

Birmingham Unitarian Church  
Board of Trustees  
Meeting Minutes  
October 25, 2021

**Present:** Mary Gawel-Ensroth, Donna Larkin Mohr, Julia Pulver, Joanne Schouten, Amy Smalley, Diane Slon, Craig Stroup, Paul Vachon

**Absent:** Rev. Mandy Beal, Cheryl Shettel, Audrey Schreck

**Visitors:** Mary Jo Ebert and Brian Schandavel (Stewardship Committee); Rob Davidson (Leadership Development Committee); Todd Freeman

In response to the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic crisis, this board meeting was held virtually on the Zoom internet platform.

The meeting was called to order by Donna at 7:01 PM. Mary read the Board Covenant. Donna led the chalice lighting and check-in.

### **Minutes**

- Craig moved that the minutes of the September 27, 2021 board meeting be accepted. The motion was carried unanimously.
- To continue the process of transferring accounts from Huntington Bank to Level One Bank, Mary moved that the names of Barbara Woolf, Bruce Weber, and Claudia Kocher be removed from the Level One Money Market account; that Claudia Kocher's name be removed from the Level One Checking account; that the names of Donna Larkin Mohr, President; Craig Stroup, Vice President; and Diane Slon, Treasurer; be added to the Level One Money Market and Checking accounts; and that the name of Mary Gawel-Ensroth, Secretary, remains on the Level One Money Market and Checking accounts. The motion was carried unanimously.

### **Monthly Reports**

1. Treasurer's Report – Diane
  - a. Diane presented the Treasurer's Report (documents attached).
  - b. The BUC Endowment Funds decreased in value due to the state of the financial markets. Withdrawal from the funds in October to help cover repair and remediation costs associated with the June flooding event will further decrease the value of the funds.

- c. The Budget and Finance Committee has totaled all the expenses to be incurred for repair work and corrective actions resulting from the June flooding event to the BUC lower level and grounds. It seems that all the expenses are covered. This includes the use of a \$30,000 grant from the UUA disaster relief fund. The funding to cover the lower-level flooding expenses does not cover the Hodas Hall roof repair. The roof repair expense will be considered separately, and funding its cost will have to be planned at another time.
  - d. Mary asked that the board communicates with the congregation about the repair work and corrective actions being taken. Donna and Diane will work on this.
- 2. Minister-Executive's Report – Rev. Mandy
    - a. Rev. Mandy provided the Minister/Executive Report October 2021 (document attached).
  - 3. Youth Report – Audrey Schreck
    - a. Audrey is unable to be a youth representative on the board due to scheduling conflicts.
    - b. Donna has contacted another person to fulfill the role and is waiting for a response.

### **Unfinished Business**

- 1. Meeting/Workshop with Rev. Dan Update – Craig
  - a. Craig confirmed who will be attending the workshop on October 30, 2021.
  - b. Craig will send out a reminder email of reading assignments.
- 2. Stewardship – Mary Jo Ebert and Brian Schandavel
  - a. A total of 263 households pledged \$506,000 for the 2021-2022 church year. Results of data analysis from 2015 to July 2021 and a strategy to move forward were presented.
  - b. The analysis shows some trends:
    - i. More household units are represented by one person.
    - ii. There has been a steady decline in membership due to deaths, leaving the church, or moving from the area. New membership is not keeping up with the pace of the decline.
    - iii. The average household pledge from 2015 to July 2021 has increased.

- iv. The pledge distribution history from 2015 to July 2021 indicates that pledges of \$2400 and up remain stable, while pledges below \$2400 show the most fluctuations.
  - v. The distribution of July 2021 pledges reveals that one-third of the congregation is responsible for 64 percent of the total amount pledged, while two-thirds of the congregation is responsible for 36 percent of the total amount pledged.
  - c. The Stewardship Committee requested the following from the board:
    - i. Connect and check in with about 20 households who did not respond to the pledge drive.
    - ii. Make sure that the budget process involves paying attention to actuals from the previous year when developing the new budget.
    - iii. Ensure the establishment of a system to guarantee the continuity of data year over year involving the Stewardship Committee, the Administrator, and the Treasurer.
  - d. The approach to stewardship must adapt to the significant changes of the last decade, including people's perceptions of religion and how experiences are valued. When considering individual motivations to pledge, it is wise to remember that people do not pledge to a budget. Rather, potential pledgers must feel connected and noticed in order for an experience to be valued and a pledge to be made.
  - e. The Stewardship Committee members are availing themselves of UUA resources and attending a workshop in November.
3. Racial Justice Update – Mary Jo Ebert
- a. A pilot program, Living the Pledge to End Racism, has begun. It is based on a program developed by the Richmond UU congregation.
  - b. The program deals with what it means to be an antiracist and what it means to be an antiracist congregation.
  - c. Each participant engages in personal introspection and develops an action plan.
  - d. The GUUSH group has adopted the Eighth Principle and will be communicating this to the congregation on November 7, 2021.
  - e. Board members are encouraged to be aware and supportive of what Social and Environmental Justice (SEJ) is doing and to engage with congregants when social and environmental justice conversations are started.

4. Committee Chairs Update – Donna
  - a. With no current chairperson for the Revenue Committee, board members were asked to volunteer as rotating leaders and schedule committee meetings for November, January, March or April, and June. The leader’s responsibilities would include scheduling a meeting, preparing an agenda, inviting all revenue-generating leaders, arranging and distributing the Zoom link, and passing the information to the next leader.
  - b. Amy, Paul, and Joanne volunteered to take on leader roles.
  - c. A future discussion will take place to find a permanent chair.
  - d. Board members were asked to submit ideas to Mary on a process for vetting fundraising ideas. Rev. Mandy will also be consulted.
5. Constitutional Revisions Update – Donna
  - a. Keith Ensroth, along with Donna and Craig, will hold their first task force meeting in November.

### **New Business**

1. Governance and Ministry Discussion – Donna
  - a. Board members had been asked to read Chapters 4 and 6 of *Governance and Ministry* by Dan Hotchkiss, focusing on collaborative leadership, governance and ministry, true committees, task forces, and John Carver’s mixing bowls.
  - b. New board members, as well as the other members, were asked to share their thoughts on a balance of power between the minister and the board, how to listen to the larger community, and a way forward that is inclusive.

### **Issues Arising for the Good of the Church**

- Amy reminded everyone about the Flamingo fundraiser.

### **Visitor Comments and Questions**

- Rob Davidson expressed how confident he is that the church is in good hands. He thanked the board for having the opportunity to visit as a member of the Leadership Development Committee and the Membership Committee. He asked board members to send any membership ideas to him and Kris Schreck.
- Todd Freeman stated that visions and missions need to be values based.

Craig moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Gawel-Ensroth, Secretary