

# All Souls Church Unitarian Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

## December 20, 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

### Staff Present

None

### Guests Present

Chuck Woolridge

Chuck Dulaney

Sam Trumbull

Jeff Wicklow

Anna Hargraves

Meridith Higgens

Mark Mathews

Barry Finkelstein

Roberta Finkelstein

### Reports Received

- Executive Team Report
- Financial Report

Note: The Board of Trustees received Brad Johnson's resignation from the position of Assistant Treasurer.

### Convening

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

## **Chalice Lighting**

Sophia lit the chalice and shared a reading

## **Monthly Theme Reflections**

Rev. Bill shared a reflection on the monthly theme of mystery and miracle

### **12-1 Approval of Agenda**

- *Motion to approve agenda*
  - Approved without objection

### **12-2 Consent Agenda**

- Approve additional FY 24 Beckner Grants

### **12-3 Discussion with the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee**

Sam Trumbull and Chuck Dulaney gave an update on the work of the LDNC over the past few months:

- LDNC has met every 2-3 weeks since July
- Conversations about LDNC roles
- Goal is to lay the foundation for more sustainable recruitment
- Continual recruitment cycle
- Conversations with Board sooner in the church year
- Connect people to leadership, help people understand what the church governance structure is and what the board is working on
- More Board transparency
- How can the LDNC support the Board
- Would the Board be open to having a table in Pierce Hall?
- Integrating new Board members

Discussion:

- What's the process for identifying Board needs? Is it a joint process with the LDNC?
  - Will every Board have different needs?
  - Board skills and identity assessment—LDNC can help with that and identify who is underrepresented and try to identify candidates who would fill the gaps.
- In favor of figuring out how to be more visible in church and having more conversations with congregants
- In favor of identifying structural ways for information to go out—needs to be purposeful and intentional
- More structured communication would be good
- Remind people that they can come to Board meetings, which are public except for Executive Sessions
- Make sure minutes are posted to the website
- Board members might attend other church committee meetings
- Create position descriptions for Board Secretary and Assistant Secretary
- Getting minutes out fast can sometimes be challenging
- Minutes might not be accessible—high level bullets might be better
- Transparency is more than documents, takes communication
- Is there a way to make more reports accessible to congregants?
- Worth thinking through the Assistant Secretary role and what they can do
- LDNC offered support for training new Board members
- Complexities of what and how to share with the congregation—some of the work the Board does doesn't leave a paper trail because it involves things like relationship building

- The Board has had a presence at events like the Find Your Ministry Fair and plans to continue doing so
- Strengths and gaps analysis—when should we complete that?
  - Based off the LDNC application cycle, probably by the end of February
  - Alan volunteered to be the liaison for this work

#### Recruitment challenges

- It is a challenging time in the church, which is making people concerned about serving; LDNC would like support from the Board on communicating with the congregation about the challenges
- Some congregants are still upset/feel unresolved about personnel actions that were taken in the Spring of 2023 and would like an update on the status of the HR resolution that was adopted in June of 2023
- Some people who come to mind for leadership roles are tapped out

#### 12-4 Building Updates

Traci and Rev. Bill gave a brief overview on planning for the building repairs and upgrades.

- What is the timeline?
  - Approximately 18 months until construction can start—need to go through permitting process and bid process, and there’s no definitive word on that timeline; may need to hire a permit expediter
- Sequencing is up in the air—don’t have an idea yet of what is going on in the RE classrooms
  - Phase A: repair of courtyard, boiler room, northwest corner of the terrace (impacts theater room and spirit room)
- Historic review needed?
  - Part of the permitting process, handled by the permit expediter and architect

#### 12-5 Capital Campaign Feasibility Study

Barry and Roberta Finkelstein gave a presentation on the results of the Capital Campaign feasibility study, the purpose of which was to determine the readiness of ASC for a potential CC. The study included 80 members/friends who comprised 62 pledging households. The data collection process also identified some challenges and messaging opportunities.

Results: very high support for the project; people were most concerned about the water infiltration.

#### Concerns:

- Can ASC raise the money?
- What is the timing?
- Challenges of recent conflicts
- Transitional minister and shorter term staff

Should be able to raise between \$4 and \$5 million.

