

Minutes
Board of Trustees: September 18, 2024
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

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

Absent Members:

Ex Officio Member: Rev Kate Walker

Others: Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Mac Perkins-High, Intern Minister

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

1. **Opening Words (Brian)** *from book by Ramirez: I am not a patient man but have learned to give myself time ...with those whom I love andI am patient when I am fly fishing.....”*
2. **Welcoming Guests (Brian)** *none noted except Mac, who plans to attend regularly*
3. **Announcements (Jim)**
 - a. Next Board meeting: Wed., Oct 16, 2024 @ 7 pm hybrid Zoom/ In person.
 - b. October Opening Words: Maria
 - c. Committee reports due in Oct: Stewardship, Finance, Personnel, Program Endowments, VIM
4. **Consent Agenda (Brian) (Documents)**
 - a. Minutes from August board meeting. Motion to accept (with edits) by *Brian, Motion carries with all in favor.*
 - b. Amended Minutes from July Board Meeting - *actual board member list updated, Motion to accept (with edits) by Brian, Motion carries with all in favor.*
 - c. Minister’s Report. *2 items, don't throw your weight around or abuse your power, but also limit what you bring to the board to what applies not to a committee*
 - d. Treasurer’s Report
No comments.
 - e. LRED report -
 - f. Finance Committee Report and Minutes
No comments
 - g. Committee Reports:
 - i. Stewardship
 - ii. COSM - *Richard; report notes need for 2 new members Kate notes will need a chair person, (2+) year church members as well, Brian added a new report to the folder; COSM will have to agree or disagree that the report is fine to present to the congregation, Kate advocated to decide at yesterday’s meeting*
 - iii. Finance

- iv. Safety - note, Rev Kate, Chris, Nick, Rita met Sunday to discuss security improvement bids
 - h. Communication to congregation regarding COSM report
 - i. Update to reporting schedule *Kate would suggest board to update to strategic plan, Chris at retreat had volunteered to update the board on the level of the UU*
- 5. **Vote on Addition of Martin Schmidt to Investment Committee (Kyle)**
 - a. *Motion to approve by Brian, Motion carries with all in favor, 1 abstention (Jean).*
 - b. *Jean mentioned board members who are interested are invited to join the post-service discussion of the new UU Values that she will lead at 12 noon on Oct 29th*
- 6. **Vote on Addition of Chris Milcarek, Nick Izzo and Jill Siegfried to Safety Committee (Chris)**
 - a. *Motion to approve by Brian, Motion carries with all in favor.*
- 7. **First Draft of 2025 Budget (Kyle)**
 - a. *This is the beginning of the process, just for big picture items, do not get attached to the numbers over the next few months until we vote in December. A new version will be presented each month. Proposed budget seeks to maintain the organization as is, with some cost of living adjustments to match the regional average of 3.4%. Very similar overall budget around 550K.*
 - b. *Cost of living adjustments and health insurance premiums contribute to the increases.*
 - c. *Saving us: Less electricity cost is under development. Assumed pledge increase is 4.2%. Existing programs will be prioritized. New ones may be cut more heavily depending on how inflation numbers continue to develop, including health insurance premiums.*
 - d. *Jean - are non-members of the church allowed to submit budget requests? Kyle - if they are active members or friends of the church, they may make a budget request.*
 - e. *Maria - idea of collecting donations at events? Rev Kate will ask this week at the meeting.*
 - f. *Kate requests 500 from her sabbatical fund to the PR budget.*
 - g. *Nick - someone will need to put any donations from events into an envelope into the office mailbox slot.*
 - h. *Raeann - strong donation culture is definitely present*
 - i. *Brian - is there a QR code to distribute as well?*
 - j. *Kyle - yes, just need to create a QR code to direct to the church donation page*
 - k. *Jim - repairs to trees are more than allocated repairs and maintenance? Do we plan for repairs that are regular? We take it out of the capital budget typically, but is this best? Kyle says operating budget covers other items, not capital expenses, we are working toward a capital budget but it is not in the operating budget.*

8. Dealing with Internal Debt (Brian)

a. *3 items in the balance sheet from 2023 should be restored to zero balances from negative:*

- 1. Ventilation System Improvements put us into about \$7000 debt.*
- 2. Reserve fund needs about 18K*
- 2. Better Business Checking & Money market should be ~80K, has 44k*

9. 1) Approval of Strategic Plan *Jean thanks everyone for their input, any kind of hiring has to be framed as evaluative goals*

Mac suggests moving RE hiring earlier

Jean moves to approve strategic plan with changes to hiring language to evaluate rather than hire, and move them a year ahead as Mac suggested - Motion to approve by Brian, Motion carries with all in favor.

2) Getting suggestions from the Board for VIMs next steps: What topics should VIM use to develop Open Questions for this year's congregational discernment

Brian - proposes to have 3

Can we do targeted discernment?

Deeper dive into communication challenge

Other?

Kyle – We do have broad data on why people leave. It's in Breeze.

Mac - broader UU organization has been putting some resources into multicultural resources for a few years ...DRUM or BLUU may have resources

Brian - add to Kyles suggestions for why do folks leave?

Maria

Richard - Why do people come? How did you hear about us?

Kate - may be able to use national data

Maria - is our attrition any different from a church of our denomination?

Kate - affirms Marias comment

Brian - what does it take for a friend to become a member?

Jean - is there something in your mind that you think you want to understand about our congregation?

10. Draft Board Assessment survey (Kyle)

a. *Kyle summarizes status and reviews draft questions with a ranking system. What is not worth asking the congregation about?*

11. Use of Proceeds from Fantasy Auction (Jim)

a. *Board asked buildings and grounds to prioritize building updates.*

First: Replace the garden lobby doors

Second: Update hearing assist system

Third: Update air filters

Air filters: 3 of 6 are working, running into a wall about getting replacement parts, may ask for money back

Arthur: suggestion to request a continuous geared hinge for new doors versus a standard hinge and to inquire as to if electric strikes can be retrofitted to the existing doors

12. Congregational discussion on Banner and Values (Rev Kate)

This was moved to the October Board Meeting

13. Future Business Suggestions (All)

Jean - Discuss the current timeline for strategic planning steps and modify if needed (see pp. 21-22).

Discuss the 'Plan of Ministry' (essentially an Implementation Plan) referred to in the Strat Plan (see pp. 10, 13, 21, 22) to learn if this works for staff and if we want to retain it going forward.

Maria- Choose new Ombudsperson by end of year

Appreciations and Aspirations (All)

Maria - Appreciates everyone in advance for their stewardship calls

Rev Kate - Appreciate VIM, and Kyles easy to understand budget!

Jean appreciates Brian - who did an amazing job to watch the morning unfold!

Jean also appreciates Mac for his campus ministry work!

Raeann - Seconds all other appreciations!

Maria - Appreciates Christine!

14. Adjourn (Brian) (9:00)

Respectfully submitted,
Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: October 16, 2024
Nicholas Izzo, Secretary

