

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist
Auburn, ME
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
November 1, 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) via Zoom, John Spruill (member-at-large), Reverend Patrick McLaughlin (*ex officio*)

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

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



Board Chalice

Linda 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.

Minister’s Report:

- Colleagues continue to express support and concern.
- Good feedback on Sunday’s service
- Has met with Jodi Hayashida in her capacity as MPA coordinator organizing a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-faith coalition to lobby state and local governments to address the needs of underserved populations.
 - They established a covenant re: what can/cannot be discussed.
 - Patrick will share broadly with the congregation any information and announcements that Jodi may provide.

- Led to a broader discussion of the lack of a Social Justice committee
 - Do we need a committee?
 - Can we do social justice work in another way?

President's Report:

- Reporter and photographer from the *Boston Globe* in attendance on Sunday; went well.
- Found bag of needles (new and used) and condoms on church grounds; tossed them. Police no longer have capacity to dispose of hazardous materials.
- October 21-22: somebody spent the night in the church – needles, cigarette butts, food, soiled mattress found on Vestry stage. (Probably not the first time) Stage was clear when DIC did its post-program walk through.
- Toby Haber-Giasson wishes to meet with Rental Agreement Task Force; has input regarding costs.
- Supportive emails after congregational meeting on Sunday.
- Planning to clean off stage; remove curtains, 2x4's.

Board Member Communications:

- None

Consent Agenda:

- October 18, 2023 Minutes

Motion to approve: John

Second: Linda

Unanimous approval.

Open Session:

- Levesque:
 - Question about when the DIC received the proposed Rental Agreement. (Anne: October 16)

- In response to Peter Floyd's comment at the Congregational Meeting that property manager claimed that rental fees were very high – Levesque wondered whether the property manager was offering a lower rate elsewhere.
- Mary Kay:
 - Is there a plan to proceed with the negotiations over the Rental Agreement?
 - Anne: the Rental Agreement Task Force will meet; then contact the DIC.
- Esther:
 - Finds the current situation overwhelming and heartbreaking.
 - Asked for clarification about Levesque's close encounter with the Spirit in the basement.
 - Levesque gave a brief recap (happened when he was ringing the bell).
 - Spirit has played a starring role in recent FB posts.
 - Esther wondered if it was the spirit of Ed Varney (his connection to the bell system).

Hazardous Materials Protocol:

- Imperative that we devise a protocol on how to handle needles, bodily fluids, chemical solutions safely.
- Will scavenge protocols and policies from other churches, the UUA, OSHA (John will check OSHA).

Comments:

- Angela:
 - Could be impetus to creating a broader, comprehensive safety policy.
 - Lots of hazards out there; regular church materials such as cleaning supplies, knives. We need to get our house in order.
- John:
 - Schedule a hazardous material cleanup day; joint effort of the church and the DIC.
- Mary Kay:
 - DIC Wednesday program working on a protocol addressing contagious persons. Ned Claxton and Greg Bianconi are involved.

- Need to form a task force from church and from DIC to identify hazardous materials before the cleanup day. Coordinate with the DIC.
- Anne:
 - Does not consider Vestry clean enough for young children.
 - Referred to needles etc. found on the stage.
 - Should we let children into the Vestry right now?
- Mary Kay:
 - DIC volunteers are comfortable bringing their children into the Vestry.
 - How to evaluate cleanliness?
 - Parents should monitor their children.

Rental Possibility:

- Discussion revolved around a request for the church to rent to a psychedelic integrative healing discussion group (the use of psychedelics in the healing process; no use of drugs at the meeting nor information about how to procure drugs).
 - David unable to find any UU churches who have experience with similar groups.
 - Contacted Erica Baron (our UUA District Rep); she will make inquiries around the district.
 - Will arrange a meeting with the group facilitator (has attended church).

Board-Minister Retreat:

- Board will schedule 1st Annual Board Lumberjack Retreat
 - To be held at *Splittin' Wood Axe Throwing*.
 - To have fun.

Future Town Hall:

- Topic: Church grounds
 - Clarify why benches and bushes/shrubs have been removed.
 - Hazardous materials and substances left on church grounds.
 - Church grounds as location for anti-social and/or illegal behavior.
- Date: January 7, 2024

Board Statement on Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia:

- Patrick and the Board to craft a statement expressing our solidarity with the local Jewish and Islamic communities and condemning the recent instances of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
- Statement to be sent to both faith communities.

8:30 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Das (Clerk)