



Minutes for the Board Meeting of
Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church

Tuesday, Oct 15, 2024 - **APPROVED**

Attendees (virtual attendance marked with *):

- Board Members – Heather Kistner, Lynn Hixson*, Maddie Kulpa, Steve Drevik*, Noel Arring, Rob Bray, Roy Kersey, Devon Miller*
- Ex-Officio Members – Chris Buice, Claudia Pressley, Catherine Farmer-Loya*, Barbara Lamm, Carol Villaverde
- Guests – Robert Hyde, Ryan McBee, AB Coleman, Denise Coleman

Meeting chaired by Board President Heather Kistner

Minutes recorded and submitted by Board Secretary Maddie Kulpa

Opening Words read by Heather at 6:01 pm

Announcements & Reminders

- Buildings & Grounds Committee update
 - 2 co-chairs: Angela Hoffman and Don Horton
 - First meeting coming up soon
 - Roy & AB formed some foundational documents
 - Co-chairs will form the rest of the committee after the initial meeting and will announce as they see fit
 - Roy stated that TVA did an energy audit with Don's presence and report will be returned in about 2 weeks
- Sunday morning announcements
 - Maddie presented some recent issues with announcement changes, and expressed a desire to make clear decisions and communicate them widely.
 - AB stated that Claudia would be working on worship service flow.
 - Noel asked how the Board came to make announcements, and Chris advised that it has always been that way in an effort to separate business and worship.
 - Noel also suggested setting a deadline for submission, and making a distinction between announcements and testimonials.

- Claudia suggested that Board committees might be allowed to make their own announcements.
- Maddie suggested moving the discussion to Teams, and Lynn emphasized the need for everyone to participate.
- Usher scheduling
 - Noel was asked as BMOD by Ted to find ushers, and Noel was unaware that it could be a BMOD requirement. Noel contacted the usher coordinator (Frony Ward) but was still concerned about the response to this issue.
 - Maddie asked to clarify whose responsibility this is. Ryan concurred that the Signup Genius is inefficient.
 - Heather affirmed Ted's initiative in reaching out to a church leader in this situation, and stated that she had advised Ted that reaching out to the BMOD is a good step to take. Noel requested that agreements like that need to be communicated to the rest of the Board.
 - Claudia advised that Frony had been traveling a lot and Ted had been stepping in. Claudia advises to find a staff member if the BMOD is unable to fill the gap themselves (except for Chris/Catherine/David) and let them take over. Noel suggested asking the usher pool to email the entire board (including ex-officio members) to help fill the gaps. Claudia will discuss with Frony.
 - Claudia also suggested the Board members fill in as ushers if and when they can.
- Heather reminded everyone to complete the Communications survey.

Congregation Comments & Questions – none present

Consent Agenda (Appendix A)

- Minutes from Sept.
- Minister's report
 - Heather stated her appreciation for Chris's speaking engagement at Shannondale and encourages the Board to think of other groups to recommend to Chris.
- RE report
 - Heather reminded Board members who have not yet to sign up for RE volunteering.
- Music report
- Program Council report
 - Heather pointed out the 4 new programs added recently.

Approval of the consent agenda was moved by Noel and seconded by Rob.

Passed unanimously, no negatives, no abstentions.

Discussion Items

Family Promise request – Robert Hyde

- Robert and his wife are the new Family Promise Coordinators. Their biggest effort right now is staffing the duties during the 4 weeks that TVUUC hosts. They are approaching different groups asking them to commit to staffing one day of the week as a group, as one idea of how to fully staff the week. This would help fill gaps and prevent volunteers from needing to cover multiple shifts. Robert also gave examples of how that scheduling could work.
- Noel stated that the HSYG already signs up for meal prep and serving. Chris advised that Small Group Ministries also have service project efforts and would be a good group to reach out to. Chris also suggested asking Mark to share with new members who might want time-limited volunteer opportunities.
- Some clarifying questions were asked: next week is Nov 10, 3 families expected, up to 15 individuals. Dinner is the only meal provided, for families and volunteers. Hosts, meal prep, serving, and overnight attendants are needed. 4:30-8pm is dinner shift, 8pm-8am is overnight shift. Meals can be cooked at the church or brought in from outside, and purchases can be reimbursed from the church. Food allergies and preferences will be communicated in advance. Rollaway beds with mattresses could be available for overnight hosts soon. A lot of this information and more is available on the website.
- Maddie pointed out that evenings and overnights are typically difficult for the existing Board. Heather asked when Robert would want an answer, and he stated as soon as possible for Nov, but by next quarter's week would be good.
- Heather told Robert that a Board Officer will reach out to Robert with a response by Nov 1. A discussion will be held on Teams about availability to commit.

