

Sierra Foothills Unitarian Universalists
Board of Trustees
March 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, Rev. AJ van Tine (ex-officio)

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

1. Finance

Geoff and Marsha reviewed the information which had been submitted by Treasurer, Gary Koerner. Highlights included:

- Share-the-Plate Program: greater amounts were received when a guest speaker from the recipient organization made a presentation, but overall giving is still down. "Text to Give" has also helped somewhat. No change to the program for now, but the Board will continue to monitor as we go forward. It is good to maintain the program as part of our congregation's "group consciousness" as part of our culture of generosity. It is hoped that giving will increase when we return to in-person services. There are different models on how to run a Share-the-Plate Program, which can be considered in the future if needed. The Finance and Social Justice Committees need to be involved in any such discussions.
- The Board received an initial preview of a budget for the 2021-22 Fiscal Year. It was based on a premise of ½ year of virtual operations and ½ year of in-person operations, though this mix is still in discussion. It was noted that the most substantial difference between the two modes is the expense for Child Care, and that utilities are not as large a difference.

2. Minutes

The Board reviewed the draft Minutes from the February 17 meeting.

Rick R moved, Marsha seconded, to approve the February 17 Minutes as presented. Passed unanimously.

It was noted that in Item 10, Committee Liaison Reports, no Action Item had been assigned regarding contacting the City about the tree root/sidewalk damage issue.

MARSHA WILL TALK TO BOB NIBLACK REGARDING CONTACTING THE CITY OF AUBURN ON THIS ISSUE.

3. Next Meeting

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

4. Thank You Notes

At the February meeting, the Board agreed to send a note to Meg Dorsey to thank her for administering COVID vaccines in the community. It was noted that Marylee Drake has also been doing this work, so the Board agreed to send her a note also.

SUZANNE WILL SEND A NOTE TO MARYLEE.

The Board also agreed to send notes to Hank Florence, for his leadership of the Friday Night Youth Program, and to Leah Florence, for her leadership of the children's art project.

MAUREEN WILL SEND (SEPARATE) NOTES TO HANK AND TO LEAH.

5. Commission on Institutional Change Report

The Board continued its review of the report, "Widening the Circle of Concern," specifically the section on Educating for Liberation. Discussion points included:

- It is the congregation's job to push the minister to continue their own education on anti-racism
- The emphasis on the UUA doing this work and its effects trickling down is confusing
- Congregations need to do this work too, take our own lead
- UUA can model it at the Institutional level
- The discussion on "internalized oppression" was an eye-opener
- Congregations can do this work even if they don't have much diversity in their numbers
- There is a recommendation to start with the children – we can do this if we identify a good curriculum
- Black Lives of UU (BLUU) has a curriculum "box" available each month; we can order from this source
- Imagine an anti-racism education program organized like Our Whole Lives (OWL)
- The book Stamped, by Kendi and Reynolds, is a good resource – good for kids and adults
- Emphasize both education and awareness on anti-racism
- We can participate in a congregational certification program on this when it becomes available
- We are going to try to include \$500 in next year's budget for Training opportunities

SUZANNE WILL SEND BOARD MEMBERS A LINK TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE BLUU "CURRICULUM BOX."

6. General Assembly

SFUU can send 3 delegates. We will solicit interest from the congregation, emphasizing our hope that one position can be a Youth representative if possible (UUA defines "Youth" delegates as being at least 14 years old, or having completed 9th grade).

Suzanne has registration funds from last year which can be used this year but she cannot attend, and she is hoping to make those available to someone who can make use of the funds.

The Board will select the SFUU delegates from among those who express interest, at its April or May meeting.

It was noted that Marsha, and Barb Munn, have signed up for the GA Choir.

SUZANNE TOOK THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS:

- **CONTACT ABBY WARNER TO SEE IF SHE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN BEING A YOUTH DELEGATE**
- **CHECK WITH UUA REGARDING BEING ABLE TO TRANSFER HER UNUSED REGISTRATION FUNDS**
- **ARRANGE FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE E-BEACON AND NEWSLETTER (DEADLINE: MARCH 20) AND SERVE AS POINT OF CONTACT FOR THOSE INDICATING INTEREST**

7. Search Committee

Suzanne provided an update on the Committee's status. Some candidates have already applied; they expect to receive more in the near future. They are currently preparing for the interview phase.

8. Thinking Ahead

a. Budget process – We are on track for development and approval of the budget for next Fiscal Year. The Board should receive the proposed budget at its April meeting and generate final approval no later than its May meeting. The Annual Meeting of the Congregation is planned for June 13. Treasurer, Gary Koerner, should plan to attend the April Board meeting to present and review the budget.

b. Annual meeting – Rick M needs to receive examples of the Notice and the Minutes from previous Annual Meetings.

The Board will approve the Agenda for the June 13 Annual Meeting at its May 19 BOT meeting. Then the Notice and Proposed Budget can be sent out and meet the timing requirements for the Annual Meeting on June 13.

RICK M WILL CONTACT VICKY JUNGERS TO SEEK THESE ITEMS.

MAUREEN WILL LOOK FOR EXAMPLES AND SEND TO RICK M.

REV. AJ HAS ONE EXAMPLE AND WILL LOAD IT TO THE BOARD'S GOOGLE FOLDER.

REV. AJ WILL WORK WITH VICKY TO SEND OUT "SAVE THE DATE" NOTICES FOR JUNE 13.

