

Sierra Foothills Unitarian Universalists
Board of Trustees
September 16, 2020

DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Those in attendance: Maureen Bauman (President), Marsha von Dessoneck (Vice President), Geoff Smith (Financial Officer), Rick Marshall (Secretary), Suzanne Borth, John Bohland, Rick Ross, AJ van Tine (ex-officio), Gary Koerner (Treasurer, ex-officio)

Geoff provided a reading for the lighting of the chalice. All those present checked in.

1. Minutes

The Board reviewed the draft Minutes from the August 19 meeting.

Marsha moved, Geoff seconded, to approve the August 19 Minutes as presented. Passed unanimously.

2. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Wednesday, October 21 at 6:00 p.m. Marsha will provide opening words.

3. Thank You Notes

Notes have been sent to outgoing Board members Ian Duncan and Laura Koerner. Supplies have been distributed to all Board members for ongoing use. The Board agreed to send notes to the following:

- Suzanne Borth for her work on the survey and the new programs which are emanating from it (this was delivered in person “online” in the meeting)
- Stevie Rea, for becoming chair of the Stewardship Committee
- Leah Florence, for the art program she led for the children and youth

GEOFF WILL SEND NOTES TO STEVIE AND LEAH.

4. Commission on Institutional Change Report – AJ

The Board continued review of the report, “Widening the Circle of Concern,” which was adopted at this year’s General Assembly. This month’s review included the Governance chapter.

Discussion points:

- Concerns about how GA is conducted – how did this year’s “Virtual” GA address/not address these concerns?
- UUA leadership structure – Executive Director staff, elected President/Moderator – would be like other organizations’ structures that I am familiar with
- Onboarding practices for Nominating Committee – sounds like a good idea, if there are some resources to support how to do this
- The discussion about the Moderator position needs clarification
- The 5th Principle Project has been inactive for 10 years?
- This report captures some recommendations from the past that didn’t land anywhere to be implemented

- Regionalization – concern that the Western Region is too big
- Like the emphasis on racial justice
- Need a structure so that changes can happen more quickly – sometimes decisions need to be made
- Who can afford to attend General Assembly is a big issue
- The proposal to create a staff “executive” – concerned this was a “done deal,” didn’t resonate, structure is curious
- Congregational polity – what’s allowed/what’s not – what we do that we don’t believe in
- Structure may be affected by organizational size
- Informal structures privilege those in power – a small group
- Cornel West quote – no matter how long traumatized, they still come back with love
- Let’s not trip over bureaucracies – make things flatter/leaner/more agile
- How do we recognize and respect groups that are not represented
 - Active community engagement needed
 - Need the structural/organizational means to do so
- Leaders repeating – difficult for new people to contribute – need leader development to support this
- Reactions to the “avatar” story
 - Frustrating
 - Family member’s experience
 - Balance between welcoming/patronizing (tokenizing)
- Much of this applies at the UUA level – what applies at SFUU?
 - Training for Board and Nominating Committee
 - Alternative to Nominating: Leadership Development Committee
 - How do we engage new people into committees?
 - Would like to see a Black Lives Matter banner at the church building
 - Create a template for committees (bylaws, procedures, etc.)
 - Informal, non-uniform structure may be limiting participation
 - Get input from the Committee Council on this

5. Finance – Gary

Gary provided a review of the financial reports for August. Highlights:

- Our cash reserves are good
- The “Paycheck Protection Program” (PPP) loan has not been forgiven yet – the bank says this is coming soon
- Sunday collections are low (Share the Plate) – this was discussed at some length and will be referred to the Stewardship/Finance Committee
- Income is close to budget, expenses too
- Keep in mind that the budget depends on the PPP money
- How much of the financial picture is attributable to the pandemic – maybe not all

6. Pandemic Recovery Task Force report

The Task Force has developed a recommendation that no small group gatherings will be permitted until the entire state is in the “yellow” category for 30 days, at which time the Task Force will gather again to pin down exact timing for this. The Board expressed concern about

the delay and inquired why not plan this timing now? It was viewed by the Task Force as an extra safety measure; that by being slower and more cautious, we could respond to what is an extremely fluid situation. The following points were raised in discussion:

