

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: Kate Tomlinson, President; Sarah-Wade Smith, Vice President; Donald Zeilman, Clerk; Matt Merriman-Preston, Treasurer; Badger Kopnitsky; and Patrick Burke.

Ex officio: Rev. David McFarland, not present

I Gathering

Kate Tomlinson called the meeting to order at 7:08PM. Patrick shared words for the chalice lighting. A quorum was present at the call to order (six of six Trustees). Kate previously distributed the agenda electronically; calls for additions or changes. Zeilman requested a brief check-in on the process of amending the Bylaws.

II Administration

1. Minutes of the November 25, 2019 meeting are pending. Will be available for the next Board meeting.

2. Financial Report: Matt Merriman-Preston. The financial report (Oct/Nov) was distributed electronically. October finances are reconciled, nothing unusual to note.

November pledge receipts are high compared to November 2018. November expenses were as anticipated.

The cash received in the special collection on December 1 was turned over to Rev. Tines, who then provided a notice of receipt. Treasurer recommends that all future collections of this kind be processed through the church financial system.

Kate and Matt will follow up on the status of pledge payments. Annual giving reports will need to be sent out to donors by the end of January.

The challenge around obtaining volunteers is having an effect on fund raising and facilities rental revenue; both are under-budget.

Unplanned change in Worship speakers or musicians results in additional work in bookkeeping. Cricket Nuttle has been volunteering to make sure requests are processed timely and accurately.

3. Minister's Report: Rev. Dave submitted his report electronically prior to the meeting.

Board notes the report paragraphs on volunteers: "... we've still not hit the right balance between what we want to do and the volunteer capacity to do it. After-worship-service-begins, Caroling, Christmas Eve, Worship Musicians, Alternative Break . . . they all would benefit from more volunteers. Or we do less." and, "This [Alternative Break] has become one of our main justice efforts, so I hope there's somebody on the Board (not the President) to work with Mark on recruiting more Alternative Break volunteers." Board will continue to address these concerns. Also noted that techniques for recruiting volunteers (e.g., in-person ask, focused need) will require consideration.

4. Report of the Clerk: Zeilman notes that membership stands at 68. Annual Certification is due at the end of January. Zeilman will send Matt the financial section of the workbook for use in compiling the required financial information.

5. Denominational Affairs: The second “Small Numbers, Infinite Possibilities” session was held in November. Zeilman reports that the session presented the idea that small congregations discern and develop a single focus for their energies and planning. Board would like to discuss this further, and noted that this idea of a single focus might effect the strategic plan.

Reports accepted by assent.

III Business

1. “Restart Weekend”: Kate notes that there has been some discussion around holding a “restart weekend” similar to the one that was held at the end of the last ministerial half-sabbatical. This would be the venue for considering the question of critical and less-critical function within the congregation. The gathering would include church leaders and those actively involved in committees and ministries.

Allegheny is at a “fork in the road,” having the strategic plan, the lyceum proposal, the single-focus effort, and Unitarian House all being major components. Part of our discernment is understanding what is realistic for Allegheny.

Board proposes that we reach out to Rev. Sunshine to facilitate this discussion on the focus and future of Allegheny. The meeting will probably take place after the mid-year meeting.

Kate will reach out to Rev. Sunshine and discuss content and date. Will then follow up with the proposed participant leader group.

2. Healthy Conflict: As noted during a review of the proposed strategic plan at the October meeting, the re-covenanting process (policy) is not functioning. At the November meeting, Patrick volunteered to contact trained mediator, Yvette Shipman about conducting a workshop at Allegheny. Yvette would like more detail about the process, such as the size (whole congregation?) and the current process. Board proposes a one-half day workshop. Patrick will continue to be in touch with Yvette.

3. Bylaw Amendment Process: Board continues to discuss the possibility of a smaller Board of Trustees, one that more appropriately matches the congregation’s size. Noted that the smaller board size brings with it a revised process for board work that may require delegating tasks, and more focus on policy and decision making.

Noted that this change would be a cultural shift. Also, there may be implications on incentive to join the Board when four of five Board members are officers.

Zeilman raises the question of a reduction in the size of the Endowment Board from five to three.

Zeilman suggests that he and Jill Brethauer may be willing to reconvene the Bylaws Committee, and work with the Board to draft amendments.

4. Nominating Committee: Clerk notes that a Nominating Committee will need to be appointed to consider possible candidates for the Board. Kate will have completed her second term, and will roll off. Matt will stand for re-election to a second term. Badger declines to run for a second term.

Patrick agrees to head the Nominating Committee, as he is a continuing Trustee. Zeilman will provide resource materials to Patrick.

5. Bequest Investments: Tabled.

IV Adjournment

Sarah-Wade moves to adjourn the meeting. **Motion carries.**

Kate Tomlinson adjourns the meeting and the chalice is extinguished.

Next meeting: January 20, 7:00pm at Unitarian House.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald G. Zeilman, Clerk 2019–20