

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax  
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
June 4, 2019

Presiding: Anthony Salvi

Call To Order 7:35 PM

Secretary: Rich Williams

Process

Observer: Paul Atelsek

Attendees: Betsy Bicknell; Scott Kestner; Kaye Cook; Rich Williams; Milo Valenzuela, Paul Atelsek; Rev. David Miller; Anthony Salvi; Ashley Rothermel; Peggy Hillman, Rich Williams, Matt Higgins, Mark Magee, Darryl Branting, Tyler Cole

Spiritual Opening/Chalice Lighting

Kaye Cook

From *Holy Quiet; Meditations by Richard S. Gilbert*

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Board Minutes

Rich Williams

- Copies of the May 21<sup>st</sup> minutes were distributed and approved per edits advised.

1. Minister's Report

Rev. David Miller

- Wedding/Power Outage: A power outage caused the delay of two weddings during the past weekend. Dominion Energy was contacted Friday night but the resolution took nearly 36 hours. The cost was \$6,000 plus another \$9-10,000 to be spent – all in the area of the septic field. Three trees cut with an addition tree leaning toward the Montessori School building. A contract of more than \$10,000 requires board approval. Our insurance is increasing considerably and the trees are not covered under the insurance policy.
- I took the lay ministers out for an appreciation lunch at Curry Mantra.
- Reston Pride: This second annual event was held on June 1<sup>st</sup> at Lake Anne Plaza. We participated in a choir performance with members from the event's sponsoring churches.
- Mosaic Harmony concert, June 1<sup>st</sup> was held at UUCF.
- Laura Weiss' CD release concert included the lighting of candles for the recent loss of lives due to gun violence in Virginia Beach.
- I took the CT to lunch, acknowledging Kathy Smerke Hochberg's service to that group.
- Board training with Megan Foley will be held this coming Saturday.
- The high school bridging ceremony will be held this coming Sunday.
- Kaye and I will be speaking with Chris Crass next week regarding his visit. (per Endowment funds approved for 2019).
- Fairfax County Committee on Faith & Equality: UUCF is again hosting this group which has just completed its mission statement.
- Annual Leadership Appreciation Dinner: This will be held on June 15<sup>th</sup> in the Commons.
- As of June 16<sup>th</sup> I will be absent departing for the 2019 General Assembly, which begins June 19<sup>th</sup> and will return on July 16<sup>th</sup>.

2. Congregational Meeting Discussion

Anthony Salvi

- RE: The discussion on the proposal for the use of Reach funds, the individual (who is not a member) wanted to make an amendment proposal which was out of order for that discussion. It could have been considered in the next section however. She wanted to amend the motion to move the Reach funds in the operating funds account. The parliamentarians made the call. Essentially, she wanted to be heard.
- Believe that the congregation is now ready to have a discussion about finances. There is/was

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confusion about operational reserve versus capital reserve. Hope to have a financial/budget meeting in October. Last year there were two budget meetings.

- Next year it might be good to start off the Annual Meeting with some rules, i.e., make clear what is not to be amended but only subject to an up-or-down vote.
- The members present were primarily older congregants. Next year – how can we message differently? Once the regular RE program season is complete many families with children are not in attendance for the Annual Meeting. Perhaps RE should be extended to 12:30 p.m. but not have a regular RE Sunday but a Special RE.
- The Covenant of Right Relations did involve a long discussion.
- Overall, the meeting was well run, short and to the point. The potential for “crankiness” during the meeting did not happen. As for the vote for the budget – the congregants seemed to be accepting. The meeting was well organized as was Anthony’s summary of the board’s actions.

3. Innovation Grant Committee Work

Tyler Coles

- Tyler provided a Young Adult Innovation (YAI) Project – First Year Report (Attached). The Stan Richards’ grant designated \$250,000 for the project. Betsy and Wendy (Littman) have been working closely with Tyler on this project.
- In a generous bequest to UUCF, the late Stan Richards provided seed financing for innovative projects that expand UUCF’s outreach to those not now engaged in our congregation and/or Unitarian Universalism. Projects were intended to be high-risk, high-payoff experiments, including approaches that might open up new ways of thinking about outreach and growing Unitarian Universalism. In March 2017, the UUCF board approved a proposal submitted by Wendy Littman (then Wendy Astell) and Betsy Bicknell for an off-campus effort targeted to young adults (people in their 20s & 30s). The mission of this effort is to help Northern Virginia young adults explore and live UU values in intentional community.
- Betsy and Wendy, along with Rita Roth, Victoria Maldonado and Jeanette Walton formed a committee to finalize the draft Young Adult Community project plan and to hire Tyler Coles to serve as the community’s professional leader. Tyler began work (half-time) in September 2018, supported by an advisory committee of Betsy Bicknell, Victoria Maldonado, Jeanette Walton and Karen Wolf.
- Though we originally considered leasing space for a physical location for the program, Tyler and the advisory committee concluded that we did not need to do that any time soon. Our long-term strategy is to continue to work individual connection with very busy young adults who are interested – how can we understand what connects these people? Interest in integrating spirituality and religiosity into their lives.
- Tyler will continue leading the community on a half-time basis in 2019-20, as he starts a ministerial internship at Mount Vernon Unitarian Church in August 2019.

