

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Policy Board Meeting Minutes
12 June 2023 Virtual

Meeting was called to order by President Steve Wilke at 6:33 pm.

Others in attendance: Alison Lamothe, Vice President; Jeremy Colton, Treasurer; Chris Kocher, Trustee; Susan Lammert, Trustee; Rebecca (Becca) McBride, Trustee

Absent: Sidney Watson, Secretary

Staff: Rev. Kim Mason, Lynn Hunt

Church Council: Sherry Bassi, absent

Chalice Lighting: Steve Wilke

Opening Words: Steve Wilke

Reading of Board Covenant: Steve Wilke

Process Observer: Susan Lammert

Steve welcomed Chris Kocher to the board and began the meeting with the following 2-part, engagement-themed icebreaker: “Why did you say yes [to serving in a leadership position]?,” and “How do you get others to say yes?”

Jeremy admitted he said “yes” to serving as Treasurer without realizing it was a Board position, because its duties overlap well with what he does in real life. He gets people to say “yes” by being a good listener (if you have ever greeted with Jeremy, you know he is really good at this!).

Susan said “yes” to serving as a Trustee because she wanted more input. She thinks we have good meetings and suggests we encourage others to attend. She wonders if a shorter, 2-year term for Trustees might help with recruitment.

Alison said “yes” to serving as Secretary because of the fondness and respect she has for the person who asked. She continued a second year because she liked serving in this role. She agreed to serve as Vice President because the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee was having a difficult time filling the slate and there was a need for volunteers. She thinks it is important to be honest with folks about what we are asking them to do when we are trying to get them to “yes.”

Chris said “yes” to being a Trustee because he wants to increase his engagement in church and learn more about its governance as well as his own responsibilities as a Board member. He relies on his enthusiasm and provides information when he wants to get others to say “yes.”

Becca said “yes” to serving as a Trustee because she had thought about doing it before and when asked thought, “why wait?” She wanted to increase her own engagement and also to offer her fundraising experience to the Board. She suggests that asking people to serve on an individual basis is a more effective tactic to get to “yes” than making a group ask.

Rev. Kim said she tries to find a good fit between people and roles that need to be filled. She gets to know a person’s background and their temperament. She is actively working on helping people learn their roles by pairing more and less experienced people so that the latter will become better equipped to fill a leadership role later.

Steve joined the Board from the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee. Another committee member, Gene Rubin, said he would serve as the Policy Board President if Steve would serve as Vice President, with the understanding that he would mentor Steve to become President the following year. He intends to mentor Alison this year with the same goal. He's not sure exactly how he gets people to "yes" but acknowledges that nevertheless, they do. He can find work for people who ask how they can help.

A crash course in Board Governance- (alternative title- WHAT did I agree to?)

Steve opened his "crash course" with a chart that illustrates our church's shared governance structure. He had also shared with us via email beforehand descriptions of board members' responsibilities according to the governance manual for our church, which was last updated in 2013; we should update this this year. We briefly discussed the current descriptions of the President, Vice President, and Treasurer. Some responsibilities are no longer up to date; others are not currently practiced as described. Alison was concerned that the role of President might require being physically present at the church more often; she was reassured that being present for most Sunday services and at specific congregational events would be sufficient. Although the current description of the President's role includes the obligation to attend monthly Church Council meetings, in practice over the last few years the Vice President has assumed this responsibility and will likely continue to do so. Steve noted that a few of the responsibilities of the Treasurer are not being carried out and suggested that Jeremy 1) give us the church's financial numbers each month, available through our accountant, and 2) play a more active role in the budget. Since our new Secretary was unable to make it to the meeting, we generally skipped over the description of her responsibilities, although Alison noted that many of the duties listed are in practice carried out by the Church Administrator instead.

Consent Agenda – Read in advance of meeting

Minutes of Previous Meetings – Alison Lamothe and Sidney Watson
Report of the Minister - Kim Mason
Report of the Administration - Lynn Hunt
Report of the Board President – Steve Wilke

Alison motioned that these documents be approved with some corrections to the May 21 Transitional Meeting Minutes, Susan seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

New Business:

Approval of delegates to the UUA GA.

- Although we are allowed up to four delegates, only one church member has expressed interest in serving as a delegate so far. Steve motioned that **George Grimm-Howell** be approved as our delegate to the GA, Chris seconded. The vote was as follows: AYES: Steve Wilke, Alison Lamothe, Jeremy Colton, Chris Kocher, Susan Lammert, Becca McBride. NAYS: None. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- **Finding a Board Member to serve as a liaison with the Personnel Committee.** Jeremy Colton offered to serve in this role.

Updates: Roof, and other Facilities issues

In her monthly report Lynn included the following updates:

- The roof over the RE wing has been replaced and scudders (spillways) cut out in a couple of places. Sheet metal work on the was finished on Monday.
- The Facilities committee is gathering bids for the following projects:
 - Replacement or repair of the West Flat Roof
 - Library Wall (exterior) repair. We may need to get a civil engineer in to assess this.

- o Gutter Replacement
- o Hosmer Room Bay repairs

She reminded the Board that the Facilities Committee has a budget and only needs to approach the Policy Board when needed repairs exceed their budget.

Active Hope Project Discussion

Prior to our last meeting Lisa Ross submitted a report to the Board detailing efforts “[t]o take the pulse of the congregation re the ‘advancing social justice’ part of our mission, including thoughts and feelings about congregational (vs. individual) social action, and which areas of interest are most compelling.” This report was included in the meeting minutes and shared with us again via email prior to our June meeting.

Rev. Kim has suggested that Lisa, as Chair of the Outreach and Social Action Cluster, convene a Social Action Summit, probably in September, to make plans for the next year(s). We discussed what our role as Board members should be in this process.

First of all, **we should be at the Summit!** We need to have enough participants and therefore should encourage others’ participation. Once there, we need to listen, being careful not to hear only the loudest voices in the room. We can provide guidance. We can advise. After a year of discernment, our task this year is to focus and take action. We will likely discuss this further during our August retreat.

Leadership Retreat. Based on the results of a Doodle poll and input from attendees of this Board meeting, we have settled on Saturday, August 26, as the date of our next leadership retreat. Since Susan will be in Maine at that time and would like to be included, we will make it multi-platform. Details will be forthcoming.

Actions required before our next meeting:

- **The most important task is finding a location for our leadership retreat. We need a space for 15-20 participants.**
- Chris will inquire about an event space in a B & B (a former church) located near him
- Lynn will check if Pere Marquette is available
- Becca will look into a community event space at Commerce Bank on Euclid
- Rev. Kim will investigate a convent in Florissant

- **Board members, please sign up to do the following duties:**
- Greet on Sundays
- Opening words at Board meetings
- Reading the Covenant at Board meetings

Process Observer check-in: Susan noted that since we wrapped up on time, we did well.

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

The next Policy Board meeting will be our leadership retreat in August, on Saturday August 26. Exact time and location TBD. It will be multi-platform for those who cannot attend in person.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Lamothe, Vice President and Acting Secretary