

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis
Policy Board Meeting Minutes
26 August 2023 at the Ethical Society of St.Louis

Meeting was called to order by President Steve Wilke at 3:00 pm.

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

Absent: Sidney Watson, Secretary

Staff: Rev. Kim Mason, Lynn Hunt

The Policy Board met briefly after it, the Church Council, Rev. Kim Mason and Lynn Hunt met for the annual leadership retreat.

1) Recently our bank alerted us to fraudulent activity. We learned that the \$95,000 check we mailed to Bartch Roofing was stolen out of a mailbox in front of the post office and modified so that the thief could cash it. Subsequently, they produced a fraudulent check for \$25,000. Fortunately, Bartch has since received the money it was due and our staff received their paychecks. Lynn had to close our old account and create a new one.

The Board discussed ways we could prevent thefts like this in the future and decided it was a matter for the Finance Committee to figure out.

2) Steve informed the Board that the church had received an anonymous donation that was intended to increase the salaries of our full-time staff. He shared an email with us from Jama Dobson that read:

I recently spoke to Kathy Wire who, on behalf of the Finance Committee, asked Personnel to make the recommendation to the board for staff salary increases and to address the special donation given for staff salaries. So here is our "official" recommendation:

"The Personnel Committee recommends for FY2023-24 an across-the-board salary increase of 2% for all employees; in addition we recommend 50% of the special donation be split equally between the two full-time staff (Minister and the RE/Communication Director). Further, we recommend the other 50% of the special donation be split equally between the four part-time staff. The 2% increase and special donation amounts added to their current 2022-23 salary would become their new 2023-24 base salary/wage."

Our bylaws establish that a donor cannot specify how their donation is spent. Nevertheless, the Board thought that it would be appropriate to let the donor know what we would like to do. We spoke to Kathy Wire and she said that there is a space in our budget for unpledged donations. There was some concern as to whether these increases should be viewed as bonuses as opposed to unbudgeted raises that we may or may not be able to sustain.

3) During the retreat we had discussed the task of formulating a Vision for our congregation, now that we have developed Mission and Values statements. We also had discussed the proposed revision of the UUA's Article II. In both instances we wanted to seek congregational input during the Midwinter meeting, but decided that it might be better to focus on just one of these tasks: the revision of Article II.

4) Susan Lammert will remain the liaison for the Committee on Ministry. If Sidney Watson is willing to serve as the liaison for the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee, Becca will serve as the liaison for the Personnel Committee. If not, Becca will remain the liaison for the NLDC and we will have to find a different liaison for the Personnel Committee.

5) Jeremy Colton submitted his Treasurer's Report via email. Rev. Kim was delighted to observe that we ended the year in the black! Jeremy was asked to include an explanatory addendum in his report.

6) We're having a hard time recruiting teachers for our RE program and we need another nursery assistant. We are offering four classes this year and nursery services. We have 40-50 students enrolled with an average weekly attendance of 15-20. To enhance recruitment of teachers, Danielle has promoted co-teaching so that teachers can sometimes teach and sometimes attend services.

7) Although typically RE hosts a pancake breakfast on Ingathering Sunday (September 10), this year it will be postponed to September 24, which will also be the beginning of RE classes. (Chris Cakes pancake service was not available on September 10.)

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

The September Policy Board meeting date will be determined and will be online.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Lamothe, Vice President and Acting Secretary