

MINUTES OF THE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OF THE FIRST UNITARIAN CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY

May 15, 2022

Pursuant to the Bylaws of the Society that provide that the Annual Membership Meeting shall be held on the third Sunday of May each year and a notice to Members, Michael Alcott, Moderator, called the meeting to order. The meeting was held both in person and via Zoom. Mr. Alcott welcomed Members to the Meeting and referred to the Meeting Agenda, Meeting Rules, and Right Relations Covenant that had been made available on the website. A determination of both in house and Zoom participants showed a quorum present.

Ana Levy-Lyons, Senior Minister offered opening words.

Mr. Alcott appoint Liz Davis as Parliamentarian. Vicky Antonini and Cara Haft were appointed inhouse vote counters. Pat Lawrence was appointed online vote counter.

Senior Minister's Report

Mr. Alcott recognized the Senior Minister. Ms. Levy-Lyons reported on the life cycle events, including deaths and births in the congregation. She reported that this has been a year of recovery and regrouping. We returned to in sanctuary services in September and slowly opened our building to other in person events. In person attendance for services is growing and services are streamed live for those who cannot be physically present. She spoke of her pride for the staff members and congregational members for their work and dedication in this time of recovery and regrouping. She noted the addition of Tasha Brownfield as Intern Minister and Daniel Lawlor as Community Minister. On November 14, 2021, we ordained Ethan Loewi, our former Intern Minister to UU ministry. She highlighted the following:

1. Our holiday services were once again in person and wonderful
2. Our unique services were revived – the Water Ceremony in the fall and the Flash Paper Ceremony in the spring
3. Spiritual Growth Programs were continued with the Covenant Groups
4. Multigenerational Jazz services explored 7 stories of Exodus using theater, sermons, and music, uplifting the spiritual and justice themes of these stories
5. We continued to strive to be a warm and welcoming community with discussion groups for elders and for youth, peer pastoral support groups and covenant groups
6. We formed an online team of hosts who help create the sacred space online
7. The newly formed Covid Response Team helped to keep us safe, and the Tech Team made our online services possible. She gave a huge thanks to the Tech Team who are all volunteers
8. She also thanked the outgoing Board members Colleen Olson, Carolyn Ellis, and Amit Mehta and the outgoing Treasurer, Pat Steele.

Minutes

Tom Check moved that minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting be approved. Bert ? seconded. The minutes were approved by a show of hands.

Board Co-President's Report

Mr. Alcott recognized the Co-Presidents, Mary Huhn and Matt Robinson. Their report was in three parts:

1. Accessibility and Improvements – Mr. Robinson began by highlighting the work on our building. We reconfigured space in the sanctuary to accommodate wheelchairs and installed a lift to the Undercroft to make the space more accessible. He thanked the Facilities Committee and the staff for their work on the projects. Accessibility was also provided by our online streaming of services; thanks to our Tech Team, online producers and hosts who make this happen. Ms. Huhn noted that solar panels will soon be in place and heating and AC from high efficiency equipment will soon be working in the Chapel, thanks to the Green Team and Facilities managers. She thanked Lee Pardee, Tom Check, John Carroll, Kevin Brunson, and everyone involved in moving the Building Our Future Campaign forward.

