

First Universalist Church of Auburn
Unitarian Universalist
Special Congregational Meeting
Minutes
October 29, 2023

11:30: Minister's Welcome Reverend Patrick read a prayer specifically crafted for an annual meeting.

Quorum Check: Quorum met.

Call to Order: Rick O'Brien, moderator, called the Meeting to order.

Budget Presentation: Ellen O'Brien, Treasurer

- Ellen thanked the Board of Directors, the Drop-In Center Board, the Finance Committee, and all attendees.
- The revised budget is pretty much the same budget as presented in June 2023 with a few revisions:
 - Ministerial costs updated
 - Savings on the copier (minor issue)
 - Drop-In Center (DIC) income
- Basic numbers:
 - Projected income: \$178,000
 - Projected expenses: \$208,000
 - Deficit: \$30,000
 - Resources available:
 - Treasurer's Reserve: \$12,000
 - Hackett Fund: \$17,000
 - Checking Account: \$20,000
- Ellen asked Anne to provide brief overview of Rental Agreement.

Overview of Rental Agreement: Anne Perron, Board President

- Overview of how rental cost was determined. Street value of space: \$3000 per month; reduced to \$1500.

Moderator asked for questions:

- Peter Floyd:

- Property manager with whom DIC is working advised that a \$1500 per month rent should provide complete access to the Vestry; there should not be the option of church holding an event even with 2 week notice.
- When was the last time the church received \$12000 for this space? An inflated price.
- Ned Claxton:
 - Was this a negotiated rate?
 - (Anne: No)
 - Then the rate should be negotiated between the two parties; then brought back to the congregation; should put “0” in the 4.700 line.
 - Respects all the work put into the process; does not want to have a public debate.

Moderator: if Ned wants to amend the revised budget, then there needs to be a motion and a second to adopt the revised budget.

Motion to adopt revised budget: Ned Claxton

Second: Greg Bianconi

Motion: to amend revised budget by replacing projected income in line 4.700 with “0”: Ned Claxton

Second: Bill Eldridge

Comments:

- Charles Nero: the aim of Ned’s motion is to avoid negotiations taking place in the Sanctuary, but rather between the two Boards.
- Cindy Greathouse: her understanding is that DIC had agreed in principle to the Rental Agreement; to the \$1500 per month rent. Rent is usually not a negotiated item.
- Greg Whitney: DIC did not agree to the Rental Agreement. DIC agreed to pay \$1500 for November because of the lack of time afforded them by the Board to make a decision. Felt it necessary to pay in order to be able to open this Saturday.

Moderator: cautioned against off-topic comments; brought meeting back to the matter at hand reminding us that the Rental Agreement is not up for negotiation at the Congregational Meeting. He pointed out that there is a deficit either way; our discussion is centered on how much red ink will there be in the revised budget.

Question called:

- Luke Lunt moved to call the question
- Second: Greg Bianconi
 - 30 Yea; 5 Nay
 - Motion carried.

Vote on Ned Claxton's motion:

- to amend revised budget by replacing projected income in line 4.700 with "0"
 - 25 Yea; 12 Nay; 3 Abstentions
 - Motion carried.

Discussion of principal motion to adopt amended revised budget.

- Comments:
 - Holly Cooney asked Ellen to clarify projected budget deficits.
 - Ellen: \$42000 without income from rental agreement; \$30000 with rental agreement income.
 - Toby Haber-Giasson: (speaking in capacity as Stewardship chair) significant portion of the deficit correlates directly to loss of pledge income.
 - John Spruill: deficit (whether it be \$30000 or \$42000) demonstrates need for a capital campaign.
 - Cindy Greathouse: do we need to establish a deadline for the Board of Directors and DIC Board negotiations?
 - Moderator: will need to amend the motion.

Motion to amend the principal motion:

- The two Boards will complete their discussion by the end of February 2024:
 - Motion by John Spruill
 - John accepted a friendly amendment to change February 2024 to November 2023.
 - Second: Levesque

Discussion of amendment:

- Angela Foss
 - Not appropriate for congregation to get involved in rental agreement process.

- Holly Cooney
 - Uncertain of the value of passing a budget that is in limbo.
- Ellen O'Brien
 - Budget very similar to the budget adopted in June; worth passing it with the updated line items.
 - We can make it work for a couple of years; then there will be some hard decisions.
- Pam Weeks
 - Income uncertainty always exists with institutions who do rentals; do not allow that one line item to get in the way of approving the budget.
- On-Line comment:
 - Rent is not a negotiated item.

Vote on amendment:

- That the two Boards will complete their discussion by the end of November 2023
 - Yea: 25; Nay: 8; Abstentions: 3
 - Motion carried.

Vote on amended principal motion:

- to adopt amended revised budget
 - Yea: 32; Nay: 2; Abstentions: 3.
 - Motion carried.

12:45: Motion to adjourn: John Spruill. Second: all of creation

- Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Das

Clerk