

Minutes
Board of Trustees: Oct 16, 2024
First Unitarian Church of Pittsburgh

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

Absent Members:

Ex Officio Member: Rev Kate Walker

Others: Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Visitors: Mac Perkins-High, Intern Minister, Jim Reitz and Sue Oerkvitz (COSM)

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

Opening Words (Maria) Margaret Wheatley, “Listen for the differences, not the similarities”

Welcoming Guests (Brian) Mac Perkins-High, Jim Reitz, Sue Oerkvitz

Announcements (Jim)

- Next Board meeting: Wed., Nov 20, 2024.
- Nov Opening Words: Nick
- Committee reports due in November: Stewardship, Building, Finance, Investments, UUA Opportunities

Consent Agenda (Brian) (Documents) Minutes from September board meeting; Approved by all with the submitted corrections

- Minister’s Report; After returning from a training, Kate comments work toward avoiding trauma, isolation. Allowing people to gather in the church after election could be a useful to many.
- Intern Minister’s report; Useful and informative report, Look in spring into hiring a campus ministry presence for Mac to train, alternate services from Stephanie Paulowski, some money is left in the campus endowment fund for this year, Kate delegates to Erica to look into this
- LRED Report - Kate will take feedback to Erica, Maria - kids families are chipping in to the OWL money
- Treasurer’s Report - brief, reviewed in further detail below
- Committee reports:
 - Stewardship -
 - Personnel - nothing of note
 - Program Endowments - Kyle, campus ministry balance is \$234, not the full balance, this can be reapplied to other funds this year - Brian - what amount and held for a future coordinator? Up to endowment committee,

but \$1397.06 left, Kate - can the money be used for next year? Must apply for the remainder of it this year

- VIM - Jean, no comments or questions
- Report on Solar Panel output

Richard - the system is now working correctly, though there is shading from trees and building reducing the output.

Discussion Agenda

1. Vote on setting Congregational Budget meeting for Sunday Dec 8 at noon (Zoom)

Nick volunteered an in-person set-up at the church, Kyle moves that we set the meeting for the date in question, Brian suggests a discussion of UUA values at that meeting, Kate mentions some of the congregational time can be used for shifting to the value, without proposing a vote, an information and conversation session, Kyle is fine with extending the length of the meeting, usually an hour is good, so add 20 min discussion, and banner survey discussion to follow - All in favor, Unanimous

2. Input from Board on assessment of Minister by COSM (Richard/Rev Kate)

We are asking for discussion and agreement on WHAT information would be helpful to the board and I and to choose a TOOL for how to get that information, particularly on areas that social justice, worship, areas Rev Kate holds responsibility over, as broad as membership and community, not anonymous (full honesty,) cottage meetings around ideas like appreciative inquiry, and a survey tool as well Kyle notes desire to include larger share of congregation, opportunity for the entire congregation to participate, as noted by the board, as well as detailed feedback capacity too, a broad assessment is a good idea, so many areas of Rev Kate's responsibility,

Brian - Idea of a signed survey and cottage meetings is good, with a set of topics, as well as writing questions, signatures of surveys will suppress some responses, perhaps there could be a shorter anonymous survey.

Rev. Kate says having people sign their comments is non-negotiable, assessments of clergy are murky at best, weaponized at worst, a lot of surveys are done in way that business conducts them, which is not healthy. They should be conducted around the first principle of dignity and respect, changing the culture, letting the congregation know that Rev Kate is asking for it. COSM is the backup for those who don't want to speak

Jean - VIM previously was the only game in town for communicating with the congregation, since we don't want to overload the congregation, VIM is planning cottage meetings targeted for January, COSM must stay in touch, don't overload, Rev Kate is thankful to avoid COSM and VIM conflict COSM needs two new members,

Brian asks what the board can provide – Rev Kate says be clear about the Boards answers to the congregation that this is a normal operating procedure in a normal, healthy church, as added to the COSM charter by the church.

Jean - COSM could consider, if anything part of the charter could be helpful to the church

Jim - from many committee experiences, it's a heavy job, hope we are very clear and there is not a lot of redoing and going back and forth, to don't pile it on the committee

Kyle - excellent point, perhaps if COSM can provide any specifics that they want to have needs to be crystal clear, in terms of written questions specifically

Rev. Kate - Worship, Social Justice Pastoral care, anything in addition to this?

Brian - any way to use a portion of this for future strategic planning

Rev Kate want to know how she can support the strategic plan?

