

First Universalist Church of Minneapolis Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2010, 6:30 p.m.

**Board Members present (absent):** Jill Andersen, Tim Balke, Dan Berg, Kathy Coskran, Nancy Gaschott, Judy Goebel, ~~Jane Johnson~~, Barry Johnson, Candace McClenahan, ~~Jim Santelli~~, Doug Smalley, Kimon Swarts

**Clergy present:** Justin Schroeder, Kate Tucker

**Others present :** Emily Wallace-Jackson (representing the Foundation), Ginny McIninch (nom comm.)

<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Discussion</u>	<u>Action, if any</u>
Opening Words/ Meeting Preparation	Kate Tucker		
Approve Meeting Agenda		Discussion of the Senior Minister's Report and the Financial Monitoring Committee report was given less time on the agenda to free up more time for other discussion this month.	Approved
Consent Agenda		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Approve January Minutes</li> <li>- Approve new members (listed in the <a href="#">February Board Packet</a> – page 3.)</li> </ul>	Approved
Senior Minister's Report	Justin Schroeder	Justin asked if there were comments or questions about the staff report published in the <a href="#">February Board Packet</a> – page 5.	
Financial Monitoring Report	Nancy Gaschott	The Financial Monitoring Committee suggested re-wording some of the Governing Policy Handbook Senior Minister Limitations policies in its <a href="#">Board Packet</a> report (page 13). These changes will need to be approved by Board at some point in the future. Barry mentioned that additional changes are being drafted by the Non-Financial Monitoring committee, and he intends these all proposed changes be combined and addressed in a future meeting.	
Congregation Survey	Barry Johnson	<p>A draft congregational survey was published in the <a href="#">February Board Packet</a> (page 17) for board discussion. The first question for discussion was "Do we want to do a survey?" We need to have a purpose for the questions we ask, share that purpose with the congregation, and follow through afterward. The main purpose for this survey is to monitor whether we are achieving our Global Ends. Although we do not have baseline data from previous surveys to compare with the results of this survey, Nancy Gaschott mentioned the survey done as part of the Senior Minister search and suggested that some of the questions might be able to be used again in this year's survey, although they would require re-phrasing. Surveying is a science, and professional help is recommended. Paul Riedesel has looked at the questions in the draft survey, but is not able to be heavily involved in the actual survey. Perhaps another person can be found.</p> <p>With regard to the actual questions, the first one, intended to get an assessment of how well we are fulfilling the Global Ends statement was considered to be too large for people to answer effectively. It was requested that this question be broken up into nine smaller component parts that address the clauses within the Global Ends statement. The statement, in its entirety, should be printed before the nine questions. Trustees liked the way Unity Church Unitarian structured their questionnaire (included in the Board Packet as an example), but their Global Ends statement is structured differently from ours, which lends itself better to monitoring. We may want to consider structuring our Global Ends statement in a similar format in the future.</p> <p>In the section of the draft questionnaire dealing with beliefs, feelings and actions, it was requested that questions be added to</p>	New draft of survey will be sent out to board next month and board will approve next month.

