

TVUUC Board ZOOM Meeting Agenda of March 16, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 6:32.

Present (in alphabetical order):

Matthew Blondell, Chris Buice, Eddie Chin, Denise Coleman, Justina Hyfantis, Heather Kistner, Susan Kovac, Viren Lalka, Ryan McBee, Jeff Mellor, Nick Potter, Claudia Pressley, Linda Randolph, Barbara Taylor, Taylor Thomas, Jamie Watts, Alice Woody

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Confirm minutes from February meeting

Denise moved, Jamie seconded acceptance of the minutes of the February meeting. Unanimous.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Stewardship Update

Taylor summarized the status of the Stewardship Campaign, noting that the Evergreen members had been notified that, as of April 1, that their pledge contributions would continue as in the past, unless they altered them by that time. If no one changes their Evergreen pledges, this would amount to ca. \$52k at this moment, for a present overall total of ca. \$250k. In coming weeks, the Stewardship Team will confer and reach out to outstanding pledge units to ascertain their pledge status. The current status of the pledge drive approximates that of recent years. About 50% of pledges come in at the start of the drive and the remainder come in as calls are made. Thank you emails have been sent out already to people who have already pledged, with handwritten cards to follow. We are in pretty good shape currently and the team envisions completion of the drive around the end of April. Last year, Denise had sent out a follow-up letter encouraging an increase of pledges and she said she would make a copy available for Matthew for this year's drive.

2. Financials

Discussion of Financials was postponed until Viren could solve his connection issues.

3. Liability Waiver Covid Task Force (CTF)

Discussion turned to the Liability Waiver. Interest in the congregation had increased on opening dates, conditions, especially regarding indoor vs. outdoor activities. Nick began the discussion by reporting on the CTF recommendation for action on two measures: 1) establishing the requirement for waivers in general for organized activities in or around the church, 2) establish the specific procedures for waivers as required by 1): in particular, should a waiver for a group activity be signed by each participant (over 18) for each occurrence? To inform the congregation and gather opinions about these measures, there will be a discussion on them after next Sunday's service in the Coffee Hour. It was felt that this update would be timely in view of

developments in the COVID situation in the local community. Last December, guidelines had been issued based on CDC and UUA recommendations. Now, in March, the metrics are looking more favorable in regard to certain kinds of activities, in particular with regard to increasing numbers of vaccinations and lowering rate of infection in the community. According to most recent CDC guidelines, if all participants in an activity have completed their vaccination 14 days prior, then they can participate without masks and without social distancing, both indoor and outdoor. Certain outdoor activities can in the view of the CTF now be approved, such as the already approved driveway car choir and the Third Creek Greenway cleanup. Indoor events will be more complicated and challenging to deal with, which will be a focal point of the Coffee Hour discussion next Sunday. The CTF meeting on March 25 will also ask that the COVID-oriented retrofitting issues be addressed and prioritized with regard to re-opening of the church for various activities. Matthew added that Keith Hulse has been added to the CTF because of his special qualifications in mental health counseling. Applications for approval of events are submitted to the COVID Task Force < covid-task-force@tvuuc.org >. The proposed, and presumably temporary, requirement of waivers was felt to aid in risk management of the church, notwithstanding the state ruling that churches are exempt from liability for their activities, because waivers demonstrate due diligence and serve as a reminder that people generally assume responsibility for their own well-being.

Jeff moved, Denise seconded that TVUUC require a waiver for events, as requested by the CTF in 1) above. All but Linda, who abstained registering concerns about the potential administrative workload, voted in favor.

Discussion continued on the procedures for obtaining the waivers. Alice pointed out that each individual should sign a waiver for a group activity for it to have weight and force. If, in such a case, an individual refused to sign, that would be noted on the sign-up sheet in the lobby that church already uses, where participants initial or sign their position: FOR, AGAINST, REFUSE TO SIGN. This sheet lists name, email, time in, time out, temperature. The process decided upon was that Claudia would distribute the waiver sheet to event organizers and that event organizers would return the filled in sign-up sheets to Claudia for filing and possibly scanning. It was generally agreed that this would be administratively the least burdensome procedure. Matthew remind the Board that our church insurance company had provided us a sample waiver because the company offers no coverage for COVID liabilities.

2. Financials (resumed)

Viren began with the reminder that the second round of the PPP loan program is now in effect. There is some possibility that TVUUC may be eligible for additional funds under the condition that the FY 2020 income be 25% less than FY 2019. If that is the case, we would be eligible for another PPP loan, which is forgiven. Some inconclusive discussion followed on whether we in fact meet that criterion. He asked Claudia to research this topic and was asking the Board whether we would be interested in pursuing such a loan in case we are eligible or can make a good case if for one or more quarters of FY 2020 we show a deficit. No fixed deadline has been set as yet, but a deadline by Fall seems possible. Such a deadline falls after the conclusion of the

fiscal year. There was general agreement that further research should be undertaken.

