

TUUCW
Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda
Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Present at the meeting:

Board & Minister: Beth Cliff, Stapley Emberling, Anita Pfluger, Felicia Keeton, Mark Corcoran, Jon Gage
(Virtual: Brian Lasher, Rev. Alan Taylor; Absent: Ravi Sankar, Alexa Marshall)

Governance Team: Lyn Kobsa

Website Refresh Committee: Chris Campbell

Observers: Sue O'Meara, Chris Place, Linda Hudson,

7:01 p.m. - Meeting was called to order by Beth Cliff

Consent Agenda

Motions:

- To approve the 3/18/25 meeting minutes. The motion to approve passed unanimously.
- To approve the 6-9-24, 9-15-24 and 1-12-25 draft meeting minutes, with amendments discussed, for publication on the website for formal approval at the June 8th annual meeting. The motion to approve passed unanimously.

Motion on Ed Thompson's housing allowance - deferred

- Beth made this motion, seconded by Felicia:
 - *Be it resolved that the amount of the Ministerial Housing Allowance, for Rev Dr Edward Thompson, Minister Emeritus, an ordained minister, who retired from The Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport, shall be \$30,000 per annum, effective January 1, 2025. This allocation shall remain in place in subsequent years unless the Board of Trustees modifies it.*
- Following discussion, Brian made this motion, seconded by Stapley:
 - To defer Beth's motion until we have further data to make sure there is no future unexpected liabilities. Mark, Jon, Stapley, Felicia, Anita and Brian agreed. Beth dissented.
 - Beth will contact Sharon Poole to get additional information.

Observers' check-in

As part of check-in, Linda Hudson asked if congregants may access supporting documentation like committee reports. The board agreed to discuss making these materials available at a future meeting.

Minister's Report and Discussion:

Reverend Alan's verbal report focused on the pledge drive and the efforts to get commitments from 63 outstanding pledging units. It's expected that these households could add another \$125k (they pledged \$130k last year). In this case, the total pledge projection is \$520k (short of our \$525k budget).

Right Relations Submission

Beth called the Board's attention to the report which summarized board member input on best practices for establishing respect and trust in communication. Stapley read through the summarized data in the written report. Beth shared the committee's next steps in gathering member information at upcoming forums.

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.

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

- Survey participation has not moved much since last report. Brian recommended one final reminder during the week of April 20th. Alan agreed to add the reminder to his weekly email.

Bagels w Board Updates (Leads: Ravi and Anita)

- April 5th was the most recent meeting. The primary topic was how to generate income, and a member suggested we charge dues.
- It was suggested we increase awareness that if we received an average pledge of \$3,000 per household, we could cover our annual staff expenses. In addition, we could increase awareness of how we use Endowment to cover operational costs.

Construction Update (Leads: Beth and Mark)

- A committee has been formed to decide on the flooring (tile colors).
- Sharon Poole contacted Beth and had additional information on ADA requirements that she'd like the board to consider regarding the ramp placement decision. Beth told Sharon the board would defer this for another meeting given our heavy April agenda.
- Construction begins May 12th and Rev. Alan has communicated in his weekly email where Sunday services will be held for the coming months. Alan said he expects to come in under the \$3,500 requested budget. Zoom will be available for virtual attendance in late May and early June, and he has budget if paid tech assistance is required.

Website Refresh Committee Update (Lead: Chris Campbell)

- Chris is chairing the website committee, and he provided an update on their progress in redesigning the church's website. They aim to fix the existing site by April 30th and develop a new website design by May 30th. The committee has completed a needs analysis, inventory of the existing site, and scanned other sites for design options. They are focusing on improving navigation, content, layout, mobile friendliness, accessibility, and functionality.

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- Chris asked about decision-making authority for website content and highlighted the need to establish benchmarks for measuring the website's success, such as visitor numbers or new member inquiries.
- Beth shared the original allocated budget to hire a web designer to build a new site might not be available anymore. Chris confirmed the committee is looking at ways to keep our spend minimal for that.

Governance Update (Lead: Lyn Kobsa)

- Lyn provided an update on the progress of forming an Operations Council (Ops Council) made up of 3 member volunteers. The group has held several meetings to discuss the proposal, including a congregational meeting with 40 attendees and two Zoom meetings. They have compiled a list of potential members, vetted by the nominating committee and staff.
- Lyn asked the board to review the candidate list, remove any unsuitable candidates, and prioritize who to approach. The goal is to have 5 willing participants by early May. Brian suggested that Lyn's committee prioritize the list, but Lyn emphasizes the need for the board to first review and approve the candidates.
 - The board approved the list except for removing Mark from it.
- There was some discussion about the need to define the commitment level and responsibilities for potential Ops Council members before approaching them.
 - Lyn explained that they haven't yet written job descriptions or clarified reporting relationships but can facilitate this once it is clearer how many and who can volunteer.
- Mark asked about the target start date. Establishing an Ops Council does not require a bylaw change – just a motion at the June annual meeting. Then the council can be formed at any time.

Treasurer's Report and Discussion (Lead: Jon Gage)

Jon asked the board to review the budget once again, even though the numbers have not changed since March. The current budget attempts to cover all of the projected expenses including the new ministers and construction.

- The initial discussion was to clarify specific budget areas including tech expenses and legislative travel expenses.
- Next there was discussion on why fundraisers were not included in the budget. The idea discussed is to have \$20k in the budget to generate a forward motion to make the fundraiser happen. Jon shared reasons why a fundraiser was not included. Following further conversation, including hearing Linda Hudson's point of view that having a line item motivates members to step up, the board agreed to keep discussing adding a fundraising line item.
- Beth reinforced that we need to keep discussing what our trajectory looks like (i.e., J-curve).

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EXECUTIVE SESSION. The Board went into Executive Discussion at 8:52 p.m. to discuss some private personnel issues and ended at 10:15 p.m.

Process observations shared by Mark Corcoran

Closing reflection by Beth Cliff

10:20 p.m. – Meeting adjourned