- This is too conservative
- It is important to be able to have events, with proper safety following the State regulations – other organizations are doing so
- Work places provide N95 masks, enforce rules
- Our responsibility is to protect people
- The men’s group is meeting in person already, in an outdoor setting, not as an official function of the church
- There was a suggestion that the Board hear directly from the Task Force’s public health expert, but this was not acted upon
- How would we define what are proper masks – how would we enforce this?
 - Need to be more specific about what’s required
- One Board member offered to purchase 100 N95 masks to enable a worship service or other gathering to occur sooner
 - Others voiced discomfort with this approach
- The “County Risk Level” categories need to come down from their current levels before we resume in-person gatherings
- Did the Task Force consider whether the cost of masks would be a concern for any members of our congregation? These could be donated if there is a need.
- We should provide masks, so that we can control that everyone uses what is appropriate

The Board requested that the Task Force reconvene and address the concerns raised here, and respond by the next Board meeting.

7. Chalice Lighters Program – Maureen

SFUU received funding from this program twice in the past, and will probably seek funding from it again in the future. But, this depends on an ongoing promotion of the program within our membership, which hasn’t been done for a while. We need to identify a congregational “champion” for this program. A fair amount of the membership must be contributors to the program in order for a funding application to be competitive. We will likely need funding for our building – the grant application will need to be specific about the needed work and needed funding amount. Most likely need will be the roof; we may need to define a specific portion of the work to be funded from this program. Members sign up to contribute to the program online. Recruiting a “champion” for this program is a good example of our more general need for leadership development. This is a good, small, standalone project which should make it accessible for someone new to a leadership role. One possibility mentioned was Constance Day, who is new to SFUU but has been a UU for a while. This item will be referred to the Stewardship Committee (after the auction!).

MARSHA WILL CONTACT STEVIE TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS.

8. Preliminary Fellowship Renewal Process

The Board discussed the timing of preparing AJ’s evaluation. The finished product needs to be ready for the October Board meeting. It should be provided to AJ for review at least a couple

days in advance, so it can be discussed at the meeting. It is OK for Board members to talk to others for input to the evaluation, even if the Committee on Ministry is also talking to the same people – in fact, that’s good.

MAUREEN WILL DEVELOP A SPECIFIC TIMELINE AND SEND IT IN A FOLLOW-UP EMAIL.

9. Minister’s Report – AJ

The Board reviewed AJ’s monthly report.

10. Committee Liaison Reports

Buildings and Grounds (Marsha) – the concrete trash cans in front of the church have been put away. Now that the High School is restarting onsite, do they need to go back? Our groundskeeper is who services them. The Board discussed and is satisfied with the change of putting them away; they do not need to go back out. Marsha will keep an eye on the situation.

Stewardship (Marsha) – plans for the auction are moving along. Committees are being asked to donate baskets for auction. Marsha will put together one to be from the Board – a “Mystery Box.”

BOARD MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO CONTRIBUTE SOMETHING TO BE INCLUDED, ABOUT \$10 IN VALUE, EACH. THESE ITEMS SHOULD BE TO MARSHA ABOUT OCTOBER 17.

Committee Council (Marsha) – meeting will be September 30.

Finance (Geoff) – discussed above.

Worship (Geoff) – no report.

Adult RE (Suzanne) – programs are rolling out, and there will be some expenses incurred. These include books and training for the facilitators.

Denominational Affairs (Suzanne) – a new, nationwide, youth group is now going. The camp located in the Pacific Southwest District (but open to all) is in the path of wildfires in the area, and is calling for financial help. Contact uucamp.org to help.

Membership (Rick M) – recognized new member Constance Day this week. Offering free chalices to members for home use. “UU 101” class is being offered.

Children/Youth RE (Rick R) – excited about the move to Google Suites/Drive. We are “practicing” with this committee before rolling the technology out for all committees.

Social Justice (Rick R) – no report.

Caring Committee (John) – there is a spectrum of appreciation for the phone call program.

Communications (Maureen) – no report.

The Board reviewed **ACTION ITEMS**, Right Relations for this meeting, and extinguished the chalice.