



**Meeting Minutes
Board of Trustees
First Unitarian Church, South Bend
September 13, 2023, 6:30 p.m.**

Present: Gail deSomer, Chuck Leone, Florence Klecka, Bill Stevens, and Dan Holm (in person); Jeremiah Cox, Rev. Chip Roush and Lynn Liston, via Zoom.

Guests: Anne Mannix and Barbara Williams (in person); Karen Dickson and Mary Alice Lundergan via Zoom.

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:40 by Bill Stevens. Rev. Chip led the Chalice Lighting. Next was check-in and recitation of Covenant.

Approval of minutes

Motion made to accept the August meeting minutes by Dan, with the proviso that the words “committees weren’t asked to help” be replaced by “the Task Force was duplicating the work of the committees.” Gail seconded. Carried.

Changes to Agenda

None.

Reports

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

President: Bill advised us to see Agenda for clues.

Minister: Jeremiah asked about only gift cards being handed out via the Ministerial Discretionary Fund (MDF). Rev. Chip said that checks are not currently a reliable way to help those in need, and he is not currently allowed use the church credit card, which would be faster. Lynn advised the Board to be ready to discuss the MDF at our next meeting. Chuck noted that Finda is working as fast as she can, so we need to understand what will work in our specific circumstances.

Treasurer: In Elena’s absence, Chuck as Finance Committee liaison, with notes from Kathy Vetter, gave the report.

- Elena has formally resigned.
- Account 330, in Telephone, is the catch-up bill from Enfocus. From hereon, it will be about \$55/month.
- Account 750, Denominational Dues, is paid quarterly.
- For the Defeat the Deficit program, payments by check will go into the 115 line; payments via Vanco will go through 150, Other Contributions. Both are tax-deductible. The 145 line is for fundraisers in which the donor gets something in return, in which case it is not tax-deductible.
- Account 360, Security, will have an expense due in 2026 of about \$1,000. Anne Mannix volunteered to call them and ask what it is for, so we are not paying several firms for the same thing.

Task Force: Jeremiah reported that the Committee and Task Force retreat went well, although Chuck lamented that he had expected the committee representatives to be asked to give reports on their status, accomplishments, and needs. Bill said that the October BOT agenda will include revisiting the Strategic Plan, which might help.

Committee on Ministry: This committee still needs one more person, and Bill asked for any suggestions. The two current members will still meet with the Board on Monday, Sept. 18.

Old Business

Task Force Committee Retreat and Committee on Ministry items were covered in the reports.

New Business

Building Use request: Gary Looney has asked about using our basement for storing about a dozen pieces of furniture. We would naturally charge him less than he would pay for a storage unit. Gail moved that the church charge him \$50/month to store whatever can fit through the elevator, stairwell, or doors, with the understanding that he is responsible for insurance and the actual transportation of the pieces. Lynn seconded; motion carried.

Office Staffing Request: Pat Davis is anxious for help with the Chirp and Order of Service, which she feels overwhelmed by. Discussion: One problem is people being unclear or uncooperative about deadlines for items to be put into the Chirp. Firmer deadlines might help. MailChimp, used to distribute the Chirp, is also slow and might be replaced. Another problem is the awkward formatting of the Order of Service, which predates Pat's arrival. Mary Alice offered to look at it and see what might work better and more efficiently. The Board asked Rev. Chip to tell Pat that her concerns are being addressed, especially the deadlines and seeing what help might be available for the Chirp and Order of Service.

Treasurer Resignation/Finance Committee meeting with Board: In her resignation letter, Elena alluded to "shady financial practices," but did not elaborate. Chuck noted that, per the Bylaws, the BOT replaces the Treasurer at their discretion, with four or more members' approval. The interim issue is that Fern Hamlin is the Assistant Treasurer, and is responsible for making bank deposits. Kathy Vetter is responsible for reconciling the bank accounts. By Article 6, Section 3, these duties must be segregated, and therefore Kathy Vetter should be also named an Assistant Treasurer. Chuck is, for now, willing to give Treasurer reports as the Finance Committee liaison *only*. Neither Kathy Vetter nor Fern Hamlin is willing to become Treasurer.

Gail moved that both Kathy Vetter and Fern Hamlin be officially named Assistant Treasurers, and that the Perpetual Calendar have this official designation occur every July. Jeremiah seconded; motion passed.

Anne asked if the MDF policy is being followed. Chuck informed the BOT that Barbara Williams, in lieu of the Treasurer, will meet with Rev. Chip to go over the records of the MDF, which, per the policy, must be done quarterly. She will then report to the BOT afterwards. Bill advised Board members to go over the policy again, in case any additions or changes are needed to satisfy doubts. Dan moved to have Barbara Williams meet with Rev. Chip to determine that the MDF policy is being followed, and to rectify any problems, so that a new Treasurer comes in without this issue to resolve. Chuck seconded; motion passed.

As to the Finance Committee meeting with the Board, Bill suggested that we will have feedback about the MDF from the Finance Committee after their next meeting, and we can move on to other issues (cost benefit analysis of 501(c)(3) status, etc.) after that.

Setting Minister Goals: We will talk about the Minister Evaluation survey on Monday, with the Committee on Ministry, and come up with goals then.

Town Hall Meeting: Do we need an October Town Hall meeting? Perhaps November? Lynn suggested that the Pulpit Host just make announcements about what the Board is doing every month or so. Bill promised to do so on October 1, when he is the Pulpit Host next. Dan noted that people are wondering how the survey results will be used. Lynn suggested we start on a report to the congregation at and after Monday's meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Next Board of Trustees Meeting: Monday, September 18, 6:30 p.m., in the Conference Room. Executive Session, to discuss the Ministerial Evaluation results.

Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting: Wednesday, October 11, 2023, 6:30 p.m., in the Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted by:

Florence Klečka, Secretary, Board of Trustees