Board Goals – Maddie – Appendix B

- Maddie presented a draft of updated Board Goals, based on the existing Goals from last year. Discussion was had about the purpose of Board Goals, and the relation to how the Management Team can use those Goals to inform both their work and their reports to the Board.
- Management Board Reports were discussed, and suggestions were made that due to the length required to report on both Board Goals and other work, quarterly reports could be sufficient.

- **Maddie moved that the Board affirm the Goals set in 2023 and retain them for the remainder of the 2024-25 church year. Noel seconded.
Passed unanimously, no negatives, no abstentions.**

High School Youth Group: Room A proposal – Noel

- Noel stated her intention to submit an Endowment Fund request to renovate Room A for the dedicated use of the High School Youth Group. She clarified that the space will still be available for rentals and other uses outside of Youth Group meeting times. She asked for the Board's endorsement for that Room to be used by the HSYG, and stated that RE staff is already in support.
- During discussion, it was added that Noel hopes to add a lockable cabinet for HS snacks and supplies, and add a table and updated furniture. Decor was discussed, and it was further clarified that the space would still be usable and rentable, including by Family Promise.
- **Noel moved that the TVUUC Board endorses that Room A be designated for the High School Youth Group and the High School Youth Group will be allowed to decorate the room keeping in mind that the room will continue to be open to others and bookable. Roy seconded.
Passed unanimously, no negatives, no abstentions.**

Management Survey – AB & Ryan

- AB introduced a proposed survey created by the Personnel Team, intending to get feedback on staff, Management Team, goals, and effectiveness. The survey will be sent to the entire congregation while we are in the midst of making updates to the Management Team structure and job descriptions.
- Ryan reviewed the current survey questions, and stated that they are hoping to launch the survey by the end of November. Suggestions were made about clarifying some of the questions.
- Chris expressed his concern with collecting feedback anonymously. After some discussion, Chris sent an article from the UUA and Ryan agreed that the Personnel Committee would review and consider the matter before publishing the survey. Ryan also asked for any further feedback be sent to him directly as the Personnel Committee works to finalize the survey.

Endowment Grant proposal – Barbara

- Barbara asked if the Board would support her request for replacement patio tables. Heather enthusiastically approved.

DFO Processes – Claudia – Appendix C

- Claudia reviewed her newly developed Processes, and directed the Board to find more in depth updates in Teams.

Strategic Planning update – AB – Appendix D

- AB reviewed the Strategic Planning Committee's progress on several ongoing efforts: Management Team process development and responsibility matrix, technology rollout from last year's Endowment Fund request, and website updates.
- He advised the Board that the SPC will be submitting an EFC request this year for additional technology, including projector screens in the sanctuary.

Action Items

- Heather asked everyone to complete the Communications survey and signup for RE if they haven't already.
- Maddie will start a discussion in Board Member Duties about Family Promise.
- AB will look at MS default settings for notifications to help avoid missed discussions.
- Review survey further, read the article about anonymous surveys, and contact Ryan with feedback (ryanmcbec@tvuuc.net)

Closing Words – read by Heather at 8:16 pm

Minister's Report for October 2024

Identify, develop and grow the necessary human resources essential to TVUUC's growth and influence as driven by its mission

Reward: Fan into flames the gifts that are within each person so as to empower all to find their ministry.

1. One of the reasons I station myself outside the door after Sunday Services is it gives me the best location for meeting new people (who often leave before coffee hour.) In this capacity I am able to learn the interests of new people and help connect them with the work of the church. In this capacity I have learned about who is interested in union/labor issues, climate change, homelessness, choir, historical archiving.
2. I will also work with and support Mark Mohundro in welcoming new members and learning their interests in Start Point classes scheduled for October 28, November 10, December 1, January 5, , February 2 and March 31.
3. On October 27 we will host our annual Diwali service in cooperation with members of the Hindu Community center. This service began in cooperation with members of our congregation of Hindu background. So it is a reflection of fanning into flames the cultural gifts that are within each one of our members and celebrating our different religious heritages.