2. Programs and People – Mr. Robinson reported that the Talent Development Initiative surveyed members to connect them to the programs and committees active in our church. Thanks to Amit Mehta and Colleen Olson for spearheading this. Ms. Huhn gave a special thank you to the Unifair team, Emily Levine for her baking, the wreath makers, organizers, and Nancy Wolfe who brought the idea of Soles for Souls to the Unifair. She also thanked the spring auction committee and Anita Shepherd who prepared the wonderful food for the Spring Auction. Mr. Robinson thanked the members of the Leadership Development Committee for recruiting the 3 outstanding Board nominees and for working with the Board to fill 2 vacancies during the year. He also reported that in July 2021, our high school youth group went to West Virginia where they worked replacing siding, painting, redoing a kitchen wall, and building fencing. Weaving has continued to be active with RAPP and hopes to bring back the dinners with the Muslim and Haitian communities. The Share the Plate Committee has distributed more than \$14,000.00 to a range of organizations. Ms. Huhn noted that 10 new members were welcomed into our congregation. Jeannie Wing was awarded a lifetime membership. Kevin Brunson has joined the staff as Facilities Director. She gave a special thank you to Michael Alcott who is stepping down as moderator and Patrick Gunn who is stepping into that role and to Pat Steele who is stepping down as Treasurer. The Finance Committee will assume the treasurer's duties. She also thanked the outgoing Board members: Colleen Olson, Carolyn Ellis, and Amit Mehta.
3. Finances – The Capital Campaign brought in \$400,000.00 and rents should increase due to the new contract with Imagine and the new AC in the chapel. Mr. Robinson reported that the upcoming major expenditures relate to the building and are what the Capital Campaign was set up for. The façade repairs, though, were unexpected, but the facilities committee and others are working on funding for this undertaking. Ms. Huhn thanked those who had made their pledge for 2022-23 and those who had pledged to the Capital Campaign. Pledges though are down, and the Board has had to make some significant adjustments to the budget proposal. The proposal includes cuts to committee budgets and lower raises for staff. The Board is committed to a sustained draw on the endowment.

The Co-Presidents closed their report by saying how grateful they are for each and every one who helped to achieve all that was done in the 189th year of this congregation.

Leadership Development Committee

Mr. Alcott recognized Laurel Lesio for the LDC report. Ms. Lesio, Catalina Bertani, and Laura Manos-Hay are retiring from the LDC. Ms. Lesio presented the slate of nominees for the Board of Trustees:

- Robin Bossert
- Lisa Pacenza
- Beth Evans

She moved and it was seconded that the slate be elected to the Board. The motion was approved by a show of hands. Ms. Lesio then presented the following slate for election:

- Elees Woods, Clerk of the Society
- Patrick Gunn, Moderator
- Dawn Elane Reed, LDC
- Michele Weisman, LDC
- Colleen Olson, LDC

She moved, and it was seconded that the slate be elected to their respective positions. The motion was approved by a show of hands.

Treasurer's Report and Budget

Mr. Alcott introduced Treasurer Pat Steele for her report. Ms. Steele noted that she is stepping down as treasurer and thanked the congregation for the opportunity to serve.

Ms. Steele said that it is a good news – bad news situation. Since the budget forums, we have become less optimistic. The good news is that we are offering a balanced budget which meets our sustainable goal, and this is the first time in several years. Additional good news is the significant increase in rental income both from Imagine and

from increased rentals due to addition of AC. Now the bad news, expected pledges have been dropped from \$330,000.00 to \$305,000.00. This is a \$25,000.00 deficit. Working with the Board, the following adjustments have been made.

1. Roll back salary increases from 5% to 4%; \$5,000 savings (also affects pension and FICA).
2. Eliminate \$3,000 for unemployment.
3. On Program side, cut back on consultant, reduced music purchases, reduced RE supplies, reduced hard/software, DCL, and Weavings budgets. Removed financial review.
4. Projected \$5,000 increase in other rentals
5. After all adjustments, the budget ended at \$595.00 over sustainable.

Ms. Steele then presented our current financial position.

Financial Position		
Cash on Hand (as of 4/30)		
	Money Market	297,547
	Checking	<u>77,763</u>
TOTAL CASH ON HAND		375,310
Endowment Balance (as of 3/31)		
	General	4,655,873*
	Capital	<u>556,887</u>
TOTAL INVESTED		5,212,760
*This is likely the highwater mark for the endowment		

Ms. Steele noted that we have likely hit the highwater mark for our endowment, given the current stock market, and next year's sustainability figure is probably going to be lower than this year's. We adhere to a socially responsible investment policy.

Ms. Steele then moved, and it was seconded, that the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 be adopted as presented.

The floor was opened for clarifying questions: There was a question on the Prepaid Unemployment. Ms. Steele responded that we have changed how we budget for it. Working with a Board member in HR, it was decided it is better to build a fund through annual payments. Three thousand dollars was determined to be the figure that should be added each year. It is likely, though, that at the end of this current fiscal year there will be a surplus and that can be added to the fund. Nancy Wolfe asked that if the budget improves, please put the financial review at the top of the list for reinstatement. Ms. Steele noted that there will be a congregational meeting probably in October and the new Board can make its determination of how to spend any additional funds, if there are any.