Claudia then steered the discussion on energy related issues that had been deferred from a recent meeting, because the roofing and energy/bullet resistant glass covering issues did not seem to fit the COVID-retrofitting requirements for available funding sources if it were considered solely as an energy-saving matter. The protective film had been high on the Buildings & Grounds priority list for the last couple years, but had lacked adequate resources from Endowment Funds to complete. There is only one local provider for this project and their bid is for \$13k of an available Small Business Loan amount of \$150k. This contractor had done the airport and Knox County schools. Factors that now make the glass film project more urgent: 1) it is a bullet resistant covering for all windows in the church, 2) the project can best be completed when the church is not open for general daily use, 3) the film would have to be ordered and delivered, which takes some time, 4) the project would probably take three or four workdays to complete, once begun. Even though there has been an informal rule that projects over \$10k should have multiple bids, the fact that only one local provider exists for this specialized work, there was general Board sentiment that we could proceed with this specific project.

One matter that had put the filming project on hold was that the cost of re-roofing the area over the church school was not known. Lack of funds when the solar panels had been installed prevented re-roofing the church school roof area at that time. The age of the building, 20 years, recurrent leaking in the church school area, and, most importantly, the first bid for completion of the re-roofing at ca. \$50k was now available. This bid comes from a contractor who has already done roof work for the church. At \$50k for the roof, it is evident that the bullet resistant film and re-roofing could both be completed within available funds. So far, only one roofing bid has been submitted, but additional providers had been identified and bids would be sought from them to meet the multiple-bid requirement for projects of this magnitude. These providers will be meeting with Will Dunklin and John Montgomery for accurate guidance in developing a sound bid. Sentiment in the Board was that the glass film portion of the Small Business Loan project funding could proceed in the absence of a congregational vote because this high priority project had been approved in previous years, but lacked funds, and that the remaining capital expenditures would be put together in a cohesive, prioritized capital improvement plan to include, for example, audio-visual capabilities of the church beyond the roofing.

Jeff moved, Ryan seconded that the church proceed with the completion of the protective glass film for the church windows. Unanimous.

Viren informed the Board that Endowment Funds currently stood at \$586,211 and the General Fund has about \$288,000. 59:00

4. Right Relations Team.

Speaking for the team of Barbara, Linda and herself, Denise began by noting that Linda had developed a Restorative Relations Charter draft that had been distributed to the Board. This draft addresses a solution for the Right Relations Committee and is based on documents

addressing restorative practices for faith communities. The intent of this initiative is to reduce or mediate conflicts that potentially arise between and among members to prevent such conflicts from festering thereby ultimately affecting the church community as a whole. The process involves using ‘conflict circles’ or ‘peace circles,’ in which the issues can be aired and resolved. After considering several possibilities for an appropriate name, Barbara proposed and the committee agreed upon the name **Restorative Practices for Faith Communities**. At this point, Barbara began steering the discussion, describing the pleasurable and fruitful communications she had had with ministers of other congregations in the Midwest region who outlined their work with ‘peace circles’ in a 31-page document. In this process, people meet in a circular forum, which has proved useful. The committee will be reaching out to experienced users of these circles for help and guidance in developing *honest*, *direct* and *respectful* interactions for reconciliation. Barbara expressed the committee’s hope that the Board would endorse continued work on this project based on the submitted draft. Some discussion turned on the number of committee members ensued. Questions involved possible difficulties in recruitment of sufficient members. On the one hand, a larger team would mean that not every committee member would be tasked with each arising issue. It was envisioned that just two team members would be called upon for each resolution process. On the other, it might be difficult to get adequate commitments from enough people to form a large enough team so that each team member would not feel overburdened. It was decided to start with a team of four to see how that would work. Adjustments to team size would be considered as experience was gathered. Because the Charter is set for annual review, that provides an opportunity for such adjustments. A Midwest Region workshop on April 10 is likely to provide more input, details and experience. Ryan expressed an interest in developing additional members from the church to participate in this team, noting that it might mean budget resources would need to be provided in the future. Resolution of potential conflicts between congregants and staff members is a separate issue beyond the scope of this committee’s charge. Denise agreed to amend and revise this Charter draft for Board vote on the Consent Agenda in April.

5. By-Law revision pp. 1-5

Linda led the discussion on the by-laws revisions on pages 1 and 3 of the five page document distributed to the Board. Any changes to the bylaws require Board approval before sending them to the congregational meeting for final approval. The committee considers that **Article II Membership, Section 1 Eligibility** needs to be reviewed and revised by Chris, as needed. One point at issue was the requirement that someone must pledge to become a member. There was some question whether this point had actually been adhered to in practice. Chris affirmed that this process had undergone several iterations over the years and agreed to put forward text for consideration by the Board. Orientation and classes could, for example, be shifted from in-person to online. Regarding **Section 2 Register of Members**, it was unclear whether an accurate up-to-date list of members exists. The committee proposes that Claudia, Jametta and Michael work on this matter to formulate a goal to bring practice in conformity with the requirement that “There shall be a register of all members.” This work interacts with **Section 4 Reinstatement of Membership**, where reinstatement is made by a request to the Membership

