

Minutes
Board of Trustees: April 17, 2024
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Raeann Olander, President (2025); Brian Junker, Vice-President (2026); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2026); Nicholas Izzo, Secretary (2025); Rob Schwartz, (2024); Bob Mitchell (2024); Jean Schmidt (2026); Amy DeChicchis (2024), Christine Milcarek (2025)

Absent Members:

Ex Officio Member: Rev. Kate Walker, Minister

Others: Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Juliet Staresnic, Claus Makowka

Call to Order (Raeann) (7:00) (Zoom)

1. **Opening Words (Nick)** Words from Rev Walter Mason at Dedication First Church Sanctuary on April 17, 1904
2. **Welcoming Guests (Raeann)**
3. **Announcements (Brian)**
 - a. Next Board meeting: Wed., May 15, 2024
 - b. May Opening Words: Jean
 - c. Committee reports due in May: Stewardship, Building, Finance, Investments
 - d. Fantasy Auction May 10
 - e. Annual Meeting on May 19, check-in at 4:30
4. **Consent Agenda (Raeann) (Documents)**
 - a. Draft minutes from March board meeting. Motion to accept (with edits) by, Rob, Raeann seconded. Motion carries unanimously.
 - b. Minister's Report. (Document) Rev Kate added 2 items: Update to Council for Communities value statement, report uploaded as well as procedure, continuing to have problems with Vector Security system for the Church Office, with notifications/emails at inappropriate times, city has notified that they will not respond unless alert is verified separately,
 - c. Treasurer's Report (document)
 - d. Committee reports:
 - i. Finance – no discussion
 - ii. Nominating – no discussion
 - iii. Program Endowments – no discussion
 - iv. VIM - no discussion
 - e. Board Priorities update - no discussion
5. **Recycling and composting at church (Juliet Staresnic)**

Juliet noticed that we do not recycle much at church, as someone who cares about the environment it is noticeable and wanted to ask about it for her Girl Scout Gold Award. For environmental reasons, addressing this can aid in our mission.

Composting box could assist with this, or a compost service (Carbon Compost) to pick up and return soil twice a year. Signs and receptacles placed adjacent to the coffee hour area.

Juliet volunteers to assist with the efforts!

Nick: Happy you will help with the solution, we do have a compost bin but were told by the exterminator it will attract vermin.

Kyle: recycling services we pay for, 535\$/month expenditure. no composting budget. We could try this with social endowment funds for a year and then tweak it.

Bob: environmental justice team is active and interested, will follow-up

Rob: thank you for bringing this to our attention

Kate: large impact of food waste globally on these issues

Nick: great to use a service!

Arthur: Vermiculture may offer answers as to how to proceed perhaps without a cost, though exterminators are often prejudiced against rodents

Raeann: seems very figured out and comes with a solution!

6. **Ethical Considerations for selling energy credits by church (Claus Makowka)**

Arcane aspect of a solar array: source of solar is often unclear

Why would we want to sell an SREC? Income to make project affordable.

Companies buy them as required to offset electric consumption of their venture.

Some companies buy them to avoid sustainable practices.

Once sold, SRECS have no continued value

Nick: When kept, SRECs generate and use renewable energy, if sold you aren't on record as using it.

Bob: How much do we make?

Claus: winter \$300, about \$600 in the summer? \$1200-1800 per year

Jean: What is incentive to pay people to give them their solar generated energy?

Claus: SRECs can be greenwashing as a way for a company to cover their green requirements. Claus is ethically against selling an SREC, but is ok if it is held separately within the budget.

Brian: Nuclear provides a lot of our power, gas at Brunot island, and renewables and coal.

Kyle: table comment for now.

7. **Approve addition of Claus Makowka as Administrator on Investment Accounts (Kyle)**

Many investment accounts, one person who is allowed to make transactions, which is Ward Kelsey. Kyle moved to add Claus Makowka as an administrator on the church investment account. motion, Rob seconds motion, 8 in favor. Christine could not vote because of loss of internet connection

8. **Quarterly Financial Report (Kyle)**

We are high on expenses.

