoming congregation to all. Reverend Alan expressed appreciation for all the work done so far, and encouraged the Board to vote for the work as recommended. The motion was voted on and passed unanimously.

Governance Committee (Lead: Lyn Kobsa)

Lyn summarized the Governance committee's options for managing operations, including hiring a full or part time operations manager, or to form a 5-person operations council made up of lay people/volunteers. As discussed on February 1st, the committee's recommendation is to create a lay person operations council. This recommendation is based on the current budget situation and assumption the congregation cannot afford a FT or PT paid staff person. Another option is to start with this Operations Council and transition to a paid position. The reverse could be a possibility as well: be creative and find ways to fund a paid operations manager for one or two years only, with the intention of turning that work over to the Council once some stability and volunteer energy has been restored.

- The 5-person Operations Council would be responsible for doing work plus managing the staff and operations, with the minister and staff attending their meetings. The minister and Ops Council would then partner on taking certain matters to the board. The board would delegate responsibilities to the Operations Council, ensuring they stay within set policies and limitations.

The board then discussed the challenges of finding volunteers and options such as restructuring and/or reducing the size of committees to free up congregants to serve on this council. Reverend Alan also pointed out that there are several staff members that are doing higher level work and it might be unfair to allocate budget to new staff without addressing this.

Motion: Brian made a motion which Ravi seconded later amended by Stapley and Brian seconded: "To endorse the Governance Committee recommendation to form an Operations Council AND charge the committee to educate the congregation, get input, develop the concept further and get back to the Board with an updated

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recommendation.” During this work the committee will probe for feasibility of the concept of a council and solicit potential candidates, both of which the Board is interested in understanding.

- Note: any changes to the size of the Board or COM need to be approved by the congregation in two congregational votes, since they require changes to the Constitution. The first vote could be at the annual meeting in mid-June, the second would have to be more than 30 days later.
- The motion was passed unanimously. (at 9:04 p.m.)

Settled Minister Search

Motion: Ravi proposed a **motion** “to launch the search process for a settled minister to be in place by August 2026.”

- The process would follow established UUA process, which requires identifying a search team of congregants that the congregation votes its approval on. This Called Search Team then reports to the congregation, not the Board. That team conducts research and evaluates potential candidates following UUA process guidelines as laid out in their comprehensive handbook. By November ‘25 the team shares what it wants with the UUA, and by the spring a candidate is finalized and presented to the congregation. Generally the minister would be called in May, ‘26. Throughout the ‘25-26 process, the search team keeps the congregation kept abreast of developments. Ravi moved to start such a process and it was seconded by Brian.
- The motion passed unanimously. The understanding was that the specifics would be determined later.

Interim Minister Search

With Alan leaving, the board discussed forming a sub-search team to find an interim minister who would fill the gap between his departure in August ‘25 and a new called minister in place in August ‘26.

Motion: Brian moved, then after some additional discussion - including Rev. Alan committing to assisting us with the search - Beth amended/clarified the motion to “seek a consultant minister to serve the congregation from August 15, 2025 to August 14, 2026.” Jon seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Process observations shared by Jon Gage

Closing reflection by Felicia Keeton

9:49 p.m. – Meeting adjourned