Coordinator, who is apparently not identified at present. Chris observed that in the past there had been an actual book where members were listed and that in converting to a computer-based list, some disruption and uncertainty may have resulted. UUA dues were based in the past on the number of members, which required careful accounting, but that process has changed and this change possibly contributed to this uncertainty. Reinforcing the need for a clear definition of membership, Ryan observed that such uncertainties had posed problems for the Stewardship Committee. Regarding the addition of a **Section 5**, in which the names and dates of new members joining TVUUC should be reported in Board Minutes, the need for specification of this process arose. Until recently, newly inducted members met with the Board following the service. Claudia reported that additional categories of membership had come under discussion in the group of church administrators, such as ‘local members’ and ‘members in the virtual, i.e. non-local, world.’ In such cases, requirements for non-local members still included participation in orientation classes and pledging, but matters such as physical appearance in the church building required further consideration and definition. Viren welcomed this enlargement of the definition of membership to include virtual members and advocated the idea of a UU Membership ID that would be recognized by other congregations as a positive way to develop membership. Chris observed that our recent experience would likely lead to a hybrid membership to include physical presence and web-mediated presence in our congregation. Current UUA rules require that members be associated with only one congregation. Definition of membership and membership categories are subject to further work. On page 3, a slight revision of **Article IV. Board of Directors. Section 1, c) Youth Representative** was offered in consultation with Catherine Loya that the “RE staff shall oversee the election and communicate to the congregation the name(s) of the youth(s) elected.” Ryan then led the discussion on **Section 4: The financial records of the Church** regarding the requirements for financial review and audits and their frequency. The cost of external audits is very substantial, perhaps the principal reason these had not been done. What had been budgeted in the past for financial review was far less than the actual cost. One solution would be a revision stating that audits would be done “as needed.” The definition of ‘financial review’ as versus ‘audit’ is also not clear. Since Viren had had to exit the meeting, Claudia suggested that further discussion include him. She clarified that she has signatory privileges over Church funds, but Michael Miller does not. Over the years, some TVUUC Treasurers have had signatory privileges, others had not. Matthew’s experience with a tax attorney was that the very minimum for a church audit was \$10k. It was agreed that Viren and Bill Cherry be included in further Board consideration of Section 4 at its next meeting. Denise agreed to work on a goal in **Section 2 Register of Members** with the Strategic Planning Committee and present it to the Board for approval. **Article II Membership, Sections 1, 4 and 5** require further work by Chris and others for the next meeting.

6. Endowment Fund Charter Revision

Linda moved, Denise seconded approval of the Endowment Fund Charter Revision. Unanimous.

7. 8th Principle Update

Eddie reviewed initiatives to promote awareness and consideration of adopting the 8th Principle, including videos and Coffee Hour discussions. The goal is to put this matter for approval before the congregation at the meeting on June 13. His committee wanted to expand its mission beyond adoption of the *words* of the principle and translate this into *specific actions* the church might undertake. Alice agreed that, in view of her conversations with various committees and members, that formal expansion and definition of precise steps for implementation was needed. Matthew noted that various committees and persons had informally discussed such steps and highlighted the work of the new music assistant that had outlined in some detail how the music program could implement this principle. In the coffee hour, initiatives to target black-owned business for church expenditures had been discussed. Eddie noted that other congregations that had adopted the 8th Principle were still somewhat at a loss on specific implementations and advocated that we take the lead in focusing on specific actions. Various committees, as well as the Board, have charges that help sustain momentum on this. Denise praised and Nick confirmed the importance of Chris' piece in the Newsletter of March 15 on practical steps for implementation of the 8th Principle. It was indicated that Alice and Eddie should provide recommendations for further action and strategies at future Board meetings.

8. New Business

a) Susan provided a heads up on matters in the Personnel Committee. The first issue was the titles for Michael Miller and Claudia Pressley. To keep their titles in line with UUA guidelines for their respective job descriptions and duties, Claudia's title should be Director of Finance and Operations and Michael's should be Office Administrator. Claudia will forward capsule job descriptions to the Board for these positions.

Jeff moved, Ryan seconded that these title changes be made. Unanimous.

b) The second issue is that our staff are on the whole seriously underpaid in relation to UUA compensation guidelines. Some positions are further out of line than others. This cannot be fixed in a year, but a long range five-year plan to bring compensation for staff into compliance with UUA guidelines needs to be established by the Board. Denise, Ryan and Matthew each endorsed this matter and Susan was asked to provide documentation to aid in discussions in their upcoming meetings.

c) Claudia informed the Board that GA, which runs June 23-27, will be entirely virtual this year. Our congregation can have 10 delegates. Chris, Claudia and Chloe Watters already will be delegates. Registration cost is \$200 per participant. TVUUC has leadership development funds to cover this cost, so this should not be a hindrance for people wishing to participate. Notifications will appear in upcoming Newsletters to encourage applications. Chris noted two items: 1) Board approval of delegates would only be necessary if we have more applicants than slots, 2) we should strive to make sure all slots are filled. Chris emphasized that the virtual GA is more productive because delegates can join in two different simultaneous events by reviewing the recordings of the events in conflict.

d) Nick informed the Board that the Knox County Board of Health Meeting would take place on Wednesday, March 17 where the state COVID policies would be discussed and reviewed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jeff Mellor, Secretary-Clerk