



UUCK Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes December 21, 2023

Board Members reviews:

Kay Eckman - approved
Ginny Horvath - approved
Kara Kramer - approved
Heidi Shaffer Bish - approved
Susanna Smart - approved
David Weaver - approved
Carol Weigand - approved

I. Call to order

In attendance in -person: Kara Kramer, Kay Eckman, Heidi Shaffer Bish, Rev Steven, Carol Weigand, David Weaver, Ginny Horvath, Susanna Smart

Absent: n/a **In attendance via Zoom:** n/a

Guests: Renee Ruchotzke and Colleen Thoele

Chalice lighting: After a brief check-in the meeting started at 7:00 PM with Rev. Steven lighting the chalice and offering a reading.

II. Announcements - none

III. Approve Prior Minutes and Receive Consent Agenda

- [November Board Meeting](#) - minutes

Reports received:

Treasurer's Reports

- [October Treasurer's Report](#)

"YTD income is better than it was in August and September, but still below the YTD target (85%). Expenses are at 93% of budget. Hopefully, pledge payments will continue to pick up. We are still carrying a negative balance in the General Fund, which probably means that a draw from our Vanguard account will be needed before the year is out.

We are looking forward to an income bump in November as the Fall Silent Auction revenue is realized. In other good news, one of our Hobbs Hall kitchen users has been renting the kitchen for a significant number of hours beyond those in the original rental agreement. Thanks to our Campus Use Manager, Katie Kuras, for booking our long-term renters and making our spaces welcoming and easy to use."

- [November Treasurer's Report](#)

"Income is still below YTD projection (90%), but improving over previous months. December is typically a good time for pledge/plate/non-pledge donations, so hopefully we will see the numbers continue to increase next month. Expenses are currently at 97% of YTD budget.

The Fall Silent Auction was a huge success. The team estimated that \$5000 would be realized, and the final total revenue was over \$10,000. Congratulations to Trudy Diehl and the team for a successful event. Because splitting the auction was so successful, it is anticipated that we will maintain this format going into the next couple of years. The Grocery Card program is up and running again. The team, led by Ann VerWiebe, will be selling cards on alternate Sundays, but they hope to increase the frequency when things are running smoothly and they can increase the number of volunteers assisting with sales."

Minister's Report:


- [November Minister's Report](#) - see also the "Policy Modification Request" below in item XI (Worship Format)

MET Report

- [MET Meeting Notes 12.7.2023](#)
 - **Handicap parking signs:** Need handicap signs at parking spots next to Annex- Jenn Gregg
 - **Treasurer Candidate:** Need a Treasurer candidate asap who would start asap to learn from Lois.
 - Use surveys from LDC; the LDC is seeking candidates.
 - **Rental Policies** - The Board is charging the MET to review and revise rental policies with an eye to maximizing revenue generation. This should include attention to member payment of rental fees, prioritization of space usage based on need for the specific space vs. potential revenue generation, etc.
 - Current Board approved Rental Agreement/policy
 - Board Clarification Needed - the MET would like more clarification of this request.
 - Raise prices?
 - Charge members for all uses? Or certain types of use? Examples: Rites of passage use (receptions for child dedications, wedding receptions, memorial receptions) versus birthday/anniversary parties, showers, etc.
 - There is a point in the current policy regarding prioritizing space and reserving the right to "move an event" to accommodate additional space request – does this address your concern?

Note: MET feels that collaboration with Katie Kuras and the Hobbs Hall Rental Team on reviewing the policy would be more collaborative and appropriate than just having the MET do this.

Due to inadequate time, this item was tabled for a future Board meeting.

- **Board to review Communication Strategy:**  UUCK Board Communications Plan (framework initiated by Jennifer May in 2018)

Due to inadequate time, this item was tabled for a future Board meeting.

Motion to accept the Consent Agenda by Carol; seconded by Ginny. Motion passed. Heidi abstained.

IV. Minister's Housing Allowance for 2024 and Sick Leave Request:

- [2024 Minister's Housing Allowance](#)
- MET endorsed the 2024 Housing Allowance - and the Board needs to make a decision by the end of 2023. (The IRS requires that the board approve the housing allowance each year.)

Discussion: If the housing allowance is accepted, no change to the budget is required .
A motion to accept the request for housing allowance was made by Ginny and seconded by Kay. The motion was unanimously passed

Rev Steven stated that he will need time off for sick leave. He requested the maximum but will not take all if it is not needed. He plans to share about this with the congregation at a near, future time.
The motion to accept the request for sick leave was made by David and seconded by Heidi. The motion passed unanimously.

V. Board High Tea Reschedule

Board members agreed to change the High Tea date from its original date to Feb 4th, 2024 due to a board member's inability to attend the original date.

VI. Finance Committee Update

Kay reported on the meeting with Michael Villani from Youngstown State University who offered information which confirmed that marketing must be under the church. (Marketing is to be kept under the UU church of Kent, on signs and the website.) Lois will file the required forms. There are unknowns about possible future state legislature regarding real estate tax.

VII. Receive Board Audit Report: [Board Minutes Audit](#)

Discussion: The document was reviewed and questions answered within the document, itself. Noted: Interesting that recurring issues are those that have been identified. For example, communication about roles. (See the audit for some of the responses to questions in the audit.)
Heidi agreed to work on the historic registration of the church once the signage is completed.
Three board members are soon to work on the communication with the congregation.
Agreed that we still need to address which CLM services will be compensated.
Motion to receive the Audit Report by Carol; seconded by David. Audit report was received.

