

First Universalist Church, Unitarian Universalist
Auburn, ME
Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
September 6, 2023
Community Meeting Room

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

Invited: Toby Haber-Giasson, Community Relations chair

Guests: Angela Foss, Levesque, Esther Tucker

6:37: Anne Perron called the meeting to order.



Board Chalice

Claire 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.

President’s Report

- 159 Pleasant St.
 - Preparations for Reverend Patrick’s arrival went well.
 - Wi-Fi an issue (Levesque to investigate).
 - Office moved back to the Church.
- Benches removed from main entrance.
 - Prompted by troubling behavior: drug use, abusive behavior.
 - All quiet since removal.
 - Anne will refurbish benches; relocate them within the church.

- Damage to main lobby doors from bicycles and carts being brought carelessly into the building. (Rental Agreement should require bikes and carts to remain outside)

Board Communications

- John: Directory ready to go; how to distribute it? (see later discussion)
- Linda: will distribute DIC updates to Board members.
- Claire: relayed Patty Weidler's question as to where in church did Anne find cigarette butts? (Upstairs; not recent – in the winter)

Consent Agenda:

- August 16, 2023 Minutes

Motion to approve: John

Second: Jane

Unanimous approval.

Open Session:

- Levesque: They cited video evidence of drug dealing and observed drug use by individuals on church property. How does the Board intend to respond? How to deter that behavior in a neighborhood with families and children? What are the consequences? Issue a No Trespass order?
 - Board agreed that it needs to develop a policy that would be part of any Rental Agreement.

Camera Use Policy:

- Recently created policy needs to be tweaked due to privacy concerns within the church building.
 - Create two systems; outdoor and indoor.
 - Outdoor system to be monitored by an appointed oversight group. To address any issues of vandalism, building safety, inappropriate/illegal activity.
 - Indoor group to be monitored by minister and church administrator. To address door use; building use issues; adherence to calendar.
 - Policy stipulation that inside cameras will not have audio recording.

Facebook Conversation:

- Church currently has three FB pages:
 - Official church FB page; outward facing (visitors cannot post); Toby and Cynthia Grimm are the administrators.
 - Unofficial FB page created by Dave Rowe; inward facing; no activity since December; Dave recently transferred administrator status to Anne.
 - Members and Friends FB page; inward facing; page where all hell broke loose last year; Jackie Majerus-Collins and Toby are the administrators.
- Central question raised by Toby: what is the future of the Members and Friends page?
 - Start a new M&F page; shut down the current page?
 - Retain the current page; cull the subscription list?
 - Remove those who have resigned from the church, no longer associated with the church.
 - Remove those invited by those no longer associated with the church and not associated with the church.
 - We do have the ability to evaluate an individual's status re: connection to church life.
- Discussion:
 - Create a new M&F page
 - Pros:
 - Offers opportunity for a fresh start; unburden ourselves from past negativity.
 - Cons:
 - Yet another FB page; danger of too many pages.
 - Shutting down the existing page will stir the pot; perhaps reopen old wounds.
 - Retain existing M&F page
 - Cull subscription list (as discussed above)
 - Those culled will not be notified.
 - Posts will remain. Can make them invisible, but is that advisable? Always a danger in deleting the past.
- Decision:
 - Retain current M&F page.
 - Past posts to remain visible.
 - Cull list according to above guidelines.
 - We will wait a month or two to see who returns to us from "hiatus;" THEN give advance notice to congregation of cleanup.
 - Set clear behavioral expectations and guidelines.

- Make clear which are the official FB pages of the church.

Church Calendar:

- Toby highlighted the challenges of publicizing Church events.
 - The broader challenge of determining **who** gets to know what we are doing. What's available? To whom?
 - The practical challenges especially given the increasing number of events.
 - Email protocol:
 - How frequent?
 - How far in advance?
 - Need to link Google calendar to web page.
 - Importance of Breeze in calendaring; posting news and events.
 - Angela and Mary Kay Weisenberger are working on the time intensive shift to Breeze; it is proving not to be a breeze.

Church Directory:

- Directory ready to be distributed. How to do so?
 - Distribute in pdf format.
 - Publicize to members and friends that Directory is available; that they need to request a copy.
 - Send pdf only to those members and friends who are in the Directory and who actively request a copy.
 - Create small number of paper copies for those who prefer hard copy and/or do not have online access.
- In the future, use Breeze to create Directory.

Order of Service:

- Paper copy?
 - Logistical challenges with regard to production.
 - Environmental cost.
- Order of Service projected on screen in Sanctuary?
 - Need to create standards for presentation and legibility.
 - Pam already has too much on her plate on Sundays; need for a larger tech team.
- Order of Service Purpose?
 - Information about the specific service.
 - Broader church information.

- Decision
 - Produce paper copies of Order of Service for September 10 Ingathering Sunday.
 - A more extensive conversation needs to happen regarding purpose, format, and content. Acknowledge central role of Worship Associates in this process. Does expand however beyond Worship Associates to a discussion of staff responsibilities and a discussion of broader church messaging from Community Relations.

8:45: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

David H. Das (Clerk)