

Unitarian Society of Germantown
Fall Annual Meeting
September 28, 2014

MINUTES

1. **Selection of Chair, Secretary and Parliamentarian for meeting.** Motions to elect Alan Windle as chair and Andrea Parry as secretary were unanimously approved. Alan appointed Dave Dearden as parliamentarian.

2. **Waiver of reading of minutes.** Motion approved.

3. **President's report** (Dennis Strain)

The previous Board delegated to the Ministry Executive Team the regular operations of the church effective July 1, 2014, with the intent that the Board be freed up to focus on mission and high level strategic thinking. The most significant achievement of the Board so far this church year has been to develop key Strategic Initiatives for 2014-2017 to provide high level guidance to the Ministry Executive Team (MET), church committees and volunteers. Drawing on the USG Mission Statement and the Covenant of Membership, the first initiatives for church leaders and committees to steer towards are: (1) Member Engagement; (2) Spiritual Development and Growth; and (3) Outreach. The strategic initiatives were discussed, as were the sources from which they were drawn. The complete text of the Strategic Initiatives, as well as the USG Mission Statement and Covenant of Membership, are available on the Church website.

4. **Ministry Executive Team report** (Kent Matthies)

MET members are lay leaders Treva Burger and Beth Lazer, and staff members Kent Matthies and Gloria Guldager Smith.

The MET received the Strategic Initiatives at the end of September, and is starting conversations with key groups about how they can live these out in concrete ways. Committees will be asked to set SMART goals (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely). MET's intention is to seek to facilitate and make the committees' work easier, without micromanaging.

The Sunday morning experience is a key focus. Last year USG instituted two services as an experiment, and the previous Board voted to extend the experiment for two more years. This year the 9:15am service is intended for centering, and the 11:15am service will be for

celebrating life. A second service was felt to be important for growth. USG averages 225 people on a Sunday morning, and there are times that not all the people who attend would fit comfortably in the sanctuary at one time. Unfortunately, this involves some splitting, which USG is trying to address. We are seeking one church, many ministries, in a way that does not burn out our volunteers.

One of the reasons USG moved to a new governance system was to help the church operate more smoothly. We are striving for parity between authority and responsibility. This has led to new alignments between staff, Ministry and committees as to who has authority and responsibility for what. Additional information can be provided to anyone interested.

A Transformation Team was created by the previous Board, in order to keep us moving toward becoming a more multicultural, anti-racist community. Despite good intentions, the Transformation Team did not get off the ground last year. There is a renewed focus on getting it up and moving.

USG will be celebrating its 150th anniversary in 2015. Discussions about how to celebrate are underway.

5. Amending Bylaws to Expand Nominating Committee (Dennis Strain)

The proposed change to the Bylaws would expand the membership of the Nominating Committee to six members (from five) and stagger their terms so that two new members are elected each year (rather than all annual terms, with an entirely new Nominating Committee elected every year). The purpose is to allow the Nominating Committee to utilize learnings from their work in subsequent years, and to enable them to offer assistance in filling volunteer opportunities other than membership on the Board.

The proposal was discussed at the May Annual Meeting and some concerns were raised. The congregation voted to table the proposed change in the Bylaws until the September Annual Meeting. In response to the comments at the May meeting, the Board approved changes to the Bylaws amendment that would (1) prohibit Board members from serving on the committee and prevent committee members from succeeding themselves for a year, and (2) provide clear authority for nominations from the floor, utilizing the same procedure as provided for floor nominations of Board members.

The vote was taken orally and votes were counted. The motion to accept the proposed Bylaws amendment was approved (48/2)(41/0 for members present at the meeting, 7/2

absentee ballots). The complete text of the amendment to the Bylaws will be available on the Church website.

6. Election of Nominating Committee

The following members were elected to the Nominating Committee:

One year term: Dennis Brunn and Gerry Whelan

Two year term: Sam Stormont and Jessica Slivak

Three year term: Rick Rodes and Sarah West

7. Financial report: Consolidated Investment Fund (CIF) (Dennis Strain)

Summary data was presented about the status of the CIF as of the end of fiscal years 2013, 2014, and 2015 projected. At the End of FY 2013, the balance was \$913,601. At the end of FY 2014, the balance was \$851,310. The projection for the end of FY 2015 is \$738,248. This reduction in principal is largely attributable to withdrawals needed to balance the operating budget. These numbers reflect additions to the CIF including a large bequest from Edna Jones in 2013, and the planned utilization of that bequest, as approved by the previous Board, for (1) repayment of loans to renovate the Sullivan Chapel and the apartment on the second floor apartment of the Youth Lodge, and (2) creation of a Maintenance Reserve Fund for the building and grounds.

A lengthy discussion ensued. Concern was expressed that the balance is going down and that the pattern of deficit spending in the operating budget continues uninterrupted. Others expressed the view that deficit spending has unfortunately been necessary if we are to continue programs at a level that would enable the Church to continue to thrive. We also have a large, old building and property that requires attention. We as a congregation may need to think harder about our priorities and what we would be willing to give up. Many suggested that the problem should be addressed by increasing income, whether from pledging or other sources. Various views were expressed as to how to accomplish this. Those included increased efforts to educate the congregation about costs and the deficit, requesting donations for special projects, and development of a focused program to increase bequests, which is already underway. USG already receives special gifts (in 2013, they totaled approximately \$65,000, some from donors who wished to remain anonymous), and has benefitted from bequests of various sizes, including from people who would not appear to have had the means to make such substantial bequests.

It was requested that a fuller explanation of the numbers be made available to the congregation. A suggestion was made that a session be held specifically to discuss and present information on the CIF in more detail.

The members of the CIF committee are Michael Campbell (chair, also chairs the Finance Council), Rudy Sprinkle (Financial Secretary), Helena Tucker (Treasurer), Gloria Guldager Smith (Church Administrator), and Tom Ott (Stewardship chair).

8. Financial report: Annual Budget (Dennis Strain)

The actual income and expenditures as of the close of FY 2013-2014 were presented along with the corresponding numbers budgeted for FY 2014-2015. This information will be available on the Church website. Questions were raised about specific items and addressed. Income and donations from Share the Plate are not shown because they are handled in a pass through account.

Motion to adjourn approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrea Parry