

Minutes
Board of Trustees, First Unitarian Church of Oakland
June 30, 2009 – 7:30 to 9:45

Trustees Present: Rinda Bartley, Claire Eustace (President), Dan Goss (Vice President), Jon Greer, Roger Hallsten, Gail Schulz (Treasurer), Bev Smrha and Charles Williams

Trustees Absent: Noemi de Guzman

Others Present: Eva Bunce (scribe), Rev. Kathy Huff (Senior Minister and Executive Team), Charles Matsen (Executive Team), Charla Weiss (Executive Team).

Dan Goss led the opening.

Agenda Approval – Jon Greer moved to approve, Dan Goss seconded. Approved

Report on Vision 2012 Summit Café Conversations and Determine Next Steps from Summit – Rinda Bartley – There was an active and deep discussion with those who attended the Vision 2012 Summit. Board members mentioned the following learnings and questions from the Summit

Whether social justice and spiritual growth were the same and how JTW and Vision 2012 meshed and were related;

Was it possible to collaborate with other churches and the fact that outward focus helps to grow a congregation;

There was a tremendous eagerness as well as frustration with the Board to implement objectives;

How to get people involved and to understand the activities and mission of the church.

There is a large number of people who attend church regularly on Sundays but are not involved in active committees. Is there a way to get them more involved?

How welcoming are Board members to new members of the congregation? Charla suggested that ribbons on nametags could identify Board members;

A board member made a suggestion that more articles could be written about activities;

Some of those in attendance expressed interest in becoming more involved. Letters will be sent to those individuals.

Bev stated that it was important to let the congregation know the purpose of a session so that they know when they are invited what will be done with the gathered information

Roger stated that it was an energizing event that gave members the opportunity to express opinions

Dan suggested having regular linkage meetings like the Vision 2012 Summit

One Voice Policy – Claire stated that currently the one voice policy falls under Board Policies IV.B.2 and states: "After subjects have been discussed and voted upon, both majority and minority will support the action taken and speak with one voice." It was stated that once the Board makes a decision all should support, not undermine, that decision. There is a policy in place and it should be followed until changed. Roger Hallsten, Gail Schultz, Bev Smrha, and Charles Williams agreed to flesh out policy in

order to give clear parameters. The group was instructed that core issues should be discussed if there are differences and meanings should be clarified. It was suggested that the group bring two or three proposed modifications to the board.

Training Commitments: Fiduciary, Antiracism, etc. – Policy Governance – Claire stated that currently, the only mandated training is antiracism training, which is scheduled for the afternoon of July 12th at Noemi de Guzman’s house. The current board has also had training in basic policy governance, which was offered at the retreat. A training in fiduciary responsibilities has been requested by several board members. It was stated that Ingrid Mittermaeier is willing to lead this training and would be a good candidate because she is a nonprofit lawyer. The session will require about one hour and Ingrid was amenable to opening it up to the congregation. A mid-August time frame will be attempted to give interested congregants sufficient notice. Jon suggested that a menu of possible trainings for future boards be developed and that the Leadership Development Group could suggest subjects. It was also suggested that there be a Policy Based Governance training given for the entire congregation because it had been three years since that had happened.

Process Observations – Jon Greer and Charles Williams – The meeting was orderly, respectful, but there was some tension in the room.

Update from Consultants’ Recommendations Subgroup – Charles Williams, Claire Eustace, Dan Goss, Gail Schulz, Rev. Kathy Huff – 38 people attended the after services meeting which lasted a couple of hours. It was noted that those attending were more active than the average member, that it was an “older” crowd, and that only one person of color attended. Comments included:
Need system for finding out about the interest in those who are presently inactive.
People wanted to talk about governance and decision-making. They wanted more voice in decision-making.
A suggestion was made that there should be more after church workshops on governance. People wanted to know as early as possible about works in progress and perfection was not necessary.
There was interest in how are decisions made, which included transparency, carefulness and thoughtfulness.
Various media should be considered because *Chalice Chatter* is cryptic by necessity.
It is suggested that Board members should use email to discuss the information gathered at this session.

Learnings from Linkage with Congregation at Vision 2012 Summit – Dan Goss – It was observed that:
The smaller group conversations allowed for richer and more meaningful discussions.
The small group setting allowed for much variety and diversity of opinion and the longer period allowed deeper discussions.
People will come and participate in face-to-face discussions.
Various modalities are useful.
Larger groups don’t always allow everyone to speak.
The report does contain things of import.

When people feel passionate they need to be heard.

It was suggested that the conversation should be publicized, people need to keep getting the information and that a regular institutional part of the work of the Board should be conversations.

New Member Stewardship – Gail Schulz – Various methods of integrating new members into the church earlier were suggested. It is recommended that Board members contact year 2009 new members with more than a phone call. It was suggested that a social event before or right after the ingathering service be used as part of bringing people into congregation. A potluck type meal before or after ingathering would allow for a stewardship pitch. Bev Smrha volunteered the use of her home if wheelchair accessibility is not an issue. Gail Schulz volunteered her home as wheelchair accessible. Rev. Kathy suggested that the Board ask the Pastoral care support for help bringing food and spreading the word so that the Board doesn't have to be responsible for everything. The next ingathering will be October 25th.

Jon stated that currently there are 9 new members who have not pledged. Board members agreed to contact one of these members each and agreed that Jon would assign each Board member with a new member. Jon also agreed to also provide background materials about soliciting pledges.

Consent Agenda– Rinda Bartley moved, Charles Williams seconded a motion to approve:

Acknowledge receipt of Executive Team Report;

Acknowledge receipt of Senior Minister's Report;

Report Board decision of May 30, 2009, to reopen GA delegate application process and to delegate appointment of GA delegate to Steering Committee;

Report Steering Committee decision of June 11, 2009, to appoint 7th delegate to UUA General Assembly (Claire Eustace);

Appoint Liam Aleguire and Charlotte Dickson to the Committee on Ministry

It was announced that the July Board Meeting will be at Gail Schulz home at the regularly scheduled time of 7:30 p.m.

Jon Greer moved, Gail Schulz seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the May 26, 2009, regular Board meeting as amended. Approved.

Process Observations – Bev Smrha, Rinda Bartley – It was appreciated that Gail provided printed copies of a memo on the consultants' recommendations forum that had been posted late. The conversation on this topic was wide and deep. The second half of the meeting had a more comfortable feeling and the tone felt more relaxed.

Respectfully submitted,
Claire Eustace, Board President