- How were the people selected for interviews?
- What about the people who are pulling back on their pledges?
  - The leadership phase in January will provide more information
- Didn’t ask for firm pledges or try to sell the project—potential pledges could increase
- How long do we give to fulfill pledges?
  - 3 years is typical—in this case, 3 church years covers 4 calendar years

- Recommendation: Move forward with the Capital Campaign
- Reminder to also focus on and value the contributions of the lower dollar donors as well as the high dollar donors
- Need to communicate to the congregation about some of the events of the past year and pivot to the future
- The Board takes/demonstrates ownership and responsibility

Motion: To recommend the congregation vote in January 2024 to approve a capital campaign to make repairs described in the 2022 Kerns architectural building assessment and to pay off the church's outstanding mortgage balloon payment due in 2026.

Discussion on the motion

- Rephrase motion to set it as a goal, not a mandate
- Non-trivial amount of risk
- Need a strategy around engaging congregation about concerns
- Risks of not doing anything is unbearable
- Finance committee is working on financial planning for long term sustainability
- Results of Barry and Roberta's work were very helpful

Revised motion: To recommend the congregation vote in January 2024 to approve a capital campaign with the goals of making repairs described in the 2022 Kerns architectural building assessment and paying off the church's outstanding mortgage balloon payment due in 2026.

Revisions to the motion were approved; discussion continued on the motion as amended:

- Heartened by results of the study
- How will the congregational vote happen?
  - Communication will be mostly handled by the Capital Campaign steering committee
  - Vote will be online
  - There needs to be a communication plan from the Executive Team and the Capital Campaign steering committee. ET and CCSC will be campaign managers and will report to the Board
- Danielle would like to convene the church council and have information about the Capital Campaign

Vote on motion as amended: passed unanimously

- Is a congregational vote required?
  - No, but it is considered best practice and universally recommended

12-6 Developmental Ministry Goals

Pam, Brian, and Clair gave a brief overview of the revised goals.

- Need to manage expectations about the goals for the congregation
- Hope to adopt the goals as adopted and put them out as adopted and get feedback

Motion: To approve the developmental ministry goals for inclusion in the congregational record that will be shared with potential developmental minister candidates.

Motion was passed unanimously

## Final Developmental Ministry Goals

These are the All Souls goals for Developmental Ministry. During the Developmental Ministry period, All Souls will work to make progress on these goals. That work will be co-led by the Developmental Minister, in partnership with the Executive Director, and supported by the Trustees, staff and congregation. Recognizing that these are ambitious goals that cover a multi-year period, we understand the Developmental Minister will help us to prioritize, refine, and sequence the work needed to carry out these goals.

1. **Establish a financially sustainable path for the church that enables us to maintain our building and carry out our mission and goals.** This includes:
  - Carrying forward the capital campaign to a successful completion;
  - Effectively managing needed building repairs and advancing the Church's long-term financial plan;
  - Being faithful stewards of our financial obligations now and in the future;
  - Considering our potential for growth.
  
2. **Foster spiritual repair and restoration that enables our progress toward our existing church goal to become a multicultural, multiracial, multigenerational spiritual community that is grounded in authentic relationships, trust and belonging.** This includes:
  - Holding ourselves accountable to the living practice of our covenant of right relations;
  - Working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions;
  - Creating meaningful experiences of belonging for all members of our community, whether they participate in person or virtually;
  - Engaging in collective learning on how to welcome and support leaders with marginalized identities.
  
3. **Ensure our governance and operational framework enables us to achieve these two goals through shared ministry at a committee, staff, board, and congregational level.** This includes:
  - Building a shared understanding of committee, staff, board and congregational roles and responsibilities, so that we can more effectively work together in carrying out these goals;
  - Evaluating strengths and opportunities for improvement that would better enable us to meet our other Developmental Ministry goals, including our antiracism and anti-oppression commitments.

### 12-7 Finance Report and Update on Pledge Fulfillment

- November was better than October, but still not great—approximately \$182,000 below what we should be
- Finances look more like 2021-22 than last year; could change in December as people make end of the year donations
- Any potential savings on the expense side?
  - Under budget on expenses, especially on personnel

- Important for the church to end the year with a balanced budget and no deficit
- Main question is how to raise revenue, not how to cut expenses
- Making sure that everyone is getting statements, which is helping alert people about the status of their pledges
- Rev. Bill reached out to some who hadn't paid pledges—some are getting current, some haven't responded, and at least one is reducing their pledge
- There is still time to raise the money needed; worry is warranted but not panic

#### **12-8 Executive Team Report**

- The Playback Theater on January 6 is an incredible opportunity to start conversation
- Month to month attendance is down from last year

#### **Motion to adjourn**

- Approved without objection
- Meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.