

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist  
Auburn, ME  
Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
April 12, 2023  
Community Meeting Room

Present: Anne Perron (President), David Das (Clerk), Ed Bell (member-at-large), Claire Hebert (member-at-large); Linda Greathouse (Vice-President) via Zoom

Guests: Sue Whitney, Greg Whitney, Angela Foss, Levesque, Ginny Starbird, Peter Floyd, Mary Kay Weisenberger

6:35: Anne Perron called the meeting to order.



*Board Chalice*

Claire read the Mission Statement and the Vision Statement.

Ed read the Communication Covenant

Anne lit the chalice; she called on all of us to work together to create and strengthen community.

Brief sharing by Board members.

### **Operating Parameters Discussion:**

Anne: apologized for late distribution of meeting materials; the past week had been busy and very intense. Briefly reviewed the edits and changes since last week's meeting. Stated that it has been a good process; that parameters can make a difference.

David: step back and look at the big picture; remind ourselves of where we are. The PSDI on Sunday (and Wednesday) has use of the Vestry, the kitchen, one of the RE classrooms, and the lobby bathroom. Parameters are a way of

managing a relationship. Ready to vote and to put the issue to bed, knowing that it is part of an ongoing conversation.

Ginny: cannot accept the keypad door as the entrance for the PSDI. Not ADA compliant. Moreover, it contradicts our principle affirming the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Greg: The keypad door creates operational challenges. How do we determine who is who? How to distinguish between those who use the keypad entrance and those who use the double door entrance.

The requirement of the keypad entrance essentially institutes segregation. Not in accord with our principles.

David: having volunteers in the keypad entry way would allow for better monitoring of the Vestry. Volunteers in the lobby often are not aware of issues in the Vestry. Recounted his own experience of being a lobby volunteer when Bets had to physically intervene to de-escalate a situation – David was completely unaware of the incident; only found out about it the next day from the email summary.

Levesque: need to be clear about ADA requirements. The keypad door does meet ADA requirements pertaining to width – allows for wheelchair and walker access. However, neither the keypad door nor the double doors are fully ADA compliant as they do not have push button switches.

Sue: the Steering Committee discussed the parameters list at length at their meeting on Tuesday evening. The Steering Committee remains firm in their assertion that the parameters are not in line with our principles and reflect classism. Sue read a statement from Matt Beliveau (Steering Committee member): cannot accept nor condone the parameters as presented; will stand against them; the PSDI cannot segregate by class; the parameters are ethically dubious.

David: apologized for citing Jodi in her absence, but Jodi did support the shift to the keypad door. The parameters document is an operational document. The PSDI is not a community of equals. The guests must abide by certain rules and regulations; they are treated differently than the volunteers: for example, they do not have access to the kitchen or to the rest of the church; they can't receive rides or money from volunteers; bathroom use is monitored. These rules and regulations are meant to ensure the smooth running of the PSDI; not to segregate the guests.

Claire: asked the PSDI to consider that it is unfair that congregants do not have full use of the Vestry on Sundays after church. This is a form of segregation.

Peter: expressed concern about the transparency of the entire discussion since the November 6 congregational meeting. Concern that this Board is repeating the mistakes of previous Boards. The information for this meeting came at the last minute. How has the congregation been informed about the issues? Have they been given opportunities to participate in the process?

David: the Board has striven for transparency throughout the 5 ½ month process. Repeated Anne's apology for the late breaking nature of tonight's information. However, Board meetings are listed on the schedule that Toby sends out weekly with the details on Sunday worship. Board meeting agendas, minutes, and supporting materials have been available on the Board blog on the church website and via Toby's emails. The Board has created and publicized as much as possible a Board email address.

Levesque: feels that the Board has been transparent; has provided information and materials in a timely manner since November.

General discussion about traffic flow in the lobby. Would using the keypad door help alleviate the flow or would it create further issues.

- Greg suggested that volunteers would have a harder time monitoring guests' use of the lobby bathroom and the storeroom bathroom if they were not stationed in the lobby.
- Levesque stated that use of the keypad door would help reduce congestion in the lobby; there would be fewer people in the lobby at any one time.

Discussion of specific parameter #20: "There will be a designated contact person who can respond if issue arise when the PSDiC is closed."

- Not a 24/7 requirement; just when events are occurring.
- Peter: should not hesitate to call the police. Was impressed by the way the police responded to a situation over the weekend. Weekdays and weeknights: there is a ride-along partnership between Auburn Police and Fire officers and Tri-County Mental Health counselors. (handed out information cards about the partnership)
- Anne: good information. Put as much contact info on a white board so to be as visible as possible.
- David: Need for procedures to back up some of the parameters (brought up at last week's meeting).
- Angela: need clarity on where to find policies and procedures.
- Sue: when would the parameters go into effect?

- April 17 (with the understanding that they will take time to implement)

Vote on the two documents:

- David made the motion to accept the Operational Parameters documents as presented.
- Claire seconded the motion.
- 5 yes; none opposed. Motion passed.

### **How to communicate the decision to the congregation?**

- Minutes of this meeting with accompanying materials on the Board blog
- Email via Toby
- Official church Facebook page
- Board binder in the Sanctuary
- Google Doc folder (under construction)

### **Miscellaneous Items:**

- First Town Hall – devote Town Hall to a discussion of the upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church building. How would we like to celebrate it? How to plan for it?
- Anne is meeting with Claudia, our church administrator, on Friday. Looking to establish a room scheduling protocol.
- Unresolved discussion about reintroducing paper orders of service.
- Need to get a handle on the Sunday ministerial calendar for the next 3 ½ months. Would like to pay visiting ministers promptly. Contact Worship Associates.

### **8:30: Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Das (Clerk)