

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist
Auburn, ME
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2023
Community Meeting Room

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

Guests: Angela Foss, Esther Tucker, Levesque

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



Board Chalice

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.

Minister’s Report: (The Board appreciates that Patrick left a northern New England clergy retreat early and enjoyed a leisurely 3-hour drive from western New Hampshire in order to attend the meeting)

- Has met with Pastoral Care team.
- Has met all the members of the Committee on Ministry (will formally meet with the COM soon).
- Has lots of COVID tests (500) to distribute.
- Colleagues at the Retreat asked about the state of affairs at First Universalist; they wish us well.

President's Report:

- Anne, Angela, and Levesque did a significant amount of work to clean church and grounds in preparation for the Saturday (Oct 14) wedding.
- Foresees doing the same on Friday in preparation for Barbara Hinckley's service.
- DIC photos and clothes do need to be moved into the storeroom when the Vestry is used for a non-DIC event. (in proposed rental agreement)
- Kitchen space: shelves across from Washer and Dryer now for non-DIC use (per parameters); Luke has moved materials. Small fridge to be moved into the kitchen for non-DIC use.
- Security cameras still a work in process; looking at maximizing coverage on the Pleasant St. side.
- Received a very nice email from Anne Kinney in response to the October 1 Town Hall.

Board Member Communications:

- David: Church website and related email accounts down; looking to find login materials. (Patrick provided email from Blue Host forwarded by Jodi regarding non-payment of bill. David will address issue.)

Consent Agenda:

- October 4, 2023 Minutes

Motion to approve: Jane

Second: Anne

Unanimous approval.

Open Session:

- Esther:
 - Tradition of bringing non-perishable canned goods to church for donation to appropriate organizations
 - Patrick: experience with working a "Stone Soup" themed service into similar initiatives.
- Levesque:
 - Doorbell is broken.

- Cited example of Sts. Peter and Paul receiving Homeland Security grant money for security system.
 - Patrick: this is an ongoing grant cycle; not one-and-done.
- Clarify bell ringing for Barbara Hinckley's service.
- Recent close encounter with resident Church spirit in the basement. (Church was built upon site of former cemetery)

COVID Policy/Protocol:

- Some elements:
 - If you are feeling poorly, consider staying at home (join us on Zoom).
 - Masking is strongly encouraged.
 - Watch out for each other.
 - If someone in your household has COVID, reconsider coming to church.
 - While distancing may be psychologically good, not all that effective given aerosol spread of COVID.
 - Air filtration system in the pulpit.
 - Link church COVID alerts to Lewiston-Auburn wastewater testing.
- Encourage masking at upcoming congregational meeting; need to get masks.

Comments:

- Angela: will provide Board with copy of her Chorus policy.

Mechanic Falls Flea Market Fundraiser:

- Anne has rented a booth
 - Hospitality Committee making baskets for sale.
 - A community builder.
 - All proceeds to the church.

Wedding Videography Proposal:

- John introduced the idea that the church could launch a wedding videography business to raise funds for church:
 - Videographers typically charge \$4-6,000 per event.
 - Possible \$3,000 profit per event to church

- Has contacted existing videography firms; a number are self-trained.
- Currently looking to train 3 staff; plans for 6 overall.
 - Youth from the congregation
 - Perhaps students at LRTC
 - Online training
- Upfront costs of \$8,000 for camera and training.
- Concerns:
 - Should we do some market research?
 - Many well-established professional videographers out there who do this for a living.
 - High tech production quality
 - Examples of work on line
 - Established client base.
 - What consistency can we fairly expect from church youth?
 - College bound
 - Busy-ness of adolescent life
 - What does it mean to hire employees?
 - We do not have \$8000 to provide upfront.

Comments:

- Esther:
 - Not enough information; table it for now.
- Angela:
 - This means starting a new business with all its startup costs. Who will do all the administrative/legal tasks on a regular basis?
 - Requires significant equipment investment. Not just cameras, but sound and editing equipment.
- Levesque:
 - Echoed the extra investment concerns.
 - Not just a technical skill, but an art. People are trained in the creative aspect of videography.
- Next Steps:
 - Patrick will speak with a colleague in the wedding biz and Anne will speak to an acquaintance in the videography field to get a sense of the market and feasibility of this project.

Congregational Covenant:

- Patrick provided a brief overview of what a congregational covenant is:

- A value and principle statement
- Expresses the aspiration of the church; what we are looking to be.
- This is what we are about.
- Expresses our commitment to each other.
- Can serve as a touchstone for committees in their work.
- Non-threatening: here is what we **want** to be.
- UU Youth groups do covenants all the time.
- Caveat: When done badly, can be weaponized.
- Some examples of covenantal language: #471, #472, #473 in the Hymnal.
- Next steps:
 - Small group conversations – lots of them – to create a one-two sentence covenant.
 - Patrick will help structure the process.
 - Patrick will train facilitators to lead the small groups.

Comments:

- Angela:
 - A shared understanding of purpose has been missing. Good to rectify that.

8:45 Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Das (Clerk)