

# All Souls Church Unitarian Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

## January 24, 2023

### Trustees

Name	Present	Absent
Alan Abramson	x	
Pam Coukos	x	
Sophia Fisher, Secretary		x
Gretta Goodwin	x	
Maya Hermann, President	x	
Traci Hughes-Trotter, ex officio	x	
Brian Petruska, Treasurer	x	
Clair Null, Vice President	x	
Bill Sinkford, ex officio	x	
Justis Tuia	x	

### Officers

Danielle Henry, Moderator

Donna Olsen, Membership Secretary

### Staff Present

None

### Guests Present

Carolyn Fowler Smith

Erica Landberg

T Vatnick

Paula Cole Jones

### Reports Received

- FY2024 Q2 Financial Report
- Executive Team Report
- Developmental Ministry Congregational Record

### Convening

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m.

### Chalice Lighting

Justis lit the chalice and shared a reading on covenant by Lisa Ward

### Monthly Theme Reflections

Traci shared a reflection on the monthly theme of liminality

### **1-1 Approval of Agenda**

- *Motion to approve agenda*
  - Approved without objection

### **1-2 Consent Agenda**

- *Motion to approve agenda*
  - Approved without objection

### **1-3 Approval of Developmental Ministry Congregational Record**

T explained the purpose of the Congregational Record – essentially the job description for the

Developmental Minister and All Souls “dating profile” 😊. First part is the required information and second part comprises responses to optional questions recommended by the UUA. Search Committee and ET selected 11 questions to respond to. Draft was mostly prepared by Traci and staff, reviewed by Search Committee. Submission deadline is Jan 31. Revisions:

- Addition of section about Rev Hardies' ministry
- Paula has made some minor revisions to the history section, including additions to the description of Rev Eaton's tenure
- mention of Little Free Pantry

Tonight's vote will be on the basis that those changes will be incorporated, can ratify final changes via email by end of Friday.

Discussion:

- Many board members were very appreciative of all the work that went into the drafting and commended the Search Committee for the comprehensive but relatively concise description.
- Pam has sent a couple of small suggestions on the description of the events of the spring to acknowledge that we are still in the process of working through healing relationships that were harmed.
- Would be great to archive this for reference (and for our next search!)
- If possible, would have been good to include any positive contributions from Rev Aldridge (currently reads a little negatively).
- Rev Bill points out that this document will be used by the incoming minister to understand what they're coming into; a minister reading a description of another ministry that seems so negative will raise questions.
- This sort of history would be helpful for incoming board members (and other leaders) so that we all have a common and accurate narrative of the church.
- Traci recommends providing the history book to the candidates.

Motion: To approve the Congregational Record, incorporating any last changes submitted tomorrow and ratified by email on Friday, and submit it to the UUA.

Motion seconded and approved without objection.

Interview panel will be Morgan and Paula with Erica as an alternate. Traci will represent both board and search committee. Pam and Justis will also represent the board. Interviews will be between March 11-28. Interview panel will meet in Feb to work out questions and rubric.

### **1-4 2nd Quarter Financial Results**

Treasurer reports that 2nd quarter results are troubling, but we'll get through it. YTD contributions are under by \$136k. To make our budget, we'd need core donations of \$140k every month for the rest of the year; we've been hovering around \$100k every month. Currently we're about \$277k behind budget for

total income. Personnel expenses are a significant ray of light – almost \$100k less than budgeted so far. Brian suspects that the budget number might have been too high (we've been under budget every month). If that's the case, then we'll continue to underspend on personnel, which will help. Currently projecting end of year deficit of \$200k. ET are reaching out to pledgers who might have accidentally gotten behind on pledging – that could increase core donations. In July, we got the Employer Retention Tax Credit, \$355k (after fees associated with the application). We had intended to use that for the building, but we could use it to fill in the projected deficit. There are a couple of elements of the budget where we have some flexibility – denominational support was budgeted at \$60k (we haven't always paid this – including last year or year before that). We have a capital reserve planned (\$10k) which we could decide not to spend. Finance committee had planned to remove ERTC from our profit & loss statement (so we could reserve it for the building) but voted to factor it back in. Want our fiscal performance to be strong this year. We're coming out of 5 straight years of deficits. Prior to last year (which was fantastic), past 3 years were core donations of \$1.3M, so maybe we need to accept that's what we can raise (our budget called for \$1.7).

#### Discussion:

- Could explore whether there are any other mechanisms we could consider (how unemployment insurance is funded?)
- Are there differences in salaries between acting vs permanent staff? No, but they only started in Aug and Sept, so July and Aug personnel were lower. But that doesn't explain why we're underspending month after month.
- How does pledge fulfillment compare to past years? Pledge statements are regularly mailed, but there was a mistake in Sept such that only those who had paid something received a statement, so Sept and Oct were probably low. ET outreach then helped, currently reaching out to those who have still not paid anything – many are responding with "thanks for the reminder, will take care of this right away." Does not seem that last spring's turmoil has prompted people to withhold payments.
- Would it be appropriate to suggest that tax refunds can be used to fulfill pledges? Maybe a worship associate could do that well.
- Campaign stewards can ask where congregants stand on this year's pledge fulfillment.
- Even if we pull through this year, looks like we might have some tough choices to make for next year. We need to be prepared for that. Finance committee was emphatic that ERTC return should be shown as a line at the bottom so it's clear that it's not regular income.
- How should this year's budget process account for the need to consider a reduced budget? Standard process might be insufficient preparation for that decision. We will know pledges for next year again, but if last year's pledges are not fulfilled, we'll need to somehow communicate that. The main deviation is in non-pledge income (seems like with all the outreach, we got people who weren't pledging to pledge, but then that reduced the non-pledge income, which our budget assumed would be sustained).
- Finance committee is being more purposeful about transparency this year. January financials will be pivotal. That's when the communication to the congregation about the budget process should start.
- UU Fairfax went through this process recently, ended up reducing their second minister, but it was a 6 month process to get congregational buy-in for such a major adjustment. The need to restructure staff would significantly change our charge for the Developmental Minister.
- Could do another reminder that All Souls is now part of the Combined Federal Campaign (that money will start coming in April).

#### **1-5 Executive Team Report**

- Board members expressed gratitude for excellent and energetic music programming lately.

- Good momentum on RE too. Coming of Age service is on the calendar.
- Shout outs to Donna and Rose. Really valuable to have a board member at new member classes.

#### **1-6 Board Visibility with the Congregation**

- LDNC is soliciting info on current board members so that we can assess what characteristics/skills we need in the incoming class.
- Pam and Alan are organizing more systematic tabling after service. Can talk about upcoming board meetings (incl sharing agendas), capital campaign, search. Would be nice to have an update in the newsletter once a month – wouldn't require vote, but can share draft in advance.
- Good to have board members present at events
  - Core connections launch (another session coming up on Feb 4)
  - Capital campaign events (incl reception last Sat and launch luncheon on Feb 25)

#### **Motion to adjourn**

- Approved without objection
- Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.