Income is close to target, only about \$3000 short of projection. Pledges are about \$6000 below target so far. Investments are ahead of budget.

High spending on professional expenses.

High spending on music. Partly due Kris leave of absence.

High on RE expenses - team managing in place of Erica.

HVAC charges were unexpected.

Brian: many costs aren't routine, so perhaps they will eventually even out

Kyle: after pandemic, went over budget on music. met with music folks to plan out expenditures on music. At end of year, excess came from music endowment and reserve funds to cover it.

Kris is on sabbatical, budget neutral with Derek etc covering.

Overall under where expected, running a deficit and need to manage cash flow.

Raeann: Do we need to let the congregation know that we see we are behind on pledges?

Kyle: will provide a message to this effect as well as in the church statement.

in the past, retained a lot of reserves in a bank account, but it was spent during covid which is causing us to have cash flow issues.

9. Date for Board Retreat (Raeann)

June 1st or 15th are available. Will revisit with a doodle poll.

10. Board Communication on "closing the budget gap" (Raeann)

- a. No one spoke against the proposed service statement draft, thank you Kyle for your comments.

11. Policy on Alignment of activities with Church Values and Principles (Brian)

Confirmation of email vote

Brian moved to confirm that we adopt the policy, Rob seconds. The motion passed with 8 approved, Chris could not vote because she lost internet connection.

12. Council of Communities policy on alignment of activities with Church Values and Principles, off of the church property

Rev Kate shared a UU statement that applies to events at a church.

Brian thinks it looks good. Wonders how or whether this should be incorporated into the statement of alignment. Brian happy to include, Kyle suggests a phrase "the Council on Communities will coordinate this review with church member."

13. Annual Meeting Agenda

Nick can prepare.

Kyle thought it should be provided in advance, not necessarily sent out, but refer to the website.

Rev Kate - tracking what bylaws dictate. Nick - to announce 2 weeks in advance.

Tracy is working with Cecily to get the official save the date announcement out.

Rob loves the idea, how much time do we need to do it appropriately.

Brian - could there be a roster of volunteers for next year?

Rob - whoever is planning should submit nominees

Kate - council of communities could take this on

Meeting will be hybrid, business in sanctuary, table talk and food downstairs could be?

Raeann - just business meeting is hybrid,

Can manage voting electronically.

Do we want a slide show? (an annual slide show of the past year events) Bob - this replaces the verbal highlights from past years?

Raeann - business meeting will be brief, Kris and Erica on sabbatical, Raeann and Kate give a briefing

Jean - childcare, given a company lead, no money for childcare, VIM need, auction, annual meeting

Raeann - complicated to provide childcare to folks,

Kyle - board could help by reducing budget and putting it to childcare

14. **Ministerial Internship**

Rev Kate - largest concern is finances, healthcare being primary,

UUA does a matching grant for these, they may be able to provide some money, up to a 50% match,

Brian - is it contingent on funding? Kate, call Derek of UUA ministerial intern group to ask.

Brian - set deadline of May to determine answers, if no affirmative answer of positive funding by then, decline intern

Kyle: Need a full cost to the board, doesn't advise selling investments to fund this.

Kate: will chase down Derek, and find out. The idea of an intern is liked, the money is the concern.

15. **Suggestions for Future Business (All)**

a. Solar issue decision

b. Nick attended with Chris a potential safety related workshop, based on assessment done last week.

16. **Appreciations and Aspirations (All)**

a. Nick and others attended a call about board assessment last night, there are things we could do together, and some additional things we could do together.

b. Brian appreciated the collegiality of the discussion with reverend sunshine.

c. Bob, video posted

d. Nick - send out notices for annual reports

e. Rob - sorry he didn't attend the meeting yesterday

f. Kate - grateful for the health and work of this congregation

g. Raeann - Nick wrote a lovely note to Juliet

17. **Adjourn** (Raeann) (9:06)

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: May 15, 2024

Nick Izzo, Secretary