



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

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

Absent: Dan Holm

Guests: Rin Adams, Barbara Williams.

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:35 by Bill Stevens. Rev. Chip led the Chalice Lighting, then check-in and recitation of the Covenant followed.

Changes to Agenda

Old Business was to include posting of the Office Administrator job listing; the O.A.'s pay raise; Bookkeeper's pay raise; the January Congregational Meeting agenda, and the MDF report. Changes to the Covid and Severe Weather policies and the Marsha Shuman memorial would go into New Business.

Approval of minutes

Gail moved to accept the November 8 meeting minutes, seconded by Lynn. Carried.

Reports

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

Treasurer:

- David agreed to try to determine why the Endowment Fund lost about \$27,000 in one month, as there were no notes in the statements to explain it. The most likely reason is investment market fluctuations.
- Barbara Williams mentioned that future statements about fundraisers would make it clearer how much net profit was made.
- Jeremiah noted that the church website now has a button that donors can press to cover Vanco expenses.
- Jeremiah asked the Finance Committee to look into investing money into short-term CDs, as the rates are good now.

Stewardship: Chuck and Gail talked about updating a brochure from 2018 which was fairly successful. Plans have been made to work with those who don't usually pledge much, if at all, and more information will be shared about what a good pledge amount would be (for the member and the church).

Old Business

Office Administrator pay raise: Gail moved that the office administrator's pay rate be adjusted to the new rate of \$19/hour as of 1/1/24. Chuck seconded. Jeremiah asked how long the church could last without a (paid) administrator; Rev. Chip felt possibly a few months at best. Generally, such interim people are paid. Motion carried, with one abstention.

Bookkeeper pay raise: Florence moved that the Bookkeeper's pay rate be adjusted from \$19/hour to \$19.50/hour of 1/1/24. Gail seconded. Motion carried.

Office Administrator job posting:

- Barbara suggested that the job description be posted on the physical church bulletin board, so friends and members can recommend to any people they know to apply; she also noted that the United Religious Community (URC) would know about any administrators who might be looking for employment.

- Rev. Chip will post the job listing on the website, as well as announcing it from the pulpit; Dr. Louise Williams will post it on the Facebook page; Gail will post it on two neighborhood groups she belongs to; Jeremiah will create a new website tab for job openings. The Indiana Employment (WorkOne) will also receive it.
- Craigslist and INdeed charge for listings; since Craigslist only charges \$20, we will post it there.
- All postings should be completed by this weekend.
- Rev. Chip will forward any responses to Lynn and Bill, so they can start interviewing.
- Chuck will perform background checks to eliminate undesirable candidates.

New Business

Covid Policy: Because of the changes in the CDC's treatment of Covid risk status, there was confusion last weekend about whether food would be allowed after the service. Therefore, Florence moved, Gail seconded, and the Board voted, that:

- The default site to check for the current St. Joseph County Covid status is the one on the church website.
- The church Covid policy will adjust the Yellow status action to say that singing with masks is permitted, and remove references to food and drinks indoors. For the Orange status, social distancing and masking are required, and a K95 mask is strongly recommended.
- The Red status will be removed.
- The words "wastewater data" will be added to the "Please note" section on the website.
- The church website should mention the latest available booster shot (September 2023).

Severe Weather Policy: David suggested we follow the South Bend Community Schools Corporation guidelines, which is updated daily, to determine whether to cancel services. This should be done the night before the service, by the Board President (Vice President or speaker may also do it, if the President is unable). An announcement to check Facebook, MailChimp, or the church website will be made from the pulpit in the next few weeks, and Florence will ask Pat to put this information in the Chirp. Lynn agreed to call the snow removal contractor, to confirm that he is still willing to continue in this capacity.

Building Use request: Bob Shuman, a former church member, has offered to pay \$1,000 to hold a memorial service for his late wife, Marsha, April 12. The Board agreed that this is a Good Thing.

January Congregational Meeting Agenda: Since many ideas for the meeting were mentioned, it was agreed that no business would likely be conducted. Instead, a maximum of ten minutes per topic would be encouraged, to ready people to vote on the topics at a later meeting, probably in May if not earlier.

- Barbara Williams will open discussion on calling "Religious Education" or RE, "Lifelong Learning."
- She will also open discussion on changing the name of the church to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of South Bend.
- The ministerial evaluation will be discussed, with the Board's and Rev. Chip's responses to be shared with the congregation.
- The Defeat the Deficit Task Force will give a status update on their efforts, as well as the Stewardship and Finance Committees' information on the church's financial position.
- David Mayfield will give information about the pros and cons of using Endowment funds to pay off the mortgage, as well as other scenarios for keeping the church solvent.
- Discussion ensued on how to reconcile the unhappy people in the congregation. Small meetings were recommended, as larger ones haven't been productive. Specific goals, with positive visions for the church and relationships, should be the aim of these meetings.

MDF report: Discussion of the Ministerial Discretionary Fund report was tabled to an executive session via Zoom, to be held Monday, December 18, at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Next Regular Board of Trustees Meeting: Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 6:30 p.m., in the Conference Room.

Respectfully submitted by:

Florence Klečka, Secretary, Board of Trustees