

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist
Auburn, ME
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
January 3, 2024

New Board Meeting Room

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

Guests: Charles Nero, Esther Tucker, Angela Foss, Levesque

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



Board Chalice

Anne read the Mission Statement.

Jane 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.

Agenda Change: Board agreed to shift Executive Session to the end of the meeting (John delayed due to flat tire).

Minister’s Report:

- Positive feedback on Christmas Eve service.
- Emails supportive of request that congregants mask up.

President’s Report:

- Similar positive feedback on Christmas Eve service.

- Stressed importance of updating the physical calendar in the Board room. Has emphasized that to Claudia.
- AA meeting on New Year's Eve went very well (Anne was present to welcome them)
- Anne Kinney wishes to continue as Denominational Affairs representative.
- Anne enjoys being the greeter at the door on Sundays. Allows her to welcome people, have brief conversations.
- Has heard some concerns about impact of masks on ability to hear during service.
- Plans to sell old wooden vestry chairs.

Board Member Communications:

- None

Consent Agenda:

- December 13, 2023 Minutes

Motion to approve: Jane

Second: Linda

Unanimous approval.

Open Session:

- Angela:
 - There are ways of addressing sound issues on an individual level.
- Esther:
 - Questions about online participation: are chat comments captured? Are number and identity of Zoom attendees recorded?
 - Angela:
 - That information is collected. How do we communicate that information to the appropriate committees/groups?
- Levesque:
 - Who makes the call on canceling Sunday service due to snow? How is that decision disseminated?
 - Anne:
 - Patrick and Anne make the call by 7am. Email to the congregation. (Facebook as well)

- Charles:
 - Concern that projected slides are not synchronized with the flow of the service. Particularly noticeable on Christmas Eve, but evident on other Sundays. Need for a formal tech run through.
 - Adult RE Preview: February – Black History Month events; March – Women’s History Month events; April-May – Treks and Sojourners series.

Rental Agreement:

- Edited draft document; David to create next iteration.
- Final document ASAP.
- Need to create separate document for weddings, funeral, large events.

Town Hall Planning:

- What is your connection to church? What can strengthen that connection? What fires you up?
- Open-ended request to congregants to tell us how they would like to be engaged.
- Decision to postpone until January 28 (weather).

Comments:

- Charles: could congregants be asked at the Town Hall to give feedback on Adult RE events so far and to suggest future topics?
 - Board: Yes.

Board Protocol on Masking:

- We still have not developed one.
- Need to go beyond a simple request; need to develop a protocol linked to changing landscape of infection
- Once again: investigate policies at other churches.

Christmas Eve Service Recap:

- Anne:
 - Concern about a lack of organization
 - Ushers needed more direction
 - Projection slides not in synch
 - Last minute preparations

- John:
 - (Re)-institute an “usher board;” orientation and expectations.
- Patrick
 - Illness a factor; people graciously stepped up at the last moment
 - Need to create a script for Christmas Eve and other marked services (Ingathering; Flower Communion): a document that takes into account traditional practice, congregational expectations.
 - Coordinate with Worship Associates and Music Committee.
 - Need to come up with a **system** that would work throughout the church year (not just about Christmas Eve).
- Linda:
 - Extend an invitation to the congregation to be a volunteer; to help services run more smoothly; emphasize that it is a short-term commitment.

Comments:

- Angela:
 - Shouldn’t kid ourselves about past Christmas Eve services: “We have never been particularly organized.”
 - There’s a smaller pool of volunteers
 - Christmas Eve service requires a production coordinator.
- Charles:
 - The importance of ushers; we need a regular commitment.
 - A way of getting youth (esp. young males) connected to the service.
 - In certain Protestant traditions, ushers play an important spiritual role.

Printer Issues:

- No wi-fi access to the copier; Patrick is not able to print from his computer.
 - Need for a hard line?
 - John will look into wi-fi connection.
- Purchase a separate printer?
 - Is it a cost savings?
 - How to fund?
- By January 17 meeting: a proposed remedy to the printer conundrum.

8:20 Motion to enter Executive Session

- Staff discussion
- Motion: Jane; Second: John

8:50 Out of Executive Session

8:50:12 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Das (Clerk)