GEOFF AND MARSHA WILL WORK WITH GARY KOERNER TO SCHEDULE A BUDGET FORUM FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 6.

c. Pandemic Recovery Task Force

The Board requests that the Pandemic Recovery Task Force (PRTF) convene to re-evaluate its previous recommendations on resuming in-person activities. This request is motivated by the now-advancing rollout of vaccines, and the newer guidance from federal and state public health experts. Highlights of the discussion:

- What do we need to do to get ready to resume in-person activities? What are the specific parameters for gatherings, both in the building and elsewhere?

- Suzanne, Ian Duncan and Amy Evans are standing by to determine the technology needs and approach to presenting a “hybrid” service – that is, live presentation in the building being simultaneously streamed online for those not attending in person.
- Rev. AJ has contacted Bob Niblack regarding the ventilation of the building. Bob’s recommendation is that it is best to open the big windows in the sanctuary. We will need to think about how comfortable that will be in the hot summer months. It is noted that the current HVAC systems are outdated and it will be a major expense (~\$15k) to replace them to a standard which will meet the current requirements.
- The CYRE Committee is asking for specific guidance for the children and youth activities in small groups, both indoor and outdoor. It is noted that children and youth won’t be receiving the vaccine nearly as soon as adults will.
- The PRTF prepared, and the Board has approved, our existing guidance which would have us returning to in-person activities no time soon. It is reasonable to expect that the same Task Force members, presented with the same request, will generate the same response. What exactly is asked of them:
 - To start working on the details of how to resume in-person activities – this makes sense
 - If the Board feels the current guidance is too restrictive, they need to provide clear direction. Five Board members provided input that the current guidance was too restrictive. This is not regarding vaccination but at what color tier do we allow small groups back into the sanctuary.
 - The CDC and State guidance updates, and the rollout of the vaccines, should have the effect of counties moving into lower-risk Tiers sooner. This is already accounted for in the way the existing guidance has been developed.
- Guidance from the UUA is based on the level of community spread of the disease, not the level of vaccination among congregation members.
- There is a concern about resuming in-person activities “because many people have been vaccinated already.” This sets up a two-tier scheme among the congregation between those who have had access to the vaccine already and those who have not.
 - If new SFUU guidance was based on individuals’ vaccination status, how would that be enforced? Or would it be preferable to create guidance where we come together when all can safely participate?
- There was specific discussion regarding a “skeleton crew” accessing the sanctuary to pilot the approach to live-streaming worship activities from there. The Board reviewed the existing policy and concluded that this level of activity should conform to the guidance for “Individual Access to the Church.” There are specific requirements for face covering, physical distancing, sanitizing surfaces, and contacting the church administrator which are appropriate for this activity.
- There was discussion regarding the diversity of risk tolerance among the membership. A desire was expressed to survey the congregation for input, so that everyone will feel engaged in this process and feel heard.
- We need to be able to explain the rationale behind the policy. The current document only lays out the requirements, but would benefit from a narrative about the principles that underlay these requirements.
- It was observed that as individuals, we are already doing other in-person activities (e.g., shopping), so it feels like we should be able to gather as a church community.

- The CDC continues to recommend that everyone avoid meeting in large groups.
- There should be enough vaccines for everyone by May, so we should be able to meet in person by June.
- We need this to regain a sense of community.
- We should also consider the option of some form of outdoor gathering.

Following this discussion, the Board reached consensus on the following requests for the PRTF:

1. Would they recommend any change to the existing policy, based on vaccine rollout and/or changed guidance from federal or state sources?
2. Begin work on the criteria for Large Group Meetings.
3. Give specific feedback for the needs expressed by CYRE – what should be the guidance for small group gatherings in this age group?

A future Board agenda item will be to put together a Board subcommittee to develop a process to survey the congregation. This might involve phone calls, Zoom groups and/or an online survey instrument. Calls should work from an agreed-upon script which is designed to manage expectations, and focus on what are people not getting, what needs not being met, by not being able to be in the building. The feedback is expected to be more qualitative than quantitative.

MAUREEN WILL PREPARE A RESPONSE TO CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM AMY EVANS, AND REV. AJ VOLUNTEERED TO ASSIST WITH THIS.

d. The Roof

Bob Niblack has noticed that the leaky area repaired last year is still leaking. He feels that spot repairs do not provide a guarantee that they will suffice, and that it is time to consider replacement. Following discussion, the Board concurred that it is time to get estimates for roof replacement, then develop a plan and recommend timing of how to proceed. It was noted that the estimates should consider whether it would be possible/appropriate to do the work over time in phases based on sections of the structure.

MARSHA WILL WORK WITH BOB NIBLACK TO FOLLOW UP ON THIS.

e. Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is beginning its process this week. Board members were asked to provide suggestions to Rick M for conveyance to the committee. Suggestions during the meeting included Leah Florence, Joan Harris, Ken Evans, Hank Florence, Carol Koons and Jeff Chamberlain. Additional suggestions can continue to be provided to Rick M.

9. Minister's Report

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

10. Committee Liaison Reports

Stewardship (Marsha) – pledges are expected to come in at about \$162,000 (our goal was \$165,000). There are still quite a few that have not yet been received, and the committee is following up with those people.

11. Right Relations

The Board reviewed Right Relations for this meeting, and extinguished the chalice. It was noted that there was some talking over each other, that there were deep feelings that were being expressed but we managed well, and that it was a good discussion overall.

MINUTES PREPARED BY RICK MARSHALL, SECRETARY