

## USG Board of Trustees Meeting, April 22, 2014

**Member present:** Dennis Strain, Leni Windle, Tom Ott, Bob Williford, Marina Patrice Van Gossen, Ann Schoonmaker, Craig Miller, Andrea Parry, Treva Burger

**Non-Members present:** Rev. Kent Matthies, Gloria Smith

**Motion:** to approve the March Minutes

**Motion Approved:** 9-0-0

**Minister's Report: Additions to report from** Rev. Kent Matthies: he will be in Tulsa next week helping to lead a preaching training and will get to attend three very different worship services at the largest UU church in the country; that he will be away the following weekend as well to officiate the wedding of a good friend; and that Lida Holota has resigned effective July 1 for personal reasons.

**President's Report:** Tom Ott wanted to make sure that thanks go to Rev. Kent Matthies for all his help in getting the AV grant process going and being enthusiastic about it. Rev. Kent Matthies thanked Bob Williford, Gloria and Scott Smith and Joan Javier-Duval for all their hard work as well.

**Governance:** The Board held a three-hour retreat on April 14 to discuss the revised governance proposal. Several members expressed the view that we need to enable the Board to engage more in big picture vision and strategy, as contemplated in the revised governance proposal. Board members raised the following questions and concerns: how the proposal would be implemented and on what timeline; what safeguards there would be on the Ministry side; how the responsibilities of the senior Minister would shift, and what he would have to stop doing to make time for his additional responsibilities; concern that the Minister's role as spiritual leader of the church would be diminished; and agreement that the changes in the Minister's role must be made clear to the congregation, especially that the Minister cannot do everything, but that the church would still work to assure that the congregation's spiritual needs are met.

Tom Ott asked if there were any questions after the presentation last week. One Board member asked will Rev. Kent Matthies have time to do the things we want him to do now, especially in areas where his greatest strengths are, specifically personal interaction. Kent's response: The biggest challenge is making sure that the minister gets to continue to minister. As churches grow, people will have less contact with the minister, so this is a change we need if we want to grow. He is committed to continuing to be Minister, Pastor and Preacher. There was discussion about the Governance and Ministry Task Force and whether it will have a continuing role in church year 2014-2015, as it recommends. The Board asked the task force to continue in order to assist the Board in implementing the revised governance structure and providing other support. The task force recommends it also be used to assist the Board in developing policies for Board review and consideration, and to decide if there is a difference of opinion between Governance and Ministry as to which arm should be the final decision maker on an issue. The Board will decide how it will use the task force and how long it will continue.

**Motion:** That the Board delegate to the Minister, supported by a team of staff and lay leaders, the authority to manage the regular operations of the church (1) in accordance with the high-level guidance and strategic direction provided by the Board, (2) pursuant to policies adopted by the Board, and (3) in consultation and collaboration with the Board and others performing the function of governing the church.

**Motion approved:** 9-0-0

The revised governance structure is to go into effect July 1, 2014. The Board would like the Task Force to continue to work on recommendations for implementation and the structure and charge of the task force going forward.

**Finance Council Recommendation:**

That The Edna Jones bequest (\$295,000 approximate) be used to:

1. Pay off the current Sullivan Chapel loans
2. The remainder assigned to a capital account for the purpose of maintaining the church building. The account will be administered by the Building and Grounds committee, which will present to the Finance Council a plan for allocation.

The building is in need to repair and ongoing maintenance and with this plan we could stop taking emergency money from the CIF several times a year. So far \$75,444 has been moved from the CIF, unbudgeted, this year for Building and Grounds emergency issues. Rev. Kent Matthies raised the question of whether it would be fiscally responsible to pay off the loans if USG is able to obtain a better return in the CIF. The reason the loan payoff is in the recommendation is because there is not money budgeted to pay off these loans and there is concern about how they are being administered. Several felt it would just cleaner to clean up the loans and that it would be in fitting with Edna Jones' wishes. There were discussions about other things Edna Jones' money could be used for, but this seems to be a good, clean, meritorious way to spend this money.

**Motion:** That The Edna Jones bequest be used to:

1. Pay off the current Sullivan Chapel loans
2. The remainder assigned to a capital account for the purpose of maintaining and improving the church building. The account will be administered by the Building and Grounds committee, which will present to the Finance Council a plan for allocation.

**Motion approved:** 8-1-0

**Draft Budget for FY 2014-2015: Board members raised** questions on an email from Patricia Hammill about increases in staff salaries. Tom Ott will check the math with Finance Council Chair Charles Gabriel. As a reality check for the proposed budget, what percentage of pledge income do we expect to come in between now and the end of the year? Andrea Parry will check in with Rudy Sprinkle as to how the pledges are coming and what he thinks we can expect for the total. Tom Ott asks how to we want to proceed as a point of process. The deficit would be \$87,010 with the \$30,000 budgeted for the capitol campaign exploration and \$13,000 for the second service. Conversation about advisability of continuing to have deficit budgets and take money out of the CIF when we are short. Where would we be if we hadn't had deficit budgets over the last 17 out of 19 years. This is the kind of big picture issue the Board needs to be wrestling with. Where do we put our money? There really isn't anything in the budget that we want to cut. We may have potential to grow in rentals.