Brian - intention is to support, not to give a grade

Rev Kate - would love another word beyond evaluation,

Brian Formative Assessment

Rev Kate – This is her 27th year of ministry, and she always wants to be better

3. **Congregational discussion on Banner and values (Rev Kate)**

Proposal for values to learn, those who want to have said their word. This is where the values have come from, this is the GPS of the organization. She will invite once more at the congregational meeting in December, phasing in the new values, phasing out of the principles, post them together somewhere, and note this is the evolution

Nick likes the idea of simplified statements for OUR congregation

Rev Kate - will create artwork, liturgy, find other ways to incorporate it

Jean - one way meeting with Mac is to involve the children, use hand gestures to teach it to the adults,

Rev Kate says create a flower dance! Banner ideas, perhaps come up with 5 proposals, use a surveymonkey, reveal the top ideas at the congregational meeting, consult with Kyle about the banner Rev Kate did offer meetings about banners some attended some not

4. **Quarterly Financial update (Kyle)**

Good news, caught up on budget, financials have improved, behind in budget, 7000X net loss for year, should be positive \$10K, but at year end positive \$3k

Balance sheet - better than last time, overall pretty happy with developments

5. **2025 Budget Update: presentation and discussion (Kyle)**

Note: Items in bold have changed

Pie charts of income expenses have changed slightly with smaller net loss of \$4500

Health insurance increases are lower than the prior expected increases, 5.74%

Staff line item: overtime prohibited; only people paid hourly eligible for overtime, but not necessarily true, if salaried one can now be eligible, all employees will be except Kate

Kyle can budget if desired for Dan, Rita, Erica, Cecily to be eligible, esp since Kris and Ellen dont have enough hours

Erica is full time salaried,

Kate - Dan, Rita, Cecily and Erica usually don't work overtime - can we do flex time?

Rule is 40 hours a week, cannot award flex time

Brian - what would have overtime cost us in the past couple years?

Rita gets extra pay to process 1099s at year beginning

Kyle will have to go back to check on recent past history,

Brian - what would weekly hours cost based on past years? How can we use this to see what to budget now?

Rev Kate - Rita is 80% time, Dan is 90% full time,

Arthur - idea of asking employees to communicate before

Kyle - preapproval can still result in overtime

6. **Understanding and clarifying accounts that affect cash flow and pay for unplanned expenses (Kyle)**

Recap of why have we spent down our cash reserves. 274K extra in 2020, now in 2024 only 47K.

Gap of 35-40,000K for emergencies, Can identify unused liability funds or ways to generate more income, or cut spending

Kyle presents several options for moving money around from existing accounts, no voting on these items at this meeting

Jean - is the balance of the account from art sold? Kyle says yes.

Nick - Does the Art committee purchase Art for the church from the fund?

Proposal to Kyle - not recently

Maria - has anyone talked with the art committee? No not yet

Kate - do they know they have that money?

Kyle - not sure if they know if they have this amount?

Brian - we seem to be in a steady state, we get enough money to make the budget, but not more, let alone more money for program initiative. If anything untoward happened, we would have to dig into our budgets. It is a steady decrease in money. Need to not cannabalize programs and find other sources of money,

Maria - lets learn from this and try to rent the church out.

Kyle - planned giving presents an opportunity.

Kate - aspirational stewardship run can present a way to accomplish goals long term, or using grants

Christine - PA grant but must match, Heinz foundation, Pittsburgh foundation,

Nick - Chris submitted a proposal to the state for a safety related grant with a matching component which has been requested for further review

7. **Allocation of Fantasy Auction Proceeds: Discussion and Vote (Kyle)**

Kyle moved to allocate \$21,040.13 from the Extraordinary Building Repair & Maintenance Reserve for the following projects:

- Up to \$14,000 for the 5 building projects in the Building & Grounds memo:
 - **\$4,800 to refurbish both sets of exterior doors to the Garden Lobby**
 - **\$3,500 for pruning the Schoyer Oak in order to protect the stained glass windows**
 - **\$700 to prune trees in the garden**
 - **\$3,235 for updating and expanding the hearing assist system in the sanctuary**
 - **\$874 for updating the fire and security reporting system.**
 - **Up to \$891 for any additional costs from these projects**
- \$7,040.13 to erase the remaining air filter debt (account 250.130 Capital: Ventilation System Improvement)

Christine seconds motion. Unanimous approval.

Brian will figure out who to communicate to that the discussion is over.

8. **Assessment of the Board: presentation and discussion (Brian and Kyle)**

Brian has in the folder a document "Congregation Assessment of the Board" a quick assessment.

9. **Change in procedure for selecting delegates: Discussion and Vote (Raeann)**

Review of document from Raeann, a person to attend the UUA GA, Pittsburgh Area Cluster meetings

Should the document say Shared Values of the UUA

Name change to Procedure for Delegates and Representatives

Raeann moves to approve the process, vote is unanimous in favor

10. Future Business (All)

11. Appreciations and Aspirations (All)

Brian appreciates we are still here after 9 pm.

Christine appreciates the campus committee.

Maria appreciates the general efforts of the committee.

Nick appreciates the collegiality of the board.

Raeann appreciates everyone in person attendance and Nicks attention to eh tech functionality.

Maria appreciates not having to do it once a month.

12. Adjourn (Brian) (9:00)

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Notaro, Recording Secretary

Approved by the Board: November 20, 2024

Nick Izzo, Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nick Izzo", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.