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		<p>correlate answers to the role First Universalist Church has played in the response given.</p> <p>Some responses to questions in our survey, particularly comments, may invite a response from someone on the Board or church staff as a follow-up. It might be good to plan for some facilitated discussion groups in case they are needed.</p> <p>Board workload in conjunction with the survey was discussed. If questions can be structured so the answers fit within the structures that Survey Monkey is able to handle, analysis of results can be partially automated. Written comments are valuable, but require a much higher level of work from the Board. We may want to limit the number of places where textual comments can be entered.</p> <p>The Board would like to have survey results to examine during its planned retreat on June 6, after the Annual Meeting.</p>	
<p>Space Issues Feedback from the Congregation</p>		<p>The Linkage Committee published a summary of the feedback received from the congregation to date on its perception of the church facility in the <a href="#">February Board Packet</a> (page 35). The Board discussed next steps. Justin said that we should consider space issue feedback as it affects our ability to achieve our Ends.</p> <p>Some of the feedback is operational and can be addressed directly by staff. The Trustees job should be partly to direct information from feedback to staff. We also need to prioritize action. It was suggested that feedback be considered in two groupings—operational issues to be referred to staff and big picture, long term issues which are appropriately Board work.</p> <p>Having a tenant seemed to be a big theme in feedback. People think we are not taking good care of our building. Having our tenant profoundly affects children's Religious Education experience.</p> <p>Congregational growth was another major theme. Churches that are not intentional about planning for growth tend to stagnate when facility pressure rises due to new people. We should be prepared to respond if attendance rises. The church should have a Strategic Plan. Such a plan would not necessarily be done by the Board. Not thinking growth equates to thinking that our message is not worth it. Our attitude, as a congregation, toward growth is very important. What is our sense of the future we want to create? Is it a moral imperative to make room for newcomers? One starting place to work toward growth is to be hospitable to the people we have. For instance, elders can't navigate ice and snow. Noticing needs of congregants and addressing them flexes muscles now will make us in a frame of mind for growth later. Small groups within a larger congregation make a difference. People need to find personal connection. Some churches choose to grow by having satellite congregations. It feels like Unitarian Universalism is the religion for the century. We need to be poised to take advantage of opportunities that may present themselves before we are ready for them. Moving to a different facility in the short term, should be last option. All other alternatives should be considered first. Longer term, eventually we probably will move.</p> <p>Young families are our growth. Crowded classes can drive young families away. Our building was designed to be a synagogue, and is not designed for the way we use it. Our building is very inefficient. We really only have three spaces that nurture the spirit: the sanctuary, the Cummins room and the Chancel room</p> <p>While we don't want growth for its own sake the board setting</p>	

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		<p>numbers of new members as a goal, growth is healthy and desirable.. It was suggested that we allow youth in the congregation to take the survey. This may help us better understand how we can keep our youth?</p> <p>There is a question of whether we can afford our building, especially if we were did not have a tenant. Not being able to afford to operate without a tenant is a big problem, and whatever action we take seems like a huge undertaking. The congregation needs to wean itself from tenant income. We need a plan to deal with that transition. Paige Winebarger is creating an analysis of costs of operating our building.</p> <p>Barry charged Trustees with thinking about process issues for next month: a dual track of short term operational issues and longer term action. It may be appropriate to consider giving some reserve money to SPIFF to try to solve some short term needs. We need to create an entity to develop a long term plan. Justin applauded the Board for considering growth. Staff is looking for a way to balance attendance between 9:00 and 11:00, which would help a lot with RE space. There may be a question for the board in the future about changing times for our services. Our biggest challenges are still RE space and parking Justin would like to look at the feasibility of offsite parking and shuttle service. Barry asked Justin to prepare a memo for the Board to discuss next month. The Board offered its thanks to Kathy Coskran for compiling the congregational responses.</p>	
Workload for Board		<p>Several Board members have raised the issue of being able to attend Board meetings and meet other assignments. Barry asked Trustees to comment on the workload. In the past it has occasionally been suggested that we might consider having a smaller number of Trustees, as some other churches do. In light of our congregational linkage and communication responsibilities, the board should not shrink under policy governance. Board service seems to be difficult for people who have families, and our traditional third Thursday of the month meeting time seems to conflict with school programs and performances that parents must attend.. Perhaps some members who don't have other commitments could pick up for members who have conflicts. If we are asking too much of people, we need to be more realistic and scale back expectations of Trustees.</p>	
Meeting Summary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Non-Financial Monitoring Committee will revise the draft congregational survey and try to get it on Survey Monkey.</li> <li>• Justin will provide Survey Monkey access to Judy Goebel.</li> <li>• Justin will write a memo regarding possible changes to service times and actions to address parking issues for Board consideration in March</li> </ul>	
Adjourn		The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.	

Respectfully Submitted,  
*Judy Goebel*, Secretary

Important Dates:

Next meeting: March 18, 2010 – 6:30 PM  
Treats for Next Meeting: Kathy Coskran