

Sierra Foothills Unitarian Universalists
Board of Trustees
February 17, 2021

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)

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

1. Finance

Gary provided a review of the financial reports for January. Our bank balance is steady, and income from our investment account continues to rise. The Share-the-Plate program revenue is doing well. The big news is that the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan has been “forgiven,” as had been expected but not certain until this month. The entire loan amount, \$27,584, will be forgiven under the revised PPP guidance. We had originally budgeted to have about \$21,000 forgiven and would need to repay the balance, under the original terms of the program. Pledge income is coming in ahead of budgeted amounts – this seems to be from members paying their pledges early, rather than a net increase in this category. In fundraising, there are plans to hold another event this year, although perhaps different than the previous “auction” event. The fall auction raised \$5,922, compared with its budget of \$5,000. Committee spending is quite low. Honoraria are paid to the Sunday worship guest speakers, about 4 times each year, and this amount is on target. Expenses are slightly below budget overall. In Buildings and Grounds, we expect a plumbing expense for a leak in the RE space. Our net surplus is just under \$30,000, and we expect we will finish the year at about \$26,000 surplus, which will build up our reserves. This will serve as a nice financial cushion going forward until we can re-open, and by extension, grow again.

2. Minutes

The Board reviewed the draft Minutes from the January 20 meeting.

Marsha moved, Geoff seconded, to approve the January 20 Minutes as presented. Passed unanimously.

3. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be Wednesday, March 17 at 6:00 p.m. John will provide opening words.

4. Thank You Notes

The Board will send Thank You notes to Meg Dorsey, for her work administering COVID vaccines in the community (including for several congregation members), and to Bonnie Dahl, for stepping up to be the new Chair of the Caring Committee.

RICK M WILL SEND THESE THANK YOU NOTES.

5. Commission on Institutional Change Report

The Board continued its review of the report, “Widening the Circle of Concern,” specifically the section on Religious Professionals. Discussion points included:

- Very discouraged that employment in UU settings is ever a “threat to life and well-being,” which was cited numerous times in the report.
- There are numerous examples of the need for training in multicultural competency, included for leadership at the congregational level.
- Noted that there is no requirement for UU ministers to have continuing education after they complete the initial 3-year process to receive “Full Fellowship.” Rev. AJ pointed out that the UU Ministers’ Association is working on changing this.
- Glad to see attention being given to these issues.
- Many UUs mean well, but don’t realize the impact of their words/actions.
- What if we had a Black, Indigenous or Person of Color as our next minister? How would they feel? There are few who look like them in our area.
- During the last search, we had a workshop on this. One takeaway was that “hire a person of color and they’ll come” (other POC) is a trap not to fall into.
- We need to remain aware that the area around us is very conservative.

6. Regional Assembly

The recent Pacific Western Regional Assembly was attended by Marsha, Maureen and Rev. AJ. No official voting occurred, to report out. In a workshop on budgeting, there was a suggestion that congregations prepare 3 budgets for the coming year: (1) continuing virtual operations all year; (2) resuming in-person operations at the start of the church year; and (3) assume a ½ and ½ combination of the first two scenarios. Marsha expects to be receiving more information on this approach.

MARSHA WILL SHARE THE INFORMATION ABOUT BUDGETING WITH GARY.

7. Search Committee Update

Suzanne reported for the committee, which also includes Board members Marsha, John and Maureen. Our Congregational Record goes “live” today (it was delayed by UUA about 4 days). Now we wait to see the response. The committee’s communications are flowing nicely, and they have put in a great effort so far.

8. Thinking Ahead

The Board will have this space on the agenda for the remainder of the church year, to identify things ahead which will need special attention.

- Saying goodbye to Rev. AJ – people will be able to have one-on-one Zoom visits with AJ for this.
- Resuming in-person activities post-COVID – this will be different than in the past. Even when we can gather in person again, it will likely initially require masks, no direct contact, no singing. A “hybrid” approach of in-person and online will have different logistics than our current “all-Zoom” operations. Our folks who have been conducting hybrid teaching will be a great resource for this transition.

SUZANNE WILL COORDINATE PEOPLE TO ADDRESS THE TECH NEEDS OF CONDUCTING HYBRID IN-PERSON/ONLINE OPERATIONS.

- Resuming in-person gatherings of small groups will meet some people's needs for connection. The Board has already adopted a policy for when these gatherings can resume, and the requirements for their activities. We will need to monitor in the context of new information about the pandemic since these requirements were established, to see if any update is needed.
- The Nominating Committee should be beginning its work in February. Rick M agreed to be the Board's representative to this. The Board rep's primary responsibility is to act as "convener" of the Nominating Committee. Rev. AJ will also support this work.
- Following are the status of current Board members' plans:
 - Maureen and Marsha are planning to continue in their current offices
 - Rick M will not be continuing on the Board
 - Suzanne is willing to serve as Secretary
 - Geoff will not be continuing on the Board
 - We will need to identify someone to serve as Finance Officer. It was noted that this job is not as intimidating as it sounds, thanks to the great work by Gary, as Treasurer. Finance Officer attends one additional meeting per month, sets up the agenda for that meeting.
 - Rick R and John are in the middle of their 2-year terms as Members at Large

9. Minister's Report

The Board reviewed the report and had no discussion at this time.

10. Committee Liaison Reports

Buildings and Grounds (Marsha) – the water is off in the RE area due to a plumbing leak. Bob Niblack has concerns about a tree root causing damage to the sidewalk in front of the building. This should be checked out with the City.

Stewardship (Marsha) – the pledge drive service went well. Now setting up appointments for the canvass; pledges are due by March 12.

Committee Council (Marsha) – met recently and discussed the proposal to create Committee Charters. The template will be refined and distributed to the chairs to work with and generate any additional feedback, for a brief re-visit at the next Council meeting in May. There was also some training on the new Google Drive structure, but that will need one-on-one followup between Vicky and the individual chairs.

Finance (Geoff) – all is well. The big news is the forgiveness of the PPP loan.

Worship (Geoff) – with its new structure, the Worship Committee will meet quarterly. The new Worship Associates Circle will continue to meet monthly to focus on thematic planning for worship services.

Adult RE (Suzanne) – covenant groups are starting up. The committee needs more help since the workload is heavier with the increased level of activity. One person suggested to invite is Mercedes McWilliams. The new covenant group facilitators may also be a future pool of recruits for this.

Denominational Affairs (Suzanne) – Regional Assembly was this past weekend. We will need to spread the word about participating in this summer’s General Assembly, soon.

SUZANNE WILL BEGIN THE OUTREACH TO ANNOUNCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATING IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Membership (Rick M) – membership and attendance numbers are holding steady.

Children/Youth RE (Rick R) – no report. It was noted that we are beginning to collect attendance numbers for both Sunday morning and Friday evening gatherings.

Social Justice (Rick R) – no report.

Caring Committee (John) – no report. New chair is Bonnie Dahl.

Communications (Maureen) – no report.

11. Right Relations

The Board reviewed Right Relations for this meeting, and extinguished the chalice. One item noted is the timing of distribution of the Board meeting agenda and materials. The goal will be to send notices about a week ahead of each meeting. It was also observed that the word of the week is “grace,” both with each other and with ourselves, which is a good spiritual practice for us all.

MINUTES PREPARED BY RICK MARSHALL, SECRETARY