Grow TVUUC's financial resources to provide secure and predictable sources of funds and a reasonable cost structure.

Reward: Fostering a culture of generosity by encouraging commitment to membership and giving/pledging.

1. I am working with the Stewardship Team to plan this year's pledge drive. I have been consulting with the chair of the committee and plan Monday October 14.
2. Fundraising consultants tell us that "people give to pictures so I have been sending Ted Jones pictures of the work of the church including Interfaith Pride Service, Pride Parade, Blessing of the Backpacks, Critter Camp, Elandria Williams" book celebration, Winter Solstice spiral etc. etc.
3. We have tentatively scheduled an 'end of the pledge drive' celebration with a special Sunday service on March 2nd that coincides with our All Church potluck.

Create a fast, focused and flexible structure to optimize and focus TVUUC's resources on accomplishing its mission and shared vision.

Reward: Empower TVUUC to be a visible, vocal, leader in the community able to act quickly in the interests of social justice and environmental responsibility. Foster a culture of hospitality so our congregation can be a meaningful community center where people of all faiths find common ground and work for the common good.

1. Many years of refining our systems to be faster and flexible allowed our church to cooperate with the Knoxville Flood Mutual Aid Society and serve as a pick-up and distribution center for supplies going to people in need communities devastated by Hurricane Helene. In our two days in this role we were able to send 80 deliveries in trucks, SUVs and compact cars. Many of these volunteers were in their 20's and 30's so I did my best to be a good ambassador for Unitarian Universalism aka demonstrating the relevance of our church to quick, timely social action. The rabbi and member of Temple Beth El also deserve a shout out for collecting supplies at their Rosh Hoshannah service and bringing them over for us to distribute.
2. In last month's report I mentioned giving a talk at Shannondale retirement community called "Seriously Funny" about how a sense of humor can help us navigate challenging times of life. After the talk I was invited to give "the same talk" to a gathering of retired Methodist ministers gathering at Fountain City Methodist Church on October 4. Since then I have been invited to speak at Asbury retirement home in Maryville on November 4 and the Cancer Support Community in February 2025. The talk is sprinkled with many UU jokes and I am very open and honest about my identity and story so this is about being a good ambassador of Unitarian Universalism. If you know of any community groups interested in speakers let me know (this is not my only possible topic fyi.)
3. I represented the church at The Big Table event where Leadership Knoxville launched a program to build stronger neighborhoods. I sat at the same table with Yassin Terrou, own of Yassin's Falafel House and lead organizer of the Seeds and Bridges non-profit with who we have cooperated on tornado and hurricane relief (We raised \$2,000 dollars to support this work on the special collection.
4. The "Reading Banned Books with Pride" service celebrating our church's LGBTQIA work and our Children's Diversity and Justice Library went very well. We had 15 church members/friends march/ride in the Pride Parade on Friday October 4 and we sponsored a booth at Pride on October 5. I met at least one person who came to the church for the first time after stopping by our booth.
5. I have been experimenting with posting teasers on social media about upcoming services with mixed results but this week my post about The Gospel of Dolly Parton got 262 likes and 12 shares. Woot!

TVUUC DRE Staff Report

October 2024

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This report is offered in alignment with the newly requested structure for Management Team members' monthly reporting to the Board.

Identify Program/Department goals that could support or reflect the Board's Goals for the Year, and provide any examples of recent projects or efforts that relate to the stated goals:

1) Create a Fast, Focused, and Flexible Structure that can optimize and focus TVUUC's resources on accomplishing its Mission and Shared Vision.

- *Improve RE department's systems and tools for streamlined curriculum development and delivery, volunteer management, and communication with families & the congregation*
 - One example of work on this goal so far: we have now set up this year's calendars for all Sunday morning RE content and scheduling. See the "[master calendar](#)" for Sunday morning RE volunteering which helps us track all of our RE space volunteer leaders, assistants, hallway helpers and greeters. This spreadsheet autopopulates from the individual team calendars we maintain which has additional information including spiritual theme, the plan for the day, availability notes for team members, etc. – one team's example is [here](#).

