

**Minutes, Board of Trustees
First Unitarian Church, South Bend
12 February 2025**

Present: Chuck Leone, Gail deSomer, David Mayfield, Jeremiah Cox, Eli Williams, Dan Holm, Francisco Gomez-Dossi

Absent: Fern Hamlin (excused)

Visitors: Barbara Williams, Diana Mendelsohn

I. Introduction

A. Chalice lighting

B. Check-in

C. Covenant

D. Approval of minutes from the January 8, 2025, meeting.

David moved, and Gail seconded, to approve the minutes as read. Carried unanimously.

E. Set agenda

Chuck: three items to change. First, add to agenda, discussion of discrepancies between alcohol policies. Second, add to agenda, whom to recommend doing the opening prayer at City Common Council meeting. Third, change the time of discussion of New Business item IV-B to first agenda item for discussion as Diana Mendelsohn is present to provide information(see New Business for details), BOT agreed to the timing change.

Jeremiah: add to agenda, discuss ongoing printing costs.

Eli: add to agenda, discuss timing of availability of Board Packet for BOT meeting.

II. Reports

A. President's report—Chuck. As written.

B. Treasurer's report—David.

Discussed variance in pledges, being \$6000 lower due to member attrition. On the positive side earnings of \$904 in interest income, budget line 198. Due to slow mail, credit card payment arrived late, interest was charged and had to be paid, plans are to use electronic checks to keep these payments timely in the future.

- Chuck mentioned that the estate of Dan Groteke's may donate ~\$10K of unrestricted funds to FUSB. Mention was made of Barb Boyd's estate is still to be settled. Dan added that Glenda Bixby's art collection will be going up for sale, and all of its proceeds will be going to FUSB (typically only a portion of sales from Art Exhibits is donated to FUSB).
- Discussion ensued regarding allocation of unrestricted donations including if these funds should first be used to cover the deceased's outstanding pledges. Chuck will review BOT policy and Endowment policy regarding these issues, and will bring this to the next BOT meeting.

C. Office report.

As the Office Manager has been busier with work requests, job completion will be prioritized based on need/timing. There was additional discussion regarding possible expansion of hours for the Office Manager including possible expansion to $\frac{3}{4}$ time position and possible Sunday morning hours. Review of options available will continue.

D. Committee reports. As written, plus:

Social Committee has planned an overnight church retreat including a workshop entitled "Love is at the Center" tentative for August 23-24, 2025 at The Mishawaka Res. Location physical accessibility limitations are unknown. The ability to zoom broadcast of the planned Sunday Service from that location is also unknown. Gail will work with Kathy Platz in obtaining information on the physical limitations present at the location. Jeremiah will explore options

regarding Zoom broadcasting from that location. Additionally, a person will be “stationed” at FUSB building to welcome new visitors who may not be aware of the change in location.

III. Old Business

A. Attendees at the UU General Assembly.

Discussed ways that the BOT can support attendance to the UUA GA. Financially, budget line 770, leadership development funds is available and has \$1000.00 still available. Louise as the Office Manager has also expressed interest in attending as being beneficial to her current church duties. The BOT will attempt to financially assist in this as an employee expense. At first it was suggested that the source of these funds be from the Ministerial Fund lines. David suggested that instead this be also funded from line 770. Even if the budget line is overdrawn, budgetary changes should be considered to allow more in the congregation the ability to participate in this annual event. Jeremiah and Gail will advertise on the Chirp! to all church members the availability of these funds and will keep records as to those expressing these needs. This will be reviewed at the next BOT meeting in March 2025.

B. Care committee description.

Gail reviewed the planned changes in the description for this committee to account for their involvement in the Congregational Discretionary Fund administration. David moved, Jeremiah seconded, and it carried unanimously.

C. Congregational vote on name change for the church.

There are varied opinions regarding the name options available. Chuck and other BOT members are doing surveying of the congregation via small group discussions during Sunday Potluck/coffee hour with plans for additional discussion groups at Stewardship Brunch and Zoom sessions. A spreadsheet tracking the proposed names will be presented to the BOT in the future. Other suggestions for additional surveying included use of a Google Form. Chuck suggested as an alternative to using a DBA entity, a less entangled name change may include appending the current church name from FUSB to FUSB, a Unitarian Universalist Church. David wondered if the portion of members interested in changing the church’s name was sufficiently significant to allow a consensus on a new name to occur. We were reminded that at the 2024’s Annual Meeting, further discussion regarding this issue was tabled to this year. Plans are to continue collection of survey information on options for new names for FUSB. At this year’s Annual Meeting, first it will be asked if there is a consensus of members wishing for a name change and if yes, plans are to expeditiously continue with this process and plan on a special meeting a few months later, to conclude this issue.

D. Committee on Ministry description.

Francisco’s summary of the COM duties regarding the details of evaluation of the Minister were discussed. It was agreed that the evaluation of the Minister by the COM will focus on the Minister’s effectiveness in the church’s ministries. In addition, rewording of the Performance, Wage, and Salary Review Policy will be done to be in line with COM Description changes. Francisco will return to the BOT with a final rewording of both items for review at the next BOT meeting.

