

## Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church Meeting of the Board of Trustees

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was held at Unitarian House with the following Trustees in attendance: Mark Tomlinson, President; Betty Luff, Vice President; Mac McMahan, Treasurer; Donald Zeilman, Clerk; Ellen Kerr; Matt Merriman-Preston; Ex officio: Rev. David McFarland. Andy Schwarz excused.

### I Gathering

Mr. Tomlinson called the meeting to order at 7:09 PM, Reverend McFarland shared words for the chalice lighting. Clerk determined that there was a quorum present at the call to order.

### II Administration

1. Minutes of the March 5 meeting were distributed electronically for review. Clarifications and corrections were noted. Clerk will amend.

2. Minister's Report: Reverend McFarland, distributed electronically. Rev. McFarland states his hope that the Board will find the information presented to be helpful. Mr. Tomlinson states that it was useful, but is of the opinion that operational items under the Minister's control should also be reported. Additionally, staff issues or items directly related to Board function might be reported (perhaps discussed in executive session, if sensitive).

Rev. Dave suggests that such items may be more appropriate in the Business portion of the meeting, with the Minister's Report continuing to promote and inform the high-level functioning of the Board. The Minister does not actually "report" to the Board as a committee or task group might, so issues and items are more appropriately discussed under the business of the Board.

It was noted that perhaps the President and Minister should conduct their own meeting as suggested by the spirit of the Ministerial Letter of Agreement (much the same way that the Committee on Ministry does not report to the Board but consults with the President and Minister).

3. Financial Report: Mr. McMahan notes that the Church budget has moved to a \$2800 deficit. He cites higher-than-normal utility bills, denominational assessments paid, and payment of the Share the Plate gift. The question of counting the face value of held Giant Eagle cards as assets was once again raised. Mr. McMahan states that the discussion is on going.

4. Report of the Clerk: Mr. Zeilman states that membership stands at 78. Notes that annual reports are due by 14 April, and that a notice was sent out stating same. Board suggests another reminder be sent out before the deadline. Clerk agrees.

Reports accepted by assent.

### III Business

1. Share the Plate Initiative: Mr. Tomlinson states that our gift to Dreams of Hope will be the largest since initiation of the program. Further, that attempts to contact Gwen's Girls around being our second-quarter justice partner have not been successful, as we have received no replies to our inquiries.

Mr. Tomlinson asks the Board to consider the Jefferson Recreation Center Summer program. Noted that the Center and its programs are City programs, not a 501c3 entity. Ms. Kerr will try and make contact with them and work with Mr. Tomlinson before the next quarter's partner is announced.

Other possibilities noted were: YMWABA, N.S.YMCA summer programs, gun violence initiatives (End Gun Violence Task Force [PIIN] would use the money for training and promotion; we have already funded Jeron Cares).

2. Sabbatical Committee: Ms. Kerr reports that the Committee has yet to establish a regular monthly meeting, but are trying to put it on the calendar. Committee suggests that the Board members meet with congregants one on one to discuss the upcoming sabbatical.

3. Nominating Committee: Mr. Merriman-Preston reports that the Committee has been in conversation with prospective candidates, and that it will be able to circulate names in a couple of weeks. He stated that they should have all of the names by April 14.

4. Endowment Committee: Mr Tomlinson reports that his research around a possible previous Board commitment to "seed" the endowment fund with some money from savings has not produced any information. He has so far reviewed 2005–2006, when the process to establish such a fund was mentioned within current financial history. More research would have to be completed.

Mr Merriman-Preston suggests that the current Board take up the discussion from the beginning. The Board's better understanding of the current financial situation, the need for the Board's ultimate vote, and the desire to be efficient with Board time, make that suggestion viable. It is also noted that the endowment must be funded \$25,000 or more before it can be managed as part of the UUA endowment fund program.

Mr. Tomlinson asks for a sense of the Board on this issue. Mrs. Luff states that most endowment monies traditionally come from bequests, but a commitment as directed by the Board would show that the leadership is taking the endowment seriously, would bring it into the congregation's consciousness, and would be an driver for growth.

Mr. Merriman-Preston notes that a \$25,000 dollar transfer, for example, is a very large commitment and wonders about the time of return. Mr. Tomlinson notes that from a stewardship perspective, we can both meet budget and save for the future.

Mr. McMahon notes that it is unfortunate that we hadn't already earmarked some money as an investment in our future, but is also cautious since we are still operating at a deficit.

Question: can we (the Church) bring the fund up to the \$25,000 level through a combination of investment and matching fund raising? Are we reaching into the “wrong pocket” to have a matching investment? Perhaps the symbolism of an outright gift from the congregation (savings) is still the most valid and useful.

Mr. Tomlinson asks whether it would be possible to decide by the Annual Meeting (and a vote), or is that too soon? Should the Board seek the opinion of the Finance Committee?

Rev. McFarland states that a commitment to the endowment should be seen and presented as an investment in the future and not as a restriction on the current congregation or a vote of “no confidence” in the current leadership.

Mr. Tomlinson asks that the discussion continue at the next Board meeting, after further consideration by the Trustees and discussion with Finance.

5. Board role in committee and staff spending with regard to the budget: Mr. McMahon raises the question following recent discussions around pay rate for hiring substitute musicians. He is concerned with the process, not with the amounts, and with establishing precedents in compensation where there are none.

Points: Does the Board need to approve spending within individual budget lines? Should the question just be “are you still within budget?” In terms of the musicians, is it a compensation issue or and expense issue? Should we not trust the committees and ministries to make their budgeted expenditures?

Resolved: The Board does not want to micro-manage the budgeted expenditures, and sees the hiring of musicians as an expense, not a change in compensation level. Further, that the Treasurer is appropriately concerned with monitoring these processes.

#### IV Adjournment

Mr. Tomlinson adjourned the meeting and the chalice was extinguished.

Next meeting, May 7, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald G. Zeilman, Clerk 2012–13