4. Finalize Budget Discussion:

- In years past, decreases in pledges were linked to individuals who were unhappy with the programs or leadership – not so this year. Of those (43) not pledging, 13 are relocating. There are 14 new pledging units, 56 still outstanding and are needed to close the gap. Regardless, this will be a balanced budget for the coming congregational year.
- A campaign to repair the roof will likely need to take place this fall but is important to make the congregation aware of this need in the Annual Meeting.
- Laura is OK with the \$2,000 reduction in the music budget and keeping Mary Gaskin’s position as part of the budget. Tyler is not funded as a personnel line item in the budget.

5. CT/Board/Ministry Evaluations Update

- CT Assessment (copy of assessment provided). Conducted in an open give-and-take discussion session that created an air of congeniality and the CT was grateful for the discussion (a very useful

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- tool). Believe that more interaction should be built into the year.
- Suggest that following the retreat the goals be shared and include a discussion on how to support each other. The idea could be for a joint retreat, then split and come back together for a discussion of the year's goals and how to support them.
  - Recommended that the CT develop a backup and succession plan for staff positions. Recent changes in staff duties/responsibilities do not match with current governance statutes. The board shall ensure that it can redraft the governance manual to reflect these changes.
  - RE: Ministry Evaluation. Anthony will coordinate an online conference discussion.

## 6. Strategic Discussion

Paul: Stable: Continue to stay at UUCF, reclaim the homeschool/Montessori resources when the leases are up for something more aligned with our values, possibly provide the space to a social justice organization. Basically, stay put and manage growth by reducing (increasing?) income-generating use. More parking possible by expanding into the woods.

Moderate: Expand into a satellite campus (in Fairfax, to justify the name?). Initially, rent a space on the GMU campus to pursue a younger demographic. Assign interim ministers and occasionally David to provide programming. If interest develops, consider taking on debt with the purchase of a small space near the campus.

Radical: "I want to be where the people are . . ." Do the Beverly Hillbillies thing, sell the 11 acres for about \$7-8 million and move to Fairfax, to justify the name. No really, determine the destination by a vote of the congregation based on market research. Target areas with higher population density, racial diversity and more a youthful demographic. Change the programming from revolving around services to a "social justice ministry," where "members" can select from a menu of causes to work on.

Betsy: Stable: Increase our income to better pay staff and pay UUA Fair Share. Use Endowment Fund income to pay off debt and then for operating expenses. Raise endowments to support specific staff positions, e.g., social justice minister after Reach funds are expended, maybe the assistant minister. Advertise "social justice" activities, including family-friendly, to transform our community and the world. Actively partner with other congregations (VOICE?) and organizations (ACLU, NAACP). \*Possibly focus on just one area of social justice, e.g., accountability dismantling racism. Provide Our Whole Lives curriculum to groups outside UUCF, e.g., LBGTTA youth, poor Latinx women. Would require hiring teachers.

Moderate: Active outreach into the community; creating multiple, small satellite fellowship meetings. Have a mission mindset. Send outreach teams into the community; meet people where they are. Ask them what they need, what makes them come alive, what we can teach each other. Set up satellite meetings/groups in the community. Define the community we will operate in, by location and demographic. E.g., young adults in Mosaic; retirees in Ashby Ponds.

Radical: Sell our campus, use proceeds to build a community center in a public-transit

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-accessible location, near low-income people of color. Share the space with other congregations and community organizations.

Ashley: Interfaith Social Action Congregate Living Community. 10-12 housing units for individuals or families. Large community center for use by residents of this community, UUCF or other area faith communities for social-action-related work and events. Car sharing, child care sharing, community gardens, communal meal prep. Commercial kitchen for community meals and interfaith events. Workshare-style office spaces for social justice coordinators living in the community and associated with aligned interfaith groups. Lounge areas for socializing and small-group gatherings.

Rich: Construct a living community with common lounge and food preparation areas to mimic either (1) group home communities that serve more senior age individuals/couples or (2) mimic the young adult tech professionals living/work centers found in metro cities where they can live, commune and work in a tech lounge environ. The built housing under this latter concept could expand to perhaps 20 or more efficiencies and single-bedroom units.

#### 7. Next Meeting/Party

- Our June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting is being hosted by Peggy. The start time will be 7 PM. Peggy will submit a Sign-Up Genius.

Process Observer

Paul Atelsek

Overall we did well throughout the meeting. A couple of times the ideas were going fast and furious and though there were a lot of radical ideas expressed – no judgments were made.

Adjourned

9:42 PM

Next Meeting Date: June 18, 2019, at the home of Peggy & Tom Hillman

Spiritual Opening: Scott Kestner

Process Observer: Ashley Rothermel

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Respectfully Submitted: Richard Williams