

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist Auburn, ME
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
May 31, 2023
Community Meeting Room

Present: Anne Perron (President), Linda Greathouse (Vice-President), Ed Bell (member-at-large), Claire Hebert (member-at-large), Betty Lynne Riggan (member-at-large), Jane Pentheny (member-at-large)

Excused: David Das (Clerk)

Guests: Angela Foss, Levesque



Board Chalice

6:38 pm: The meeting was called to order by Anne Perron, who, as she assembled and lit the chalice, reminded us that it takes all of us to keep the balance to support this 150-year-old organization.

Jane Pentheny read section 1.2 of the Policy Manual related to Board Covenant as a reminder to all.

Anne read the Auburn UU Mission Statement.

Brief sharing by Board members.

Approval of Consent Agenda:

May 17, 2023 minutes: A motion to approve the Board

minutes of May 17, 2023 was made by Claire, seconded by Anne, and approved by all.

Open Session: No items were brought forward for discussion by the guests present.

Interim vs. Contract Minister Discussion: Discussed next steps now that we have been informed by the UUA that we were not matched with an Interim minister. The message we received from the UUA was as follows:

We are writing to let you know that you did not find a mutual match in the interim search process. We are a bit stunned by this as we expect you all are. And we are sorry. We want all of our congregations to be well-served. This is yet another sign of a changing landscape in Unitarian Universalism, religion, and even the world.

You are one of 15 congregations that did not find someone yet. Given we started with a deficit of ministers to congregations in interim search and then lost 6 ministers in the process, we expected some but not all congregations to come up without a match. We will convert your interim search profiles to contract search profiles for maximum flexibility on timing.

So, it appears there will be no second round of matches this year for interim ministers. And we need to complete an additional set of questions on the UUA site associated with our application and then publish our minister job posting.

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Seeking a contract minister is different from an interim minister because a contract minister can become a settled minister with the congregation, whereas, an interim minister cannot. If we feel we need the skills and congregational work associated with an interim minister, we can ask a contract minister to become “credentialed” in interim minister work through the UUA.

Other considerations: Do we need to seek a full time or part time minister? Were we not selected by the ministers we interviewed because we have inadequate administrative support and processes? If so, do we need to take action to resolve those issues first? Should we hold a congregational town hall meeting to discuss our options and how to proceed?

It was concluded that we will schedule a congregational town hall for June 25th to discuss our next steps in pursuit of the contract minister, including seeking volunteers to serve on the minister search committee.

Annual Meeting Preparation: The annual congregational meeting is scheduled for next Sunday, June 4, 2023, after Sunday’s service in the sanctuary. The Board discussed the agenda, slate of officers, how establishment of quorum for in person and on Zoom will take place, and who will provide opening words (Claire) and Presentation of Rose Window Award (Betty).

The non-board members of the leadership slate will be contacted by Claire and Betty to confirm they are willing to serve for another year.

Update on the PSDIC: Anne reported the first 2 Sundays the drop-in center was not operating on Sundays, guests were present outside and were “acting out.” One Sunday a guest was witnessed urinating with visibility from inside the church. The following Sunday, during a contradance in the vestry, outside there were guests swinging a 4’ long pipe and threatening people. Neighbors have been throwing trash (found on our grounds?) in cars in our parking lot. This past Sunday (Memorial Day weekend) there was only 1 guest observed during the service, and none before or after and no disruptive behavior.

At the PSDIC meeting last night Ben Whitman was unanimously voted in as the steering committee chairperson, replacing Greg Whitney who will step down from that role, but still remain active with the PSDIC. We acknowledge the fine job Greg has done in chairing the steering committee.

It was reported that guests are now using showers and that process is going well and seems to be much appreciated by those participating. There is a fundraising committee that is considering a website to advertise the PSDIC with the intent to raise money, and a Go Fund Me site has been established, and already received donations.

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There was discussion about the need for a phone for guests and it was suggested that a church land line in the kitchen could be run from the kitchen to the wall between the kitchen door and the shower room and that phone could be used by guests. Further research by the Board determined that the phone line is the church office line and if the church office receives a call, it will ring on that line, if not answered will go to an answering service, but if in use, will be able to be picked up and listened to. It was felt this is not an ideal situation for use by guests. Anne will follow up with the PSDIC and recommend they pursue another solution.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Greathouse
Vice President (Clerk in David Das' absence)