

UUCM Board Meeting
Tuesday, July 19, 2016

In attendance were President Michael Mernin, Vice President Sue Laufer, Treasurer Dennis Kurtti, Secretary Sheila Eby and trustees Jim Abramson, Doug Andrews, Paul Black, Ellen Fenster-Kuehl, Dottie Hiebing, Steven Mintz, Mary Moriarty, Steve Ramshur, Denise Rodgers and Reverent Judy Tomlinson.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM, and June board minutes were adopted as proposed without discussion or amendment.

A note was written.

- Welcome to Danielle Ramcharan
- We considered other notes inviting her, Iris DeLaPaz and Jaclyn Puleo to a board meeting.

President's Report

Search Committee

- A survey has been distributed ascertaining the congregation's preferences for our new minister (more than 60 responses)
- Interest expressed in bringing it to lapsed members and to youth
- The process will continue to unfold with a worship service in October that the UUA has developed for this purpose. We will seek candidates in November and December, review submissions in January, then conduct interviews through Skype. Three or four prospects will visit us in February. The presentation of the final candidate and congregational vote will take place in April and May, respectively.
- Needed: A few board members to host informal two-hour gatherings in their homes, where a dozen or so congregation members can learn more. A sign-up sheet was circulated.
- Needed: Expertise on Web design to help communicate developments

West Orange Congregation

Becky Doggett, representing that group, has requested \$2K toward its urban ministry. They'd like the money by September. Michael will ask Becky to join us for more information. Reactions included:

- Judy: We have to draw \$10K out of our reserve to fund current operations, so we really have to figure out where that extra money would come from.
- Denise: We need a structure for vetting these requests.
- Sue: We can't put everything on hold while we fine-tune our priorities.

The Board Retreat

An overnight during the 23rd/24th weekend was strongly encouraged, rather than meeting at Jim Abramson's house.

- Pros: building invaluable relationships among ourselves
- Cons: Murray Grove facility does not afford much time for bonding
- Mike is looking at places elsewhere.

Community Involvement

We discussed St. Mark's Church's recent community service, which addressed racial justice. Judy voiced pride in the number of our own congregation members who attended.

Associate Minister's Report

- Shannon Gattens has been named the new RE chair. RE has all but five teachers for next year, record progress. Summer RE is going well with young adults leading the one-room schoolhouse.
- The revamping of our adult religious program is underway.
- Nine people are enrolled in Harvest the Power; we want three more.
- Three covenant groups are going through a transition in leadership. A group on parenting has been proposed.
- Connie Thames and others are working on a new hospitality process.
- Last service included six visitors, well below the average for congregations like ours.

Ministerial Transition Team

Transparency is key to this group, which conducted a workshop attended by 18 percent of the congregation. More of these sessions will take place through next year, and people who have already participated are welcome to do so again -- we need everyone's input as the transition unfolds. "We've gotten people jazzed up about change and why we need it," said Christian Turek, who provided the report. Now we need to determine the kind of change required, and lay groundwork for that transformation.

UUA Interim Minister Appraisal Finalization

Judith Rew sent a survey to some people. Respond to Sue with suggestions. She will send it out to us all. Sue will complete and submit.

Rental Questions

- The board noted Jerry Fried's suggestion that we provide our space free or at a reduced rate to a concert supporting an anti-gun violence day of remembrance. The question became moot weeks later after the group opted for an outdoor location.
- Another question arose about free or reduced rent for the Day of Remembrance event. We discussed the question of whether such arrangements are worth it -- do they bring in prospective new members, strengthen our community, cover their costs, etc. Dennis pointed out that rentals are \$18K in the hole for last year, and raised the question of whether we should start this year giving space away. We resolved to research insurance and other costs and then let the Executive Committee decide.

Treasurer's Report:

- We passed a balanced budget for last year, taking \$10K out of our reserve fund. Next year's budget is sound. Collections and pledges are up.
- Staff is a major expense, so we should know what they're all doing.
- We should also stipulate what our special funds -- in the names of Mary Wanderpolo and Charlie Ortman -- can be used for.

- Danielle has fine-tuned the market value of our rentals. Last year, they were way off.
- Pledges are 70% of our money, should be 85%.
- Need to assess our financial performance and look at organizational management -- is it efficient, do we have the right people? Are we selecting staff using objective assessments? And are we getting enough money coming in?
- Chris Corbett and Dennis are willing to go through the financial report line by line, like a tutorial, for all those who are interested.
- If we address the last four bullet points, our ongoing financial issues will go away.
- Treasurer's report accepted by board

Additional issues raised:

Denise: Need to block out an hour of time to articulate a set of priorities we can use to guide our spending decisions.

Mike: It's not realistic to launch a full-scale revision of our mission statement at this time.

Ellen: We need an hour or two to talk about the organizational chart. Many of our committees would benefit from this input; they could handle some of the issues we wrangle over in board meetings.

Vote to adjourn at 9:45 PM.