

**Minutes, Board of Trustees  
Unitarian Universalists of South Bend  
14 January 2026**

**Present:** (at church) Gail deSomer, Francisco Gomez-Dossi  
(via Zoom) Fern Hamlin, Ann Hoewing, David Mayfield, Eli Williams, Karen Dickson

**Absent:** Justine Backus

**No visitors**

The meeting was called to order by Gail deSomer, board president, at 7pm.

**I. Introduction**

**A. Chalice lighting**

**B. Check-in**

**C. Covenant**

**D. Approval of minutes from the December 10, 2025, meeting.** Gail and others noted some clarifications for Other Business, section A, regarding the building doors. To summarize: 1) the east door no longer has physical problems although there continue to be issues with its security pad; 2) reference in the motion to “East and West entry doors” does mean all 4 doors (inner and outer). **Motion to accept the minutes** moved by Francisco, seconded by Ann. **Motion carried with 2 abstentions.**

**E. Set agenda.** Who can officiate at weddings in our building added to **Other business.** Later, **Snow removal** also added.

**II. Reports**

**A. President’s report--Gail.** As written.

**B. Treasurer’s report--David.** As written, plus this summary of what we have repaid to our Endowment account, prepared by Kathy Vetter.

**Endowment repayments via Operating Budget 2015-16 through 2025-26.**

**2016-17.** We budgeted \$100 and paid \$100 (deficit budget).

**2022-23.** We budgeted nothing and paid nothing.

**2015-16 through 2024-25.** We budgeted \$1000 and paid \$1000 each year.

**2025-26** (current year). We budgeted \$1000 and have not yet paid. (Payments are usually done when the fiscal year closes June 30.)

**Total repaid to date: \$8100.**

**C. Office report.** As written, no action items.

**D. Committee reports, Task Force reports.** As written, no action items.

**III. Old Business**

**A. Minister search--Gail.** Four candidates the committee will be discussing.

**B. January 18 informational meeting--should we provide slides as handout at the**

**C. From Admin Committee, Special Collections and Church Group Fundraising Policy, Outside Contractor Policy.** Fern presented the Finance Committee recommendation that the 3 words “for intramural use” be removed from the final sentence

(#6). Discussion focused on the 10% of raised funds to be paid to the church. David explained how any collection costs us to track and to move money (e.g., with a check). **Motion to remove the 3 words “for intramural use” and to substitute 5% for 10%** made by Francisco, seconded by Eli. **Motion carried.** Discussion of Outside Contractor Policy culminated in the observation that this was an unnecessary policy which, if enforced, would handicap building and grounds maintenance and make much unnecessary additional work for the Board. **Motion not to approve the Outside Contractor Policy** made by David, seconded by Fern. **Motion carried.**

**D. Report from Personnel Task Force--David.** Still working on this.

**E. Request for ¾ time position for Dr Louise Williams.** Considerable discussion. Ultimately, a complex motion was made by Eli, seconded by Ann. **Motion: To move the office manager position to ¾ time until August 1, at which point the Board will re-evaluate the situation. To receive a revised proposal from Dr Louise Williams to include expected timeline for completion of projects referenced in her proposal. For the Board to receive monthly updates on progress towards these projects. To continue the church’s payment of 50% of Dr Louise Williams’s health insurance (currently \$464 for medical, dental and vision as yet not known) and to revisit this issue in one month when solid dollar amounts are available. Motion carried with 5 in favor, 2 opposed.**

**F. Office Manager job description and evaluation.** Gail and Ann carried out the evaluation, which included setting goals for the upcoming year. David noted that the UUA Personnel Manual indicated Board members should have access to these evaluations, along with the individual being evaluated. This was not referenced during the evaluation, but Karen, as incoming president, felt she should have access to this evaluation. Gail agreed and will discuss this with Dr Louise Williams, since when the evaluation was carried out it was not known that the Board would have access to the evaluation. This will be explained for future evaluations. Discussion on the job description began with Fern contesting the minimum qualification of “3 years of experience as office manager for nonprofit or congregation” as totally out of line for our organization and this position, requiring way too much and being way too limiting. After minimal discussion, and some members asking for more time to consider the document, Gail suggested tabling this item until the February meeting. Consensus agreement.