2) Identify, develop, and grow the necessary human resources essential to TVUUC's growth and influence as driven by its Mission. & 3) Grow TVUUC's financial resources to provide secure and predictable sources of funds and a reasonable cost structure.

- *Partner with the Membership Committee to develop enhanced welcoming and orienting procedures, programming for newcomers to TVUUC, and education for TVUUC leaders and members about welcoming and inclusion.*
 - The Adult RE Team is sponsoring the Welcoming as a Spiritual Practice workshop on Sunday, October 13th, from 12:30-2:30 pm and strongly encourages all Board members and TVUUC leaders to participate.
 - Miriam and I will be offering a RE families, youth & young adult focused Starting Point session on Sunday, December 8th, to do direct reaching out to these populations within TVUUC to invite them to consider membership. This will include adapting the content of the session as well as doing direct invitations to non-member RE parents, youth over 16 who are participating in TVUUC programs/community, and recent graduates and other emerging adults at TVUUC.

4) Improve TVUUC's ability and focus to connect generations through Common Goals and Initiatives.

- *Develop programming/events designed to bring generations together, and build opportunities for short-term engagement from TVUUC adults into Sunday morning & youth group RE programming*
 - Bob Grimac joined the Learning Lab RE space on September 15th for an introduction to American Sign Language, and Matthew Blondell visited the middle school youth group to lead them in a vegan cooking lesson on Sunday, September 29th.
 - The High School Youth Group, under Noël Arring's leadership, is connecting with the broader community in many exciting ways, including preparing and serving meals one night during each Family Promise week, participating in the Pride Parade, attending the church retreat together, and more.
 - The RE Leadership Team sponsored an all-ages Fall Potluck Game Night on October 2nd, and is coordinating the upcoming Fall Soup Potluck & Trunk or Treat on October 30th.

Provide status updates of any ongoing projects as needed:

- A few Board members have joined us for a Sunday in RE so far this year. It is my hope that all Board members will spend at least one Sunday morning in one of our RE spaces, as it will help you be informed about our programs for young people, experience how they work and how our volunteers provide leadership, and will also give our young people a chance to get to know TVUUC leaders and you an opportunity to connect with our awesome young TVUUCers. PLEASE contact me so we can discuss possible dates for your visit, if you have not done so already.
- The 4th-5th grade Our Whole Lives sexuality education program launched on Sunday, September 15th, with nine participants. Our teaching team includes Devon Alley, Jenny Snead, Stephanie Kyriazis, Miriam Davis and myself. The class is taking place on Sunday mornings (participants go to OWL rather than one of the Choose Your Own Adventure RE spaces for the duration of the class), and will conclude on December 15th. The kindergarten-1st grade OWL class will be offered next, with a parent orientation in late January and the first session at the beginning of February.
- This year we are writing and piloting a new UU preschool curriculum, focused on exploring the core UU values as voted into the UUA bylaws in June 2024 (Love, Equity, Interdependence, Justice, Generosity, Pluralism, and Transformation) through books in the Children's Diversity & Justice Library collection. This program has been going very well so far, and not only have we been enjoying it at TVUUC, but another congregation that is field testing sessions for us reports that they LOVE it, as well. It is our intention not only to have this as a resource for our own program, but to make it available widely to UU congregations at the conclusion of this year, once we incorporate feedback and update sessions for sharing.

List any relevant matters that require input/approval from the Board:

- I am in full support of a proposal Noël Arring is bringing to the Board re: designating Room A as a high school youth space, with the understanding that it will continue to be a multi-use space at all times when the youth group is not meeting. I am happy to talk with any Board members or other TVUUC folks who have questions or concerns about this proposal about why it is being brought to the Board and why I am in favor of its approval.

List any other items of note:

- I am taking a week off from October 6th-12th to spend Fall Break week with my family. I will return to TVUUC on Sunday, October 13th.
- I may be away November 1st-3rd to take middle school youth to the Intermediate Conference at The Mountain, but at this time it is not yet certain whether the Con will take place, as The Mountain is still recovering from Helene, and the NC Department of Transportation is still requesting that all traffic in Western NC be limited to local and relief vehicles.
- The Board should be aware that pastoral support of parents & families at TVUUC is also an aspect of my work, though one that is not (and should not be) particularly visible; this month I provided a selection of books for young people that explore loss and death, online grief support resources for parents, wrote messages of comfort & love for a child, and offered advice about helping young kids process and understand loss in conversation with parents following the death of a beloved grandparent. This is something we offer every time a loss (or impending loss) within a family at TVUUC is shared with us.
- We currently have 51 children & youth registered for RE for the 2024-25 program year. There are about a dozen additional kids/youth who are regularly participating but have not yet turned in registrations. This does not include new visitors (have attended fewer than 3 times so far). At this point in the year in 2023, we had 40 registrations in.