The Board will vote at its May meeting on continuing the second service for another two years. As an aside from Rev. Kent Matthies as reasons to keep the second service in the budget, three points coming from 126 Second Service surveys:

Do you like having the choice of 9 or 11:15, 69% yes

Did you have a have a positive experience in the service this year, 79% yes

Would you like to see us continue to have two services, 75% yes

One group member noted that a good way to increase our income is to increase our membership. Leadership needs to take more responsibility to reach out to visitors. Growth is another good thing for the Board to talk about next year. How do we involve more than just the Board? A thought that Adult Spiritual Development should be more directed to people outside the church. Rev. Kent Matthies commented that growth in and of itself is not as important as making sure that we are doing what we are doing well.

How should we proceed with the budget? Proposal that a small group meet with Charles Gabriel to address some key questions. The questions might be: if we allocate the Edna Jones Bequest to a Buildings & Grounds fund, can we reduce their budget? Are the staff salary increases appropriate, etc. And then Charles Gabriel could attend the next Board meeting. Marina Patrice Van Gossen and Rev. Kent Matthies will meet with Tom Ott and Charles Gabriel.

**Philadelphia Cluster meeting:** Craig Miller went to the meeting. There was a conversation about a large group website and a large group event like perhaps attending the gay pride parade. They asked that the cluster flyer be distributed at the annual meeting.

**Minister's Annual Review:** Andrea Parry reminded the Board that the new minister evaluation policy states that the evaluation must be done before the end of the church year and that the gathering of input alternates between input from the Board and input from wider group. This year is an input from the Board year. Leni Windle and Bob Williford agreed to work with Andrea Parry on this.

**Annual Meeting:** Concern that the Annual Meeting should be on a day with one service and not two. The Board would like to consider going to one service on May 18 (one week earlier than planned) and having the Annual Meeting after the 10:30am service and asks Gloria Smith and Rev. Kent Matthies to investigate this option and make the decision.

Motion to adjourn 9:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Treva Burger

**Unitarian Society Germantown**

**Minister's Report to Board of Directors**

**Rev. Kent Matthies**

April 18, 2014

As I write we are preparing for the Passover Seder Dinner and Easter Sunday. I hope this finds you all in the spirit of renewal and freedom.

Thanks to all of you for a very good meeting on April 14<sup>th</sup> with the **Governance and Ministry Task Force**. I thought we had honest and open conversations about the most important questions at hand. Your feedback gives us good direction on how to prepare for the next stages of the conversation and work. I do believe strongly that the proposed changes would help us do more effective division of labor. The proposal before you can allow the Board to focus better on strategy, policy and oversight, while empowering Ministry to work on regular programs and operations. We have such a high number of talented and dedicated people in our community. The new structure would make work more enjoyable and rewarding. I know the proposal is a significant change and extend a formal offer to any of you who want to talk with me more in depth about how it might look if implemented.

**Second Service Proposal:** Linda Brunn and I are working with others in evaluating the feedback we received from the 126 respondents to our Second Service Survey. We will integrate the feedback into our thinking on how to shape the proposal for next year.

We are fortunate that next year Kin Sims, the Princeton Theological School student will serve as **Student Minister**. After multiple interviews we decided that Mr. Sims can add to our ministries and congregational life next year. The Student Ministry position will last from September 2014-15 with an average of 10 hours of work per week. As I indicated in my report last month we envision a job that would focus on supporting social justice efforts and our high school program, while also letting Mr. Sims experience some of all the nuts and bolts of parish ministry. I requested that Rev. Debbie Davis the Director of Field Placement at Princeton Theological Seminary increase their financial commitment. She agreed and committed to pay the entire \$2,700 stipend.

**Stewardship:** We are very happy to report that we did receive the full \$20,000 Chalice Lighters Grant to upgrade audio and video in our sanctuary. Joan Javier-Duval deserves big credit as author of the grant proposal. I worked with Joan, Gloria, the sound/tech team and other district leaders to help usher along the conversations in developing the project and proposal.

We look forward to our one night/ one day “**Start Up**” for **Daniel Gregoire** as our Director of Faith Development on May 16-17. Thanks to Marina Patrice Van Gossen and Tom Ott for agreeing to attend representing the board. Sandra Greenfield, from the Joseph Priestley District who will conduct the meetings. This is especially important for all leaders on the board to be aware of as we continue to clarify expectations and improve collaboration with Daniel Gregoire in this new position, which includes children’s and youth religious education, adult spiritual development, caring and worship leadership.

Happy Passover and Easter. See you soon.

In Faith, Kent