

Birmingham Unitarian Church
Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
November 22, 2021

Present: Rev. Mandy Beal, Mary Gawel-Ensroth, Donna Larkin Mohr, Julia Pulver, Joanne Schouten, Cheryl Shettel, Amy Smalley, Diane Slon, Craig Stroup, Paul Vachon

Visitors: Jeff Kingzett (Environmental Action Team), Jane O'Neil (Environmental Action Team and Leadership Development Committee)

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. Rev. Mandy led the chalice lighting and check-in.

Minutes

- The minutes of the October 25, 2021 board meeting had been approved by email vote.

Monthly Reports

1. Treasurer's Report – Diane
 - a. Diane presented the Treasurer's Report (documents attached).
 - b. Craig moved that the Treasurer's Report be accepted. The motion was carried unanimously.
 - c. Diane reported that the Budget and Finance Committee had discussed the Hodas Hall roof repair, which could take place this November or next spring.
 - d. Rev. Mandy raised a point of order to clarify that the board does not need to approve making the repair as this decision is within the purview of the executive.
2. Minister-Executive's Report – Rev. Mandy
 - a. Rev. Mandy referred to the Minister/Executive Report November 2021 (document attached).
 - b. Concerning the state of the RE program, BUC's situation is on par with the programs in the area. Multi-platform classes are available; yet participation is low as the children and teens

continue to adapt to the many stressors of the ongoing pandemic in their lives.

- c. Attention to RE families will be included in the Stewardship process.
- d. Rev. Mandy also announced that she has been received into full fellowship by the UUA Ministerial Fellowship Committee, after meeting a set of standards during a three-year probationary period.

Unfinished Business

1. Sustainability Plan – Jane O’Neil and Jeff Kingzett
 - a. This item was added to the agenda.
 - b. To review, the Green Sanctuary is part of the Environmental Action Team which is part of Social and Environmental Justice.
 - c. One of the goals of the Green Sanctuary is to lower the congregation’s carbon footprint by creating a comprehensive, three-to-five-year sustainability plan for the organization.
 - d. A core group of people will be involved in the effort with input from across the congregation.
 - e. A timeline will be developed to work on this project. Once a plan is put together, the congregation will be involved in various educational endeavors. Finally, the plan will be presented for a congregational vote at the annual meeting.
 - f. Rev. Mandy invited Jane and Jeff to come to a staff meeting to inform the staff of this work.
2. Meeting/Workshop with Rev. Dan Hotchkiss – Donna
 - a. As a follow-up to the workshops, everyone was asked to prepare a question for Rev. Dan. The questions included:
 - i. What would be a reasonable amount of time to go through the process of changing our model of governance?
 - ii. What is exactly in the Carver model that needs to be changed?
 - iii. In churches that have implemented a thriving model of Hotchkiss, does it become easier for the Leadership Development Committee to recruit volunteers for leadership positions?
 - iv. I need further clarification between what our church has as existing board policies and the policies that are given as examples in the “Board Policy Book” (Appendix B, pp. 208-

224) in *Governance and Ministry*. The example policies more closely resemble the structure, if not totally the content, of what we have in our Carver model of policy governance.

- v. I like the yearly scheduling of the components of the Hotchkiss model. With everything being so fluid now due to the pandemic, could the model be changed to accommodate our present-day circumstances? Should we give the same consideration we are giving our children to the adults in our congregation?
 - vi. When setting goals, what is our responsibility in the present day? For example, how do we address what will happen in three years?
 - vii. How can the Hotchkiss model be implemented when there are limitations to accomplishing goals using the Zoom platform?
 - viii. Regarding responsibilities of board members, how can we predict how those responsibilities will change in light of what is going on in the present-day pandemic environment?
- b. Rev. Mandy, Donna, and Craig will meet with Rev. Dan.
3. Update on Candidates – Donna
- a. There is currently no chairperson for the Revenue Committee. Amy, Paul, and Joanne have agreed to be rotating leaders and schedule committee meetings for November, January, March or April, and June.
4. Constitutional Revisions Update – Donna
- a. The team (Donna, Craig, and Keith Ensroth) held a meeting on November 4, 2021, and plan to meet again on November 30, 2021.

New Business

1. Governance and Ministry Discussion – Donna
- a. Board members were asked to read Chapter 8 of *Governance and Ministry* by Dan Hotchkiss.
 - b. Julia summarized the Annual Vision of Ministry along with Questions and Visions, Year by Year.
 - c. Joanne summarized the Board's Year/Goals, Open-Question Work.
 - d. It was suggested that the Budget and Finance Committee should look at the Annual Vision of Ministry.
 - e. Rev. Mandy will send a copy of the Annual Vision of Ministry to Mary to be included in the Board Google Drive.

2. Follow-Up to the Workshops with Rev. Dan Hotchkiss - Donna
 - a. Rev. Mandy suggested that the Hotchkiss model be used for planning the Vision of Ministry and development of policies as issues arise, while the existing Carver model can be used for conducting the day-to-day business of the church.
 - b. Cheryl, Amy, and Mary have volunteered to be part of a task force for the follow-up work. Rev. Mandy recommended that the task force develop an orientation for new board members as well as a plan for ongoing training.
 - c. The task force will meet with Rev. Mandy to determine the scope of the work.
 - d. Rev. Mandy, Paul, and Craig will meet to work on congregational open questions.
3. Holiday Cookies for Edward Rose Firm – Donna
 - a. Cheryl will purchase and deliver the cookies as a thank you for the use of the firm's parking lot on Sundays.
 - b. Board members will be contacted about reimbursement.
4. Rev. Mandy asked that an executive session be held after the board meeting.

Issues Arising for the Good of the Church

- No issues were raised.

Visitor Comments and Questions

- Jane commented that the meetings are always interesting.

Cheryl moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Gawel-Ensroth, Secretary