



**Meeting Minutes  
Board of Trustees  
First Unitarian Church, South Bend  
April 12, 2023, 7:00 p.m.**

*Present:* Gail deSomer, Florence Klecka, Karen Dickson, Lynn Liston, Bill Stevens, Elena Wake, Rev. Chip Roush

*Absent:* Becky Lindstrom, Ken Chambers

*Guests:* Barbara Williams, Anne Mannix, Chuck Leone, Dan Holm, Louise Williams (via Zoom), Jerry Brooks (via Zoom)

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 7:10 by Bill Stevens. Chip led the Chalice Lighting. Next was check-in and recitation of Covenant.

**Approval of minutes**

Motion made to accept the March meeting minutes by Gail, Lynn seconded. Carried.

**Changes to Agenda**

Under Reports: Marketing Survey.

Under Old Business: Town Hall followup.

Under New Business: 2023-2024 Budget.

**Reports**

Reports from Minister, Treasurer and Committees received in packet. Additional information given in meeting:

*President:* Nothing to report, as Ken Chambers is in Budapest.

*Treasurer:* Gail asked about the difference in ending balances between two of the report pages. Elena said this was due to a transfer of funds.

*Committee Reports:*

**Stewardship Committee:** The canvass is incomplete. At this time we have pledges of \$114,113. Bill Stevens estimates that we will equal or exceed our 2022-23 level of \$130,000 once the canvass is complete.

**Endowment Committee:** Gail asked if the BOT needs to approve this report before the Annual Meeting in May. Chuck Leone said that there will be a few changes to it before then. Consensus was that the request for funds, which is above the allowed percentage this year, will be achieved by a combination of moving unused, previously granted funds, and asking for special permission from the congregation. Barbara Williams reminded the group that grant recipients need to report on whether the funds have been spent, and if they intend to finish the project after the church year. If so, they need to reapply. Karen D. asked if the Invisible Church fund was from an Endowment grant. Gail said that it had been part of the Beverly Tudor bequest. Barbara W. mentioned that money was borrowed from the Endowment Fund when the building was being renovated, and it needs to be repaid.

**Marketing Committee:** Louise Williams mentioned (see attached report) that six more responses have come in for her survey. The main concerns are the need for growth, visibility in the community, positivity, and clarity about what our church stands for and does. Rev. Chip: What are your next steps? Louise: Look for action items in the responses, for a mid-range plan. Gather more opinions to make said plan. Bill: There is a lot from the last two Town Hall meetings to consider.

## **Old Business**

*Board Town Hall Meeting Issues Followup:* Louise reported being confused and a bit upset to hear about a “group of 12” and wondered if they were a separate authority. Bill: No, they were a group who met to discuss church issues and to make suggestions. We are a democratic organization, after all. Florence: Board committee liaisons, this is the cue to take the Town Hall suggestions aimed at your committees to them to work on. Lynn: Organizations tend to have historical memories; older members know unwritten rules, which can be a challenge to newer people. We must work to incorporate newer members into the processes, and to pass the torch. Anne: Eric Morgan said this is very true, that it is not always known whom to contact for specific knowledge, permission, etc. Lynn: Must avoid the “we’ve always done it this way” trap. Barbara: Reading minutes of past meetings of committees and other groups is useful, but seldom done. Louise: I know I need to collaborate with Jim Ward on concert promotion. But newer people tend to be more adaptable. Barbara: Feedback sessions directly after events are helpful, especially if written down.

## **New Business**

*2023-2024 Budget:* As his salary is included in the budget, Rev. Chip excused himself and left the meeting. Elena reminded the group that the five budget options are just possibilities (see draft budget sheet). Discussion included the following topics:

- History of deficit budgets is not sustainable; takes money out of savings.
- Changes and adjustments to draft budget
- We are in a better place than before the move, with better building, \$300,000+ endowment, and \$30,000 in savings.
- What is the structure of a sabbatical?
- Is it feasible to have a  $\frac{3}{4}$  time or even  $\frac{1}{2}$  time minister? Will the money saved be worth the fallout (losing members, hurt feelings, extra work for volunteers)? How important is the minister’s role?
- Per the UUA, a church in our geographic location should have 250+ members.
- Who are we, what is our image in the community? What does the church provide? How can this be translated into funds?
- Social media marketing is a start; full-time minister is the default “face” of a church to the community.
- Why do people leave the church? Usual reasons: moving, not right fit; life circumstances; issues with certain people.
- Should the office personnel get raises? Consensus is yes.
- Should we incorporate a \$7,000 grant from Endowment Fund to pay down the mortgage principal? Consensus is yes. It is just moving assets from one place (savings) to another (building equity).
- Continue to have no Director of Religious Education next year? Consensus is yes, not enough children to warrant the expense at this time.
- Can there be a six-month budget, to see if marketing efforts bring in more money? Possibly, if plans are made in those six months.
- Is it feasible to ask for a \$26,000 deficit budget to be approved, and what happens if it does not pass? An amended budget would have to be proposed later.
- Staff evaluations need to be performed. What steps must be taken and by whom to make this happen?
- Need to hire a facilitator for long-range planning, to discuss issues not resolved.

Shortly after 10 p.m., the guests left the meeting.

## **Other Business**

It was decided to have an additional Board meeting to finalize the proposed budget next week. Elena is to prepare an amended budget sheet.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 p.m.

Next Board of Trustees Meeting: Wednesday, May 10, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. eastern time, via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by:

Florence Klečka, Secretary, Board of Trustees