

## **MARCH 24, 2015, USG BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Dennis Strain, Marina Patrice Nolan, Linda Brunn, Judy Rodes, Scott Wolkenberg, Craig Miller, Linda O’Gwynn, and Ann Schoonmaker

**ABSENT:** Bob Williford

**VISITING:** Rev. Kent Matthies, Rev. Daniel Gregoire, Gloria Smith, Michael Campbell  
Meeting was convened at 7:40. Marina Patrice Nolan gave opening words.

### **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY MINUTES**

Approved as corrected:

1. Tom Ott and Bill Morrow were also visitors.
2. The board committee to evaluate the minister consists of Linda O’Gwynn and Scott Wolkenberg. The process will be completed by August.
3. The Committee on Ministry is composed of Bill Morrow, Chair, Kathy Bonanno, and Christine Ginsburg.

### **COMMITTEE ON MINISTRY**

Ann Schoonmaker gave background on the previous structure and policies of the committee which are no longer in practice. The board charged her with reviewing the CM structure, policies, and procedures in consultation with the Governance and Ministry Task Force, and presenting an updated policy for the board to approve.

### **COMMENTS ON THE MARCH 22 PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED BUDGET**

The reports and background information were helpful; and the tone of the comments was favorable. Speakers stressed the need for increased visibility for USG and a need to increase rental income.

### **FINANCIAL COUNCIL PROPOSED RESOLUTION REGARDING THE GENERAL ENDOWMENT FUND AND YEAR- END BANK BALANCE**

Michael Campbell, Chair of the Finance Council, presented a proposal from the MET and the FC to establish a cushion amount in the bank account of \$15,000, any amount over which could be counted against General Endowment withdrawals to cover the deficit in FY 2016. After extensive discussion and additional suggestions and questions, it was decided to table the proposal until more information could be made available.

### **APPROVAL OF CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY EXECUTIVE TEAM**

The board approved the following list from which three new members would be chosen: Jenn Leiby, Susan Smith, Linda Bernstein, Bill Dowdall.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 pm.

Minutes taken by Ann Schoonmaker for Bob Williford

### **President’s Report: March 2015**

Governance and Ministry Task Force

The Task Force recommends that Board consider addressing the following:

- There appears to be concern among some members of the congregation about transparency, trust, and stewardship of money.
- To address this, a view was expressed that we need clear financial policy and procedures and an audit, and maybe a financial coach. The Board must take ownership of this and let the congregation know we are addressing it.
- View was expressed that USG's financial structure is too complex. A consultant could help streamline.
- Would be good for the Board to grapple with the purpose of the endowment.
- Would be good for the Board to be more proactive and less reactive to complaints. Let the congregation know what is planned for the year.
- We need clarity on what we as a congregation want to achieve. One suggestion was a healthy future for USG. This includes Finance, but how should a healthy future for USG be achieved? Is the objective to save the building and the CIF? Can we find a smart group to boil down the goal and come up with ideas for how to get there?
- Less animosity. Create zones of care.
- It would be helpful for Board to more clearly understand what their role is and what they have to grapple with. That might assist the congregation in getting more clarity.
- It was suggested that a consultant from the UUA be engaged to assist the Board. What are the issues in governance we need to fine tune? How do we get to constructive civil conversation? View was expressed that it would be hard to do this without an external facilitator.
- Board training and orientation is critical. Possibly do an orientation in June, after new Board members are elected and before people leave for the summer. All Board members should attend. Orientation needs to include both nuts and bolts, and briefing of new Board members by the old ones on what issues have been developing.

### Finance Council

The Council has some firm views on the proper use of the CIF: withdrawals should be limited to income (the 4% averaged over three years) and that income would be available for special projects if not needed for the operating budget. Dave Bruton will develop a proposed policy.

The Council is proposing that excess funds in the checking account be used to offset withdrawals from the CIF.

## **MET March 2015 Report to the Board**

**What MET would like from the Board:**

Approval of the list of candidates vetted and approved by MET. We would like to ask three of the following: Jenn Leiby, Linda Bernstein, Susan Smith and Bill Dowdall, to serve a minimum of two-year terms each.

### **Feedback on the proposed budget so we can send the Board a final draft for approval next month:**

The budget process seems to be going very well. Dave Bruton has agreed to present the budget to the congregation and March 22 and practiced by presenting it to the Finance Council on March 17. The biggest issue seems to be Rudy's rosy pledge projection. He has agreed to share the basis for his projection at the March 22 meeting. We feel really good about a projected \$30,000 deficit, a 39% reduction, but have heard some noise about some people not thinking it's enough.

### **What MET has worked on this month:**

#### **Child Spiritual Development**

CSD is preparing a survey to send to parents to determine how well the program is serving the congregation and where they might look to make changes.

#### **Coalition Against Mass Incarceration**

This group grew out of the Ending Racism committee and is also part of UUPLAN. They are doing good work and have lots of potential. We would like to see them become a committee of the church and are working out the details of what that looks like and means.

#### **MLK Day**

Kay Weiser and Sarah West who co-chaired this year are of the opinion that no one will agree to chair MLK Day two years in a row because it's so much work and they have recommendations. There is a meeting set up with the two of them, our new Social Justice Coordinators, Anne Gwynn and Mel Strieb and Treva to help create a plan going forward to continue this important ministry.

#### **Numbers**

After March 15, 2015 our average overall Sunday morning attendance is 227. At the same time last year it was 228. For 9:15 worship, the average is 43 (44 last year to this point), and for 11:15, 132 (130 last year to this point.) CSD attendance at 9:15am averages 11 (last year 24 to this point, 16 at the end of year), at 11:15am 41 (last year 40 to this point, 35 at the end of the year.) So total average bodies at 9:15am are 54 and at 11:15am are 173 for the total of 227. CSD numbers include the nursery and vary widely, from 2 to 19 at 9:15am and 5 to 77 at 11:15am, some of the very low numbers are because on intergenerational Sundays CSD only includes nursery. Child Spiritual Development registration is also the same as December at 81, but Daniel

feels like it's more so he's going to look into it. Adult Spiritual Development participation in classes for Winter/Spring is 90, for Fall it was 77. Small Group Ministry is holding steady around 110.

### **Snow Plow**

Bill Blasdel and Dave Dearden have created a plan to ask the neighbors to help with the costs of the snow plowing. Gloria will connect to Bill to as to the best way to proceed on this.

### **Retreat**

Delores Ott and Susan Smith have chosen a location they feel good about for a one-day retreat on June 6. Christine Ginsberg, Gerry Whelan and Heather Hill have agreed to work with Daniel Gregoire, Kent and Kin Sims. We will invite more people to serve on the planning group.

### **Transformation Team**

The Transformation Team would like to send a representative to the Worship Arts meetings. This news was received with enthusiasm - a great step toward USG's transformation. They are also working on the Daskam Room name change possibilities.

### **Welcoming**

Due to broader societal changes that all "traditional" (as opposed to "evangelical") churches are struggling with, MET believes Welcoming (Membership) needs re-envisioning. We would like this to be a deliberative, though not necessarily lengthy, process. We are figuring out what this would look like.

### **Youth and Adult Committee**

Daniel proposes to spin YRUU into a YRUU Planning Committee made up of Daniel, a chair, two youth advisers and two youth. They would develop goals for the YRUU, Social, Spiritual and Social Justice programs for the youth in the church and perhaps beyond. They would have fundraisers and church wide events. We let him know that this sounded fine.