E. Board Executive Session Policy.

Discussed ways to maintain confidentiality of issues covered in Executive Session yet provide documentation needed for transparency of Board business. It was decided that brief description(s) of the topic(s) discussed would be entered into the BOT meeting minutes but no additional details will be provided for confidentiality sake. Decisions and voting that need to be made by the BOT regarding the discussion that occurred while in executive session, will need to be done outside of executive session and will be recorded in the minutes to maintain transparency. Dan moved, David seconded, and it carried unanimously.

IV. New Business

A. Request form Rev. Byrd Tetzlaff for Zoom access to all meetings.

There will always be limitations based on who is involved in the meeting and the current lack of availability of additional Zoom channels without incurring additional expenses. Jeremiah suggested more efficacious use of the Zoom channels can be done if participants are parsed into separate “rooms” such as a “talk back room” and “after service discussion room” running concurrently to allow more than one meeting to occur on each channel. Overall, this was deemed to be an aspirational goal and the BOT is encouraging all meetings to be more accessible.

B. Building use request by Diana Mendelsohn.

She represents Earth Day Michiana. They would like to move their earth day event indoors to FUSB. Date of event is April 26, 2025, Saturday. Building costs for this to occur was discussed. Dan offered to have the Peace & Justice Committee sponsor the event. This reduced the cost for facilities use by 50% to an estimated \$350.00. Set up will start at 5 PM. Event begins at 6 PM. Estimated end time 10 PM. There will be music provided by the Van Dyke Review, they will bring their own sound equipment. A presentation on sustainability will be done. Pizza, salad and water/tea will be provided. No alcohol. They will use the church utensils. They will do clean up at end of event. Francisco moved to approve, Dan seconded, and it carried unanimously. [Clarification of this item was made and approved at the 9 April 2025 Board meeting: Peace and Justice committee is sponsoring this event. The committee is therefore responsible for opening and closing the building, and general trouble shooting. As a church event there is no rental fee.]

C. Church Security.

Discussion regarding safety of church activity participants was covered. Although no outright threats have been noted. Discussion of additional factors to improve physical safety, such as additional cameras, was discussed. Jeremiah will review further options in this respect and return to the BOT with a report. Francisco volunteer to cover the cost of security for the "Love is Love" dinner.

D. Board input and priorities in budget 2025-2026 fiscal year.

David has sent out notice to all committee chairs of budget request deadline at the end of February. Gail mentioned that the DREAM team needs to add a part-time employee, 5 hours per week, to help with administrative requirements in the care of children, such as routine background checks necessary. Additional budget input from the BOT will be discussed at next month’s meeting. Deadline for budget completion is April 1.

E. Child Abuse Policy and Disruptive or Inappropriate Behavior polices.

Child abuse policy was updated and amended to include a code of ethics for those mentoring children. Jeremiah moved to approve changes, it was seconded by Francisco and unanimously passed. The Disruptive and Inappropriate Behavior policy changes could not be read due to technical difficulties. Review of this policy was tabled until next BOT meeting.

F. Discrepancies between church alcohol policies. This was tabled until next BOT meeting.

G. Ongoing church printing costs.

Jeremiah brought up the issue of the increasing costs of printing needed for church activities. It is estimated that the annual cost of printer toner will be between 2-3K. A suggestion of using off-brand printer cartridges was made but not approved as there are concerns that these may damage the printer itself and may not be effective. Jeremiah will review options for printing and costs and will present this to the BOT in the future.

H. Recommend FUSB ministry to provide City Common Council meeting opening prayer.

Discussion was made; Eli volunteered to perform the opening prayer if needed.

I. Timing of Board Packet materials. Eli was concerned about the availability of BOT monthly meeting packet. It was pointed out that delays in the contents can be multifactorial including when reports are submitted. It was also pointed out that some of these materials are available and can be accessed even before the email is put out by Louise announcing its availability.

V. Other Business. – none

VI. Privilege of the Floor. – no requests.

VII. Executive Session.

Executive session started at 9:13 PM

Discussion of 2 topics: 1) Discretionary Fund Policy. 2) Review of current minister candidates.

No decisions/motions were executed based on this information.

Executive session ended at 10:01 PM

VIII. Adjournment at 10:03 PM

Next regular Board of Trustees meeting: Wednesday, 12 March 2025, 7pm, Conference Room.

Summary of assignments from February 2025 Board meeting:

Chuck:

- review BOT policy and Endowment policy regarding unrestricted fund allocations
- continue collection of options for new names for FUSB

Gail:

- obtain information on the physical accessibility limitations present at Mishawaka Res.
- Keep list of those expressing need for financial assistance to attend GA

Jeremiah:

- explore options for Zoom broadcasting from the Mishawaka Res
- advertise on the Chirp! availability for financial help for attending GA
- review security options including cameras (active and inactive) and signs, report to BOT
- review cost options for printing and report to BOT

Eli:

- City Common Council opening prayer

Francisco:

- Rewording with corrections of COM Definition and Performance, Wage, and Salary Review Policy at the next BOT meeting

David

- Set up electronic checks for credit card payments.

UNASSIGNED:

- Assign a person to be “stationed” at FUSB building on Sunday 8/24/2025 during the Church Retreat

Submitted by
Francisco Gomez-Dossi