Music Department Efforts in support of Board Goal #2:

- The following goals all work to maintain a community of volunteers who...
 - Identify people with interest and/or skill in music
 - Develop each other's gift's
 - Grow the pool and of music volunteers while strengthening their relationships
- Maintain Ensembles which foster and feature musical gifts and interests
 - For performance in Services:
 - Choir
 - House Band
 - Brass Ensemble
 - Potential New Ensembles
 - Bell Choir
 - Recorder Ensemble
 - Ukulele Ensemble
- Support for individual's gifts
 - Musical
 - Rehearsals
 - Practice Tracks
 - Digital Resources
 - Individual Rehearsals
 - Performance opportunities
 - Organizational
 - Serve on Music Standing Committee
 - Library Filing
 - Sound Operation
 - Training
 - Practice Sessions
- Support Local Music Interest Groups
 - Within TVUUC
 - Sing Out
 - Old Time String Band
 - From Community
 - Music Study Club
 - American Guild of Organists
 - Knoxville Singing Circle
- Enrichment Performances

- Soirees (where TVUUC community Musicians perform)
- Recitals (both paid and free offerings from local musicians)
- Concerts (Contracted appearances by larger groups and touring acts.)

**Program Council Report
Board Meeting 10-15-2024**

4 New Programs this year

- **TVUUC Trail Trekkers – Bob Grimac**
TVUUC volunteers maintain the TVUUC Adopted Section of the Third Creek Greenway – periodically on Sunday mornings

- **Lonsdale Elementary School Library Team – Sharon Fields**
TVUUC volunteers will help the school librarian re-shelve books – potentially every school day.

- **UU the Vote – Ken Stephenson, Joyce Green**
Encourage and support efforts by members of the congregation to join in activities designed to increase voter participation in local and national elections.

- **TVUUC Lesbian Group**
A social group for discussions and fellowship

New Program Leaders

- Family Promise – Debbie Hyde, Robert Hyde

Program Leaders Retreat – Saturday, September 14, 2024

- 24 Program Leaders attended
- 7 Speakers
- Topics and Discussions about:
 - Shared Ministry
 - Purpose driven programs
 - New member/visitor shepherding
 - 1st Sunday Potluck sponsorship
 - Program Publicity is a major goal this year. Avenues of communication for publicity – bulletin boards, PC Sunday table in the Art Gallery, newsletter, website, listserv, Order of Service, maybe a paper guide (similar to the previous paper guide), re-visit doing another Volunteer Fair, sponsor a Let's Connect Sunday Potluck.

For reference: Mission

To create a welcoming community that nurtures spiritual growth and challenges us to transform the world through acts of love and justice.

Accomplish and uphold the Mission of TVUUC by optimizing existing resources.

Grow TVUUC's financial resources through reliable sources of funding and a reasonable cost structure.

Create a fast, focused, and flexible structure to support TVUUC's growth and influence.

Connect all generations by providing support for the goals and priorities of the TVUUC Congregation.

Affirm and promote Unitarian Universalist values and principles through church programs, ministry, and community outreach.

DFO PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

- Sunday Service Flow and Coordination
- Visitor Experience Check-In and Follow-up
- Financial Management Process Improvement and Finance Manual Update
- Space Rental Management Process Improvement and Policy Update
- TVUUC Document Management and Filing System

ADDITIONAL STRATEGIC PLANNING IN PROCESS

- Management Team Development
 - Management Team 4DX Process
 - Management Team Responsibilities Matrix
 - Management Team Process Improvement Priorities
- Technology Support Team – A/V Volunteer Team
 - Continued Configuration of Endowment Computers and Network Infrastructure
 - SharePoint File and Document Management System
 - Website Pages for Governance and Congregational Input
 - Realm Refresh Widgets to Display Program Council information on the Website
 - Audio/Video Updates – Sanctuary and Church Information Monitors