

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist  
Auburn, ME  
Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
August 16, 2023  
Community Meeting Room

Present: Anne Perron (President), Linda Greathouse (Vice-President), David Das (Clerk), Claire Hebert (member-at-large), Jane Pentheny (member-at-large), John Spruill (member-at-large), Reverend Patrick McLaughlin (*ex officio*) via Zoom

Guests: Angela Foss, Esther Tucker, Levesque, Mary Kay Weisenberger

6:40: Anne Perron called the meeting to order.



*Board Chalice*

Anne welcomed Reverend Patrick

Jane read the Mission Statement.

Claire read a section from the “Covenant for Auburn UU Board of Directors” from the Board Policy Manual.

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

Brief sharing by Board members.

### **President’s Report:**

- Robin Smutny Trust:
  - Long time member Robin, who recently passed away, willed a generous trust to the church. Ellen O’Brien, Ned Claxton, and Greg Bianconi are working with Robin’s lawyer on the details.
- On-boarding process for Reverend Patrick
  - Anne has been connecting Reverend Patrick via email to various church committees and groups.
- Updated Directory ready to be printed and distributed
- Vandalism in the Sanctuary:
  - Music belonging to Phil was stolen.

- His 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary picture (Phil, Jodi and Pam) was taken from the organ bench and smashed.
- Meeting with DIC leadership on August 10
  - Met with Greg, Patty, and Ben
  - Positive meeting
    - Goal of reinforcing good relations
    - DIC sees the Church as the “host;” will engage with the Church as the “host.”
  - Board suggestion that both groups meet on a regular basis

**Board Communications:**

- David will resend information re: District Leadership Retreat

**Consent Agenda:**

- August 2, 2023 Minutes

Motion to approve: Claire

Second: Jane

Unanimous approval.

**Open Session:**

- Mary Kay
  - Need some clarity regarding Claudia’s email address
  - Fire doors have been propped open – need to be closed
  - Fire alarm going off – Peter Floyd is being alerted with each alarm
    - Anne: Probably due to renovation activities (sanding) in office; Need to change who gets called.
- Levesque
  - Levesque did a walk through of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor apartment at 159 Pleasant with City of Auburn Electrical Inspector in preparation for the change of use application
    - List of electrical upgrades and smoke and CO detector requirements

**Minister Search Update:**

- We Have A Minister!
  - Official start date on August 28; 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday will be September 10.
  - Plan a series of messages to the congregation

- Can remove this standing agenda item

### **1<sup>st</sup> Floor Apartment at 159 Pleasant Street**

- John suggested that the congregation expected a vote on the use of the apartment
  - General Board consensus that there was no expectation of a vote
    - No change of purpose: ministerial use
    - Still not bringing in revenue
    - Vote would be required with any major renovation
      - Need for a plan and \$\$\$
- Anne and John will work on a communication to the congregation regarding the apartment (as part of the broader series of communications with Reverend Patrick's arrival)

### **Email Issue**

- Discussion at DIC/Board meeting regarding a negative email sent to the Board from a member of the DIC leadership; negative comments directed at Anne.
  - DIC aware of the email and who sent it; requested that the Board provide them with a copy of the email.
- Should Board provide the DIC with the email?
  - Yes:
    - allow the DIC to address the issue internally
    - stop similar emails in the future
    - make the DIC aware of how some Board members have felt disrespected
    - create a policy regarding negative emails
    - help our relationship with the DIC
  - No:
    - The DIC knows who sent the email; can work with that person directly
    - People need to be able to vent
    - Should the Board get in the habit of sharing emails; does the Board wish to be perceived as hanging people out to dry?
    - Previous consultation with UUA suggested that Board simply acknowledge negative emails and ask that the sender stop the practice
    - The importance of moving on; of taking advantage of all the current positive momentum

- Guest Comments:
  - Levesque: DIC can request the email directly from the person who sent it.
  - Mary Kay: need for consistency regarding nasty emails, with how to deal with all the negative stuff
    - A policy?
    - Good topic for a Committee on Ministry
  - Angela:
    - Email already several months old – that ship has sailed.
    - As a congregant, she would like to be confident that she could send an email to the Board without it being shared.
- Decision: Board will contact the DIC -- ask them to go directly to the person (if they so wish); the Board will not share the email due to privacy considerations.

### **Security Camera Policy:**

- Background information
  - Anne shared an image from security camera feed
    - Showed member of DIC entering code on lobby door keypad while a guest looked on.
    - Concern that guest now has entry code
  - People are in church when and where they should not be
    - Cigarette butts found in church
    - Vandalism of Phil's space
    - Powder on lobby floor
  - Outdoor cameras have helped in eliminating waste, garbage, and drug paraphernalia.
- Plan to install 4 more cameras
  - To cover all exits
  - To have greater interior coverage
- Concern about security of Sanctuary
  - Use the current camera set up to monitor Sanctuary 24/7?
  - Expand security camera system to the Sanctuary?
  - Lock doors to the Sanctuary: Phil and Pam thought that this was in the works pre-COVID.
    - Key access issues rear their ugly head
  - Importance of Sanctuary as a sacred space; expectation of privacy.
- Guest Comments:

- Esther: why not install an alarm system in Sanctuary? Camera information already too late; an alarm could prevent vandalism and theft.
- Levesque: vandalism totally unacceptable; need to address it as forcefully as possible
- Angela:
  - Use the separate security system; keep it simple.
  - Use of existing broadcast camera system in Sanctuary raises logistical and trust issues.
- Board Action Plan:
  - Created Camera Policy Task Force: Anne, Claire, John, Levesque
  - Policy to consider:
    - Privacy concerns
    - Who has access
    - Who can request to see footage
    - Who has the need to know
    - When to share with law enforcement
  - Draft Policy to be presented at September 6, 2023 Board Meeting
- Guest Comments:
  - Angela: advisable to create a policy template so that there are agreed upon expectations around the structure of a policy; would provide structure and clarity to those tasked with creating policies.

### **Town Hall Recap**

- General appreciation of how well Town Halls are working
  - Good attendance, both in person and online
  - Constructive and broad participation by those in attendance
- Agreement that virtual element of Town Hall needs tweaking in order to work more smoothly; to allow for greater participation
  - Board member to monitor chat during Town Hall
- Next Town Hall
  - October 1 to discuss 2023-2024 budget in preparation for October 15 Congregational Meeting

**Executive Session:** not required

**8:50:** Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Das (Clerk)