

Minutes
Board of Trustees: July 12, 2024
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

Board Members Attending: Raeann Olander, presiding Past President (2025); Jim Pashek, Vice President (2027); Kyle Gracey, Treasurer (2026); Nicholas Izzo, Secretary (2025); Jean Schmidt (2026); Christine Milcarek (2025); Maria Lauro (2027); Richard Dum (2027)

Absent Members: Rev. Kate Walker, Brian Junker, President (2026)

Ex Officio Member:

Others: Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Claus Makowka

Call to Order (Raeann) (7:02) (Zoom)

1. **Opening Words (Jim)** Reading from a UU Minister, “when we lean on each other our shared courage infinitely grows and we lean on each other...”
2. **Welcoming Guests (Raeann)** none noted
3. **Announcements (Brian)**
 - a. Next Board meeting: Wed., August 21, 2024 @ 7 pm on Zoom
 - b. August Opening Words: Jim
 - c. Committee reports due in August: Stewardship, Building, Finance, Investments
4. **Consent Agenda (Raeann) (Documents)**
 - a. Draft minutes from June board meeting. Motion to accept (with edits) Raeann initiated, 1 abstention (absent). Motion carries with 7 in favor.
 - b. Minister’s Report.
Rev Kate on vacation-no report this month
 - c. Treasurers’ report:
 - i. Covered as part of the quarterly financial review
 - d. Opening Word Roster for 2024-2025
 - e. Committee Reports:
Finance
Personnel
VIM (no comments)
5. **Election of Board Officers for 2024-2025 (Raeann)**
 - Raeann nominates: Brian Junker – President; Jim Pashek - Vice President; Kyle – Treasurer; Nick - Secretary
 - Motion passes with 1 in abstention, 7 in favor
6. **Statement on SREC Credits (Kyle)**

The Board discussed the various aspects revolving around the sale of SRECS and could not decide on a single message to convey how we can characterize the use of our SRECS that result from generation of power from our solar array, other than: we are using all of

the power generated from the array, our use of electricity drawn from the grid is decreased by an equal amount, we are selling SRECS to be used by the market for such energy credits, and we have no control over how those SRECS are used by entities that buy them. In order to educate the church community on the complexities and possible ethical considerations of SRECS, Claus Makowka and Richard Dum have agreed to write an essay on the positives and negatives of this matter and to publish it in the Church Newsletter. The statement will be provide education to the community for reflection and discussion amongst members of that community. It will not be positioned as a statement from the Board, which will not officially review or approve of the essay..

7. **Board Liaisons and report schedule (Nick)**

- Nick explained to new members of the board that a nominated liaison would communicate between the church board and each board committee according to a set schedule throughout the year.
- Kyle - onboarding occurred last night for the liaisons
- Liaisons were chosen for each committee

8. **Board Priorities (Raeann)**

- A document was presented to describe feedback from the board retreat and sign up volunteers to review - any interested volunteers?
 - Richard: Not sure what “Normalizing relationship between board and COSM?” means. Kyle explained that there was a disconnect between the board and COSM during development of assessment process, leading the board and COSM to be misaligned. Regular communication and coordination is requested between the two.
 - Maria – asked about the Spring 2024 external assessment of the board.
Kyle – explained that Rev Sunshine led a process but had been promoted to another position at the UUA before completing the evaluation for us. Kyle will figure out a new plan for finishing assessment
- 2: Finance committee, do you mean to say stewardship?
Kyle: Stewardship makes more sense, Maria willing to be a liaison to stewardship

Christine and Jean: Interested in arranging dinner for board and new members

Raeann: Anyone want to work to create a process for educating, recruiting to support delegates to GA? Christine and Raeann

Raeann - Jim will join Board Assessment panel

Nick will allow us to track comments

9. **Financial Report (Kyle)**

Located on the drive folder:

Finance committee will not meet this month. Time may need adjustment with Lee onboarding.

Numbers aren't terrible nor are they good. The major issue is that pledge payments are way behind. Summer is usually a lull. Payments started to drop in May, about \$24,000 under budget, currently. Earlier we asked folks to contribute to a cost-of-living adjustment fund for the year. Payments on these promised contributions appear to be behind.

Hope for the quarterly statements to spur members to make contributions. Share the plate and investments are both ahead. Miscellaneous income is fine, Giant Eagle cards are ahead, and rental fees and incomes are slightly behind. 93% of budgeted income, about \$21,000 behind overall.

Insurance is higher due to lack of additional sensor installation. Higher than expected HVAC maintenance fees are pushing 1500-1600 higher.

Utilities are balancing. Solar array has nearly balanced the budget.

Cash is low. May need to withdraw from Donaldson Genzsler account to move into cash. Ministerial intern money has been moved into an account. Expect UUA to send a check to the account.

Net equity this year is negative, meaning we have more debt than assets. In the short term, we need to protect our cash flow. Kyle won't authorize any additional expenses from reserve funds. We must correct this negative balance by end of year, or factor in future savings to next years budget. The financial situation is tightening and we must either begin to bring in additional income (new members) or cut spending.

Maria: are we back to pre-covid levels of venue rentals? Wedding host team may need to be assembled to work on this. We should talk about some communications at this time to

Kyle: 2019 rental income peaked at \$21,000. 2020: \$2,000 2023: about \$16,000 of rental income LOWER than 2019. About \$5-6k this year, slightly ahead. Unbudgeted revenue is very helpful. 3-4 people have not contributed their budgeted increases.

Raeann - summary of board meetings potentially could say that the budget is tight?

Maria - Stewardship meeting this Monday will include some communication strategies.

Kyle has communicated that pledge payments are significantly behind on the church website

10. **Paula Cole Jones Workshop "Shaping the leading edge: ideas on nominating trustees (Jean)**

- One member of the team did have to step away, but maintained 8 members.
 - How we do business in our community is key to creating a culture shift
 - First step is to assemble a Leading Edge Group (LEG)
 - Nominating committee will be a key community to include

- Potentially could use this to select new board members and to reduce burden of nominating committee (a Collaborative Decision-Making Process)
- Open to thoughts!
- Kyle: Thank you Jean. Supports democratizing our selection process.
- How are the communities chosen? Jean responds that this is our assignment at our church, to identify the existing community of communities.
- -Maria - how is this different from typical Nom Com work? Jean: They take a list of members with 2 years of standing on the board.
- Board members will discuss how this might be done, offline, and report back.

11. Communication Issues

- Kyle notes need to be careful what is worth sending through Breeze after noticing many mass emails
 - Opt out feature has been provided now in Breeze
 - Possible solution is to remind people and segment our Mailchimp better
 - Cecily may have ideas about some of these emails
 - Kyle can add back in in the future

12. Future Business Suggestions (All)

- Kyle: Board Assessment for next meeting
 - Call for agenda items goes out ahead of time.

13. Appreciations and Aspirations (All)

- Jean appreciates Richard for his perspective on SRECs.
- Kyle thanks new and significant contributing board members
- Maria says thank you for presenting - Raeann - thank you for all you have done the past year
- Raeann - thank you for all your contributions! Hope you get as much out of it as you put into it!

14. Adjourn (Raeann) (9:00)

Respectfully submitted,
Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: August 21, 2024
Amended and approved by the Board, Sept 17, 2024
Nick Izzo, Secretary