No one wished to speak for or against the budget as presented. The vote was called. The Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Operating Budget was adopted by a show of hands as presented.

Capital Budget Report.

Mr. Alcott introduced Tom Check for the Capital Budget. Mr. Check reminded the congregation that in 2019 it approved a plan to set up a 15-year plan to identify major repairs to the building. It approved the formation of the Capital Reserve Fund which was seeded by \$400,000.00 segregated from the endowment, 10% from annual rentals, and a Capital Fund Campaign. We are on target and doing well balancing funds. Earlier this year the Board asked the Capital Reserve Group to take on the responsibilities of the Facilities Committee and therefore changed the group's name to Facilities Committee. Chairman John Carroll has written a report that can be read on the church's website. The Facilities Committee is composed of John Carroll, Tom Check, Lee Pardee, Kevin Brunson, Liz Davis, Judith Sedaitis as Board Liaison, **Sara Seahofer**, and Matt Castle.

Mr. Check then presented a slide of this year's (FY2021-22) with anticipated differences as follows:

FY21-22	Budget	Anticipated Expense Thru 6/30	Difference
Planned projects	\$ 233,000	\$ 37,100	\$ 195,900
Additional Green Projects	\$ 70,000	\$ 90,000	\$ (20,000)
Unanticipated Urgent Projects		\$ 36,500	\$ (36,500)
Façade Project (Unanticipated)		\$ 108,800	\$ (108,800)
Total	\$ 303,000	\$ 272,400	\$ 30,600

Planned: Sanctuary wheelchair seating, sidewalk repair, daycare AC leak repair
fire alarm system - started, organ repair - started

Green Projects: HVAC in Chapel and FWR, solar panels on 48 Monroe roof

Unanticipated Urgent: Gas line inspection & replacement, 48 Monroe roof replacement

Façade: Architect, boom lift to inspect conditions, sidewalk shed

AC will be live by June 30 and solar panels installed in July. A number of unanticipated issues arose this year that are life safety issues and are shown as the Unanticipated Urgent Projects on the chart. Next, Mr. Check presented the proposed Capital Budget for FY 2022-23.

FY22-23		
Projects Carried Over from FY21-22	\$ 174,500	Fire Safety System and Organ Repair
Green Projects Carried Over	\$ 13,000	Solar Panels
Unanticipated Projects Carried Over	\$ 10,000	48 Monroe Roof Replacement
New Projects	\$ 15,000	48 Monroe Stoop Repair
Façade Project - July-October 2022	\$ 109,200	Preparatory Work (roof joists, window tracery)
Total FY22-23 Capital Projects	\$ 321,700	

Façade Project Nov 2022 -June 2023 | \$ 690,923
Financing of the Façade Project to be investigated over the summer.
Congregational vote Fall 2022

The issues with the façade were first highlighted last year and an architect was hired to assess. The architect reported that high on the spire stones were loose (from the 1995 repair) and ready to fall. As a result, the sidewalk shed was erected as a life safety project and to provide a place for the eventual erection of the scaffolding necessary for the repairs. Between July 2022 and October 2022, a similar assessment will be done on the windows facing Pierrepont. By October we will have a concrete scope of the extent of the repairs and or replacement that needs to be done to the façade. We are already seeking bids from contractors based on the assumption of significant work

needed. In all the capital projects we are following the guidelines recommended to the Board by the CRG. In October a congregational meeting will be necessary to inform before commitments are made and contracts are signed.

Mr. Check moved that the Capital Budget for FY 2022-2023 be adopted as presented. Robin Bossert seconded. There were no questions, but Judith Sedaitis stepped forward to thank Mr. Check for all he has done. A clarifying question from online – Tom, please clarify that the façade work will not be paid for by the Capital Fund. Mr. Check replied that at the October meeting all the information will be given as to the extent of the repairs and length of time involved. At that time, it will be up to the Board to make recommendations about the financing. Mr. Alcott asked a clarifying question – is the amount we are voting for the \$321,700.00? Mr. Check answered yes.

The Capital Budget was adopted unanimously by a show of hands.

Mr. Alcott adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Elees Woods,

Clerk of the Society

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