

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist
Auburn, ME
Congregational Meeting
November 6, 2022
Minutes

11:30: Reverend Jodi gathered people together to begin the meeting. Members of the Board introduced themselves and described the discussion leading to the meeting. The Board articulated the challenge that it has set for itself:

- “How do we get us back to ‘US?’”

and announced three decisions:

- Any further physical changes to the church, apart from the completion of the bathroom and laundry facilities, will require approval by the Board and/or the congregation depending upon the scope of the change.
- the Board will create its own email address
- the Board will maintain a binder of information containing Board minutes, the Board policy manual, the church Bylaws in the back of the sanctuary.

Anne Perron (Board president): Affirmed that no need to elect a moderator as the Board has ~~sacrificed~~ appointed Rick O’Brien. Asked congregation’s willingness to abide by a simplified version of Robert’s Rules.

The moderator called the meeting to order and did a quorum check: 58 members (34 in person, 24 via Zoom) were present. Met the requirement of at least 20% of membership.

Reverend Jodi: Prayer

Anne Perron: presented a Board motion that emerged from the October 29 discernment conversation:

- continue the Drop-In Center through the winter (specific date to be determined in consultation with the Steering Committee of the DIC)
- continue discussion and discernment with the goal of re-establishing balance between and among the various Church ministries (the Board will lay out the details soon)
- request that the Steering Committee explore other collaborators and sites for the DIC

John Spruill: Raised a point of order: is there a motion from the September 25 Congregational meeting that needs a vote.

Rev. Jodi: the motion – the call for this meeting – was passed on September 25.

Greg Bianconi: seconded the Board motion.

John Spruill: the motion represents a commonsense step.

Ellen O'Brien (Treasurer): thanked the new Board and especially thanked the previous Board who dealt with many challenges. She looks forward to everyone returning to church. The finances of the Pleasant Street Drop-In Center (PSDC) will be on a future Board agenda.

Tom Wylie: proposed an amendment to the motion: to continue the PSDC “*through April 15, 2023.*”

Greg Bianconi: seconded the amendment.

Bill Phillips: emphasized the importance of a specific date.

Greg Whitney: does this mean the PSDC will close on April 15? Or is it an end date for the discussion about the PSDC?

Anne Perron: reiterated that the Board supports the PSDC mission. The motion was designed to provide space for discussion and communication.

Greg Whitney: time is important; difficult to plan the next steps.

Rev. Jodi: we need to clarify – closing or not closing by April 15?

Anne Perron: restated the Board’s intent to continue the PSDC through the winter (given the critical needs of the guests) and to create space for conversation.

Luke Lunt: suggested April 17 as the deadline, giving the congregation one more Sunday in the process.

Bill Phillips: suggested language: the Board and Steering Committee will make a recommendation to the congregation by April 15.

Angela Foss: suggested: “by at least April 15.”

Bill Eldridge: asked about the composition of the Steering Committee – Church members? non-members?

Greg Whitney: listed 12 participants on the Steering Committee all of whom are members of the church.

Rick O'Brien: requested Tom Wylie to restate his amendment.

Tom Wylie: restated the amendment with the understanding the April 15, 2023 was the deadline for recommendations.

Bill Phillips: offered an amendment to Tom Wylie's amendment:

- To continue the PSDC.
- By April 17, 2023, the Board of Directors and the PSDC Steering Committee will present recommendations regarding the future parameters of the PSDC.

Jane Pentheny: seconded the amendment.

Rev. Jodi: advised the congregation to step back, take a deep breath, and be aware of the anxiety that an opaque set of rules (Robert's Rules) can create.

Vote on the amendment: Yeas – 36; Nos – 5; Abstentions – 7.

Rick O'Brien: read the entire motion:

- continue the Pleasant Street Drop-In Center.
- by April 17, 2023, the Board of Directors and the Pleasant Street Drop-In Center Steering Committee will present recommendations regarding the future parameters of the Pleasant Street Drop-In Center.
- continue discussion and discernment with the goal of re-establishing balance between and among the various Church ministries (the Board will lay out the details soon)
- request that the Pleasant Street Drop-In Center Steering Committee explore other collaborators and sites for the Pleasant Street Drop-In Center.

Vote on the motion: Yeas – 39; Nays – 3; Abstentions – 3.

Tom Wylie: move to adjourn.

Greg Bianconi: second.

Motion: carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 12:55.