**G. Menu reminder for January 24 Italian dinner--see December minutes, dinner at 6, what time should we set up--Gail.** Agreed for 4pm arrival for setup.

#### **IV. New Business**

**A. Perpetual calendar items** (see agenda for full list). Gail noted that all but one of the items listed is being done by Finda and Kathy Vetter. The one item for the Board is to certify our membership number for the UUA. Gail said this is 118. **Motion to certify our membership as 118** made by Francisco, seconded by David. **Motion carried.**

**B. Request for use of building March 17 for Interfaith Women’s Dialogue--Gail.** Noon event, free usage requested. **Motion to allow the Interfaith Women’s Dialogue to use our building March 17 (approximately 10am-2pm) at no charge** made by Francisco, seconded by Ann. **Motion carried.**

**C. Equity Task Force formation--Lynn McDonald willing to chair--Gail.** Question was raised as to whether this was just for the Service Auction, answer appeared to be that it was meant to serve in general, with the Service Auction in particular. **Motion to form the Equity Task Force with the goal of looking at ways within the church to make sure all activities are equitable** moved by David, seconded by Eli. **Motion carried with 6 in favor, 1 opposed.** Question was raised as to whether membership of Task Force should be set, answer appeared to be that Lynn McDonald, as chair, would find members.

**D. Peace and Social Justice signage request.** These are signs forbidding the entrance of ICE and CBP agents (“Private Property. No ICE or CBP access”). Discussion included Francisco’s explanation of the legal position regarding where these signs are actually legal obstacles to access (must be on interior door that can be closed). Gail noted that posting them on our exterior doors as well would symbolize our position. **Motion to allow the Peace and Justice Committee to post these signs as they deem necessary** made by David, seconded by Ann. **Motion carried with 6 in favor, 1 abstention.**

**E. From the Administrative Committee--Memorial Garden Policy and Volunteer Recognition Policy.** Gail suggested these be tabled to February. No opposition to this.

## **V. Other Business**

**A. Who can officiate weddings in our building.** Gail noted that we have several people in our congregation who have the legal authority to officiate at weddings. We have a request for building use for a wedding in one week and we are asked if we can provide someone to officiate. **Motion to authorize Cat Rambo to officiate at this wedding and to ensure that legal procedures are followed** made by Fern, seconded by David. **Motion carried.**

**B. Snow removal.** Gail explained that we couldn’t reach Pedro (who did previous years’ snow removal for us) in the fall and that as the season progressed and the weather forecast became more ominous, we could only find one company (at short notice) who would take us on. [Sorry, I don’t have their name.] November’s bill was \$1100, December’s was \$3000. She and Francisco have figured out some of the things this company does that we can eliminate (excessive salting, for one), but there is no denying that the #355 Snow Removal line item will exceed its \$1000 annual budget. Consensus that there’s not a whole lot we can do about this, since we must clear the snow. However, a few suggestions that might help: 1) Ask the company to notify us (i.e., Francisco for the Grounds Committee) each time they do work for us, so that we can see exactly what they’re doing as we’re aware of the weather conditions and therefore try to ensure they don’t do more than we want; 2) This summer, look around and check any other options for next winter’s snow removal, i.e., someplace not as expensive.

**VI. Privilege of the Floor.** No takers.

Francisco moved, and David seconded, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35pm. The next regular Board meeting will be Wednesday, 11 February 2026, 7pm in the conference room.

Fern Hamlin  
Board Secretary

Summary of assignments from the 14 January 2026 board meeting:

**Gail, David:** Provide January 18 slides to office for posting on website after January 18 meeting

**Gail**

- Communicate to Dr Louise Williams the Board's request for a revised ¾ time proposal with timeline and monthly progress reports to the Board
- Discuss evaluation procedure (i.e., who will see the evaluation) with Dr Louise Williams
- Membership certification
- Communicate with Lynn McDonald regarding Equity Task Force approval
- Communicate with Cat Rambo regarding upcoming wedding in building

**Justine:** As liaison for Peace and Justice Committee, communicate Board decision regarding sign request

**Francisco**

- Ask snow removal company for notice of work done on day of or soon thereafter
- As Grounds Committee liaison and (I think) chair, explore alternative snow removal companies after winter ends