VIII. Board Communications - tabled to the Jan 4th agenda.

Congregation Updates

- January 14th Session: Rentals Ideas based on the foundation made so far (by CART).
 - Celebration
 - Volunteer Appreciation
 - FY24 Goal Updates
 - Rentals Ideation Session (Questions? Format?)
- February Session on Budget Status? Date?
- **Minutes** - Timing and approval process
- **Communication to Congregation in re:**
 - Board Agenda and Meeting Participation
 - Roles of Board, MET, and COSM

IX. Additional Board Meeting Times:

Given the packed agendas we have had over the past months, and the weighty topics we need to address in the near term (e.g. Worship time/format, budget, tabled policy topics), might we consider a second standing or as needed monthly meeting?

Discussion: The Board agreed to meet a second time in the month and possibly shorten one of the meetings.

Next Board Meeting dates: Jan 4th and Feb 1st (the first and third Thursdays of each month, at the same time).

X. Rentals Update (CART Learnings, Next Phase)

Lori and Kara have met with the CART team. They discussed the completion of the CART team's charge. The CART team requested that the Board acknowledge this for purposes of closure.

The team also gave feedback that identified the need for clarification about roles and suggested training for the congregation about roles.

The team also asked for clear communication about who can participate in Board meetings and/or get items on the agenda for Board meetings.

- CART Charge Closure: A motion was made to affirm the CART charge has been completed and to thank them for their work and their ideas about implementation; David made motion and Ginny seconded it. The motion was unanimously affirmed. To implement this, it was agreed that the Board needs to send out a letter to the CART team and to invite a broader task force to participate, in the future. Kara volunteered to write the letter to the team and will write a piece about this for the enUUs newsletter.
- MET Request: *"Need to bring Board, MET, CART and Katie together to discuss concerns and conflict and get on the same page; resolve miscommunications, and determine who is responsible for what."* – Need to identify approach to establishing a [MOCHA](#) for rentals that identifies who is responsible for what, with respect to rentals. The Board discussed addressing this at the upcoming Townhall meeting.
- Clarification re: Rental Policy Revision Request will be handled per MOCHA above.
- Name Change: The Board agreed to cease to use the name "CART" to describe the Hobbs Hall rental team and to come up with another name. An alternate name was not proposed.

XI. Worship Format

Renee and Colleen joined for this part of the meeting to discuss the results of the Worship Survey results and to share ideas about worship options gleaned from their research.

Ideas related to Worship Formats:

- Small groups and kinds of worship are ways for people to connect which grows a church.
- It is important to create worship formats that include families. Family ministry friendly.
- *Theme Ministry* offers a common focus and addresses engaging all ages in the church at a given time. Research suggests that *Theme Ministry* helps congregations grow. We can continue to use theme ministry, including the Soul Matters packets, but broaden and shift the ways we make use of this framework.
- For example, consider doing a shorter (45 min.) early service with a different flow; highly family oriented; and anchor image and an anchor story on the specific theme. End the service with a question which kids ponder together and which adults can go into small groups to converse. Such small groups on Sunday would be drop-in groups. The reflection time together in small groups in a structured way would be a key element because it would help build connections among people.
- This would not be zoomed (this would free us from copyright issues).
- There would be a second service which might be more traditional (also available on zoom).
- We need to create solutions for outgrowing the sanctuary for a single service.
- In order to deepen faith and build resilience within the community, there are multiple connections among people which can be built upon. When commitment deepens people automatically give of their time, talent and donations.
- We need to hang in throughout conflict or disappointment.
- Use consistent rituals so that words and songs are memorized and give strength during difficult times.
- It will be important to include people who can only zoom with their own zoom small group(s).

- Revising the worship format is a creative process and warrants continued consideration and input from those affected.
- Timeline for starting: sharing this idea during the early months of the new year. Staff hours would possibly have to shift depending on which changes are made.

Discussion: The Board agreed to encourage the worship team to continue exploring these ideas about worship. We look forward to moving forward with discussing this idea and engaging others in the creative process.

- **Policy Modification Request from Rev Steven** - made in [November Minister's Report](#):
"Late Arrival to Sunday Service and Sanctuary Access: Sunday worship service greeters will close the sanctuary doors following the ringing of the chimes and will not admit late arrivers until the first hymn has started in order to reduce distractions once the service has started, in addition, the rear entrance door to the sanctuary will not be used for sanctuary access for Sunday services. This policy is established in order to show courtesy and respect for the musicians and Minister."
This idea was not addressed during this meeting and may need to be tabled.

XII. Process Review

Comments about the process included:

- Nice to have laughter.
- Glad to agree to wait rather than to approve something that is not clear.
- Nice opening ritual.
- We are flexible to accommodate our guests.
- Glad about being ready to meet for a second meeting (more frequently).

XIII. Extinguish the Chalice and Adjournment

Rev Steven extinguished the chalice and the meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Next meeting Jan 4th, 2024: Kay will offer the opening and closing words.

Respectfully submitted,
 Susanna Smart and Carol Weigand, Co-Secretaries