

TVUUC Board Meeting

June 2, 2020

Board Members Present: Matthew Blondell; Eddie Chin; Denise Coleman (President); Justina Hyfantis; Viren Lalka; Ginna Mashburn; Ryan McBee; Robby McMurry; Wendy Syer; Jamie Watts; Alice Woody
Ex Officio: Chris Buice; Claudia Pressley

[Meeting held by Zoom Videoconference]

The meeting began with a moment of silence in honor of victims of violence everywhere.

Endowment Fund Project

The Endowment Committee has recommended that the Board approve an application for Endowment Funds for the purchase of an outdoor storage enclosure. This enclosure, or fence, would be located just outside the back door of the lobby. The enclosure, which will be lockable, will contain gardening equipment as well as ladders. With the current, rather old, un-lockable structure, and with the church now unoccupied much of the time, there is an increased risk of theft. The unsecured ladders can also permit access to the roof, which creates a safety and liability concern. The estimated cost of this enclosure is \$3500.

After some discussion, **the Board approved an Endowment Fund grant of \$3500 to purchase this enclosure.**

2020-2021 Budget

Robby McMurry (Treasurer) presented the draft of a budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, which begins on July 1. With so many unknowns about the year ahead, it was particularly difficult to estimate both income and expenses. The Finance Committee began with the assumption that there would be no income from an auction, a rummage sale, or room rentals, and it makes low estimates of other income. It also assumes that additional funds will be needed to make some infrastructure adaptations before the church building opens, and to purchase additional technology to assist with on-line services and programs.

As requested by the congregation last year, the budget does include funding (of \$1000) for the Children's Diversity and Justice Library. Pledges received already for next year are about \$474,000 and the draft estimated an additional \$10,000 from pledges not yet received. The budget also assumes that the U.S. government loans received from the Payment Protection Program (\$71,000), and Small Business Administration (\$10,000), will be forgiven. Even with these adjustments, the draft budget presented to the Board showed a deficit of \$9920.

The Board was then faced with three options:

- Find a way to further reduce budgeted spending
- Increase the estimated income in some category
- Recommend that the congregation pass a budget with a deficit

Although passing a budget with a deficit is not prohibited, it has not been done for many years (or ever.) Most Board Members felt that this would set a dangerous precedent and possibly deplete church

savings, and rejected this idea. There seemed to be little opportunity to reduce spending, as 73% of the budget is allotted to staff salaries. With the exception of sextons and childcare workers, all staff continue to work while the building is closed, and additional help may be needed to assist with communication and technology. After a long discussion, the Board decided to increase the estimate of anticipated new pledges by an *additional* \$9920 to balance the budget. If income does not meet the estimates in the budget, it may be necessary to do some additional fundraising. It was also suggested that the staff might apply for some Endowment Fund grants to assist with the unusual infrastructure adaptations. A third possibility is to apply for an additional loan under the Small Business Administration Disaster Relief program.

With the adjustment stated above, the Board approved the budget to be presented to the congregation for a final vote at the congregational meeting. (Note: If changes in the budget of more than \$10,000 are necessary, another congregational vote would be required in the future.)

The Board also suggested that the Personnel Committee address any requests to increase the hours of staff members, recommending that any decision which would increase personnel costs be postponed for several months or more, until we have a better idea of our financial situation.

Opening the Church Building

The TVUUC Leadership has started the drafting of a policy and plan for re-opening the church building. Consistent with guidelines from the UUA Safe Congregations Team, TVUUC plans to take a phased approach to re-opening, with the highest priority given to the safety and health of the congregation. Senior Minister Chris Buice stated that he is absolutely committed to leading the congregation as *safely* as possible during this pandemic.

The current draft proposes a four-phased approach, with full, unrestricted, building access permitted after the fourth phase. During all four phases the following would be required:

- Temperatures will be taken before anyone enters the building; anyone with a significant fever may not enter.
- Sanitizing stations will be available.
- Face coverings will be required at all times by all people (except young children.)
- A distance of 3-6 feet (**Which did we decide on? Discussion was inconclusive**) or more must be maintained between individuals or between household groups.
- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned on a regular basis.
- All visitors will sign in to facilitate contact tracing, if necessary .

We are currently in Phase One. The building is closed to the public and the congregation and no more than 10 persons may enter the building each day.

The proposal is to move to Phase Two when the average daily number of cases in Knox County stays below five for a period of two weeks, and the total number of active cases remains below sixty for two weeks. (This benchmark has not yet been reached at any time; there were 23 new cases on the day of the Board Meeting).

Similar benchmarks will be set for progression to Phases Three and Four and total opening. If COVID numbers in the region later increase, it may be necessary to move back to an earlier phase. When services begin again in the sanctuary, they will probably include a limited number in the congregation.

These policies are still being developed and are subject to change. Decisions will be made by the Leadership Team, based on recommendations from the Knox County Public Health, Centers for Disease Control, and the UUA, as well as the TVUUC staff and local medical professionals.

Share the Plate Collections

For two Sundays of each month, the money collected in the Sunday Offering is split, with half of the offering given to a local or regional agency. In most years, the twelve agencies participating in the program are selected before the beginning of the fiscal year by a vote of the congregation. The amounts donated to organizations chosen for 2019-20 may have been affected by the closing of the church in March, even though there is still a Sunday offering and the Share-the-Plate program has continued. Organizations chosen for next year could likewise be affected. The Share-the-Plate Committee has suggested that we keep the same list of twelve organizations for the 2020-21 year, with assignments in the same months as the current year.

The Board approved a motion to do this, keeping the Share-the-Plate schedule for 2020-21 the same as that approved for 2019-20.

Admission of New Members to the Church

While the church has been closed, UU101 classes for prospective members have continued to be held on-line. Some participants are now ready to be sworn in as TVUUC members. Because there will not be in-person services for several months (at least), **the Board approved a motion to permit a proxy to sign the membership book on behalf of a new member, during the period of the pandemic.**

Evaluation of the Senior Minister

Church policy requires that an evaluation of the Senior Minister be conducted every three years. As this was last done in 2017, an evaluation will be done this year. Denise Coleman will send information about this process to Board Members in late June.

Submitted by Wendy Syer, Secretary to the Board.

6/13/20