

All Souls Church Unitarian Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

December 14, 2022

Trustees Present

Cait Clarke
Sophia Fisher, Secretary
Gretta Goodwin
Maya Hermann
Traci Hughes-Trotter, ex officio
Neil Manzullo, President
Bernard Mustafa, Treasurer
Clair Null
Bill Sinkford, ex officio
Chuck Wooldridge

Trustees Absent

Joe Feuer
Justis Tuia

Guests Present

None

Reports Received

- Executive Team Report
- Partial Monitoring Report for Executive Limitation #5

Convening

Neil convened the meeting at 7:08 p.m.

Chalice Lighting and Reading

Cait lit the chalice and shared a reading

11-1 Approval of Agenda

- *Motion to approve agenda*
 - Approved without objection

11-2 Approval of Consent Agenda

- Items on the consent agenda:
 - Approve Rev. Sinkford's housing allowance.
 - Approve October 2022 minutes
 - Approve November 2022 minutes
- *Motion to approve, seconded, approved without objection*

Item 12-3 Reflections on Financial Crisis

- Is the deficit linked to lack of pledges?

- The amount of pledges was well below budget—budgeted for more pledges than received
- Have we made changes to budget projections based on the history of low pledges?
 - Pledges come in waves—normal levels in Q1, 3, 4 and a spike in Q2 due to end of the calendar year giving
- How do we budget \$1.2 million without having that number supported by donations? Do we need to lower the budget?
 - The new budget process will now rely on pledges in hand at the end of the generosity campaign
- Will this year's audit be more expensive?
 - No, last year's was more expensive than this year's will be because it covered a longer time period (18 months instead of 12 due to the fiscal year change)
- Is 8 weeks for a pledge campaign the norm in other churches?
 - Generally no, but since ASC is behind the curve we want enough time to reach everyone
- How to communicate during the pledge campaign the consequences of not meeting the pledges needed?
 - More art than science
 - Vision is the best way to raise money
 - Funding our Future increased new pledges approximately \$200,000, or about ½ what is needed to fill the deficit
 - Still looking to increase funds by over 30% which is unheard of achievement
 - Quite likely we'll come up short in this year's pledge campaign
- Are we planning to tie the vision of what the budget is to the church goals?
 - Not yet scripted the conversation to the congregation
 - Maybe not specifics because the Board will have just finished adoption of the interpretations
 - Messages will reference goals
 - Won't know what goals we can message to until pledges start to come in
 - Goal language will be included in testimonials and messaging
 - Won't have the opportunity to develop a budget that skews funding towards specific goal areas in this cycle
- Are we thinking more broadly about how to reach people? Folks are still disconnected and there are lots we're not reaching
- Board reflection on the budget:
 - Is the median donation still low after funding our future?
 - Too soon to tell but likely not much—most donations came from those who already were giving so the average donation went up but not the median
 - We need to shift the focus from those who are already giving to those who are not
 - ASC has some catchup work to do—not going to be able to fix in one year, needs a major culture change
 - What is the Board's role in stewardship?
 - Board should consider making the stewardship and fundraising committee a Board committee
 - A Board committee has a more direct line to the BoT
 - The Executive Director is the chair of the stewardship and fundraising committee—it's not a question of monitoring and providing updates, it's a question of what the BoT's role in stewardship and fundraising is.

- The Board can no longer take a hands off approach to fundraising—needs to be involved with canvassing and calls
- What other creative ways can we get the BoT involved?
- BoT members could join stewardship committees
- Fundraising is also about soft touches that come out of relationships—we have to be in the habit of having those soft touch conversations
- Should we require a balanced budget?
 - Do not believe ASC is ready for a requirement to have a balanced budget
 - Does not have a sustainable financial model—there's more work to do and we do not have the culture of generosity that will support spending
 - 1-2 more years to get to a point where that would be sustainable
 - Need to get fundraising house in order
 - Need to match budget to pledges
- Is there a way to put in internal controls and a second set of eyes to ensure that budget mistakes do not happen again?
 - Changing the role of the accounting firm and moving the bookkeeper role to the accounting firm
 - Increase in accountability and responsiveness
 - Educating staff on how to apply funds and instituting internal checks on the process

Motion: Chuck and Cait will talk to the stewardship and fundraising committee about what we can do to help and also come back with an analysis of how stewardship and fundraising fits into the church structure.

- *Moved, seconded, passed unanimously*

Item 12-4 Goal #7 Interpretation

- Monitoring question—numerical data not especially helpful for this one, but also need an idea of what the church would look like if we met this goal
- Institutionally an area where ASC has struggled in the past few years—how do we know when we're making progress?
- Any thought of offering resources in how to be good pastoral care support—how to feel comfortable about being in the space of being attentive to needs
- The new congregational care group is a group of people who are going to set together to figure out how to improve processes
- How do we help people forge connections to the church?
 - Direct new people to educational opportunities
 - More training for greeters/ushers

Item 12-5 Transformation Team Report

Motion to approve report, seconded

Discussion: what does it mean to approve the report instead of receive it?

--approving because the report is coming from the BoT

Motion passed unanimously

Item 12-6 Exec Team Report and Partial ARAO Executive Limitation monitoring report

- Will the BoT relook at the wording of the limitations?

- Yes
- There has been a lot of progress on accessibility—love the new webpage
- New Interim RE director, Lara Profitt has deep experience with curriculum development and anti racism
- What about Jubilee Singers? What's the plan after Lenard retires?
 - There will be five contract directors over the spring before starting a search for a new permanent director
 - These guest directors are funded by a Beckner grant
- When is the RE director being announced?
 - Announcements have gone out to the RE community and staff, but the pulpit announcement will wait until she starts
- What's the timeline for being a canvasser/identifying someone to be a potential canvasser?
 - Early January
 - Training canvassers in January and February to be ready to go when the campaign starts
- Is the BoT ready to adopt new accounting practices?
 - Terminating the services of a bookkeeper who has been with the church for 15 years is not a decision that was taken lightly .
- Will combining the functions of accounting and bookkeeping have a budget impact?
 - May save a bit of money but will largely be budget neutral

Meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.