

**Minutes of Meeting of Board of Trustees of
Westside Unitarian Universalist Congregation**

August 13, 2014

The meeting was held at President Joe Rettenmaier's home on SW Barton St, Seattle, Washington, and was called to order by Joe at 6:40 pm. Joe offered words of chalice-lighting wisdom from Robin Williams.

Present were President Joe Rettenmaier, VP Matt Aspin, Treasurer Michael Matz, Secretary Lisa Maynard, and Trustees John Britt, Shannon Day, and Glenn Phillips, as well as Rev. Peg Morgan, intern minister Kevin Lawson, and DRE Betsy Lowry.

Thank You Notes

Thank you to Cherie Tucker for organizing a Chico's fundraiser; the total amount raised for the congregation is not known yet. Thank you to Marie Kaz, Becky Boberg, Marion Carlson-Ranum, and Joan Whitley for office volunteering. Thank you to Patti McCall for helping with administrative work while Shannon was away.

Minutes

Moved, seconded, voted to approve the July minutes with the changes that Lisa sent in email (the main difference from the original was a streamlined discussion of employee compensation).

Minister's Report

Peg had emailed her report to the Board (appended). As Shelby has officially stepped down from rummage sale, we need to think creatively about how to raise the \$6500 represented by the rummage sale income line item.

Peg had provided draft language for a policy about how WSUU allows people to do rites of passage, for which she had asked Board approval. Discussion about whether this should be a Board policy versus minister's discretion, especially as we move into a program-size congregation. Consensus was that Peg is our trusted head of staff and the expert on ministry, and the Board would generally defer to her in matters of ministry.

Peg had updated Shannon's job description to align with current duties and retitled it/her as "office administrator." Shannon's current pay is within the UUA guidelines for that title. Board agrees that Peg is our head of staff and can update job descriptions such as this at will.

Treasurer's Report

Michael had emailed and also offered hard copies of the quarterly budget report (which will be sent to the congregation next week) and the monthly report. Kudos to Shannon for setting us up with Amazon's Smile program so that people can select WSUU as a charity to automatically receive 0.5% of the value of their purchases. We do get a higher percentage, however, if people instead click the Amazon link on the WSUU website. Shannon and Joe will work together to explain this to the congregation.

Pledge revenues were \$4K less than budgeted for the month, but the previous month was much higher than budgeted so it is okay for now (similar pattern as last year). Expenses look okay.

John attended a 501 Commons workshop where they emphasized that monthly treasurer's reports for nonprofit boards should have a high-level focus on "what's up, what's down." Don't get bogged down in details. But do ask for a mid-year projection of expenses/income for rest of year.

Concern expressed about rummage/book sale income (\$6500) with no specific plan to raise it. Ideas are around but no commitments yet.

Question about our nonprofit status (for matching contributions from employers). Explanation from Peg: as a church, WSUU is automatically a nonprofit in the state of Washington. We are 501(c)(3) through the UUA, not on our own.

Joe attended Finance Committee meeting last week (made up of Ellen West, Joanne Cook, Paula vanHaagen, Debra Duff [considering], Michael Matz, Eric Winiecki) to discuss the Board-proposed list of tasks on the FC chartering document. Board is seeking to have FC establish communication loops, but FC is not interested in reviewing committee expenditures or being involved in fundraising. Paula took notes and will come up with a revised draft FC charter (in time for Board's Sept mtg).

FC proposed that Board mtg move to third Wed of month so that we can have more accurate and timely financials and a better work flow, based on the bookkeeper's schedule, among others. FC intends to review treasurer's report every month before it comes to the Board and to offer insight/highlights. Board agrees (so our next Board mtg will be Sept 17).

Bert had sent a written music director's report (appended). Betsy distributed a printed DRE's report.

Transition Committee

Laura Pierce and Lisa Reitzes joined at 7:30 pm to discuss the memo that the Transition Committee (TC) had sent with its recommendations (appended). Laura distributed a summary of 11 TC recommendations. TC asked us to each reflect on and choose our three highest priority recommendations.

Laura will send an annotated summary of our discussion of the prioritization of recommendations, but in brief, the ones we talked most about were:

#4 Focus on leadership development for volunteers, including training, clarifying a path to leadership, and promoting a culture of service.

#7 Clarify the meaning of membership and improve how we relate to and engage new and established members.

#10 Establish a year-round Stewardship Committee to coordinate and strategize about fundraising efforts.

Some points mentioned during discussion:

- Tension between urgent things (fundraising!) and important things (leadership development).
- Some activities on the list of recommendations are already underway.
- Can we do one thing that addresses several things? Look for synergies.

- Items #8, 9, 10 are related to each other.
- Some items could be delegated to a subgroup (e.g., #2 could be held by Congregational Concerns Committee with liaison from Board members – Glenn and Joe are interested; #5 preparing for GA – Shelby is already focused on).
- Items #4 and #7 could be grouped as part of a leadership/visioning/engagement process.
- Items #1-3 are about structure (providing a structure so that when you get people enthused about something, there is a clear container for their efforts).
- Items #8 and #9 are practical, about resources, keeping the machine humming.
- Some passionate arguments for prioritizing item #11 (right-size our program offerings to our current capacity).
- People who have been around for 5 to 7 years sometimes drift away because their early enthusiasm wanes without them becoming part of the leadership corps; how to help them connect.

Joe asked TC members which they would prioritize. They said #4 (leadership development) and #7 (meaning of membership) are important.

Point was made about UUA's current focus in terms of membership growth (virtual church, what Tandi Rogers is doing). WSUU is an old-school congregation, focused on physical building and physical connections to each other. Should at least some people at WSUU be starting to discuss/work on more permeable boundaries?

Board asked for a continuing conversation how to move forward with this list of recommendations. We can ask the TC to develop more detail about a particular area. Lisa and Laura are willing to continue serving on TC, and John is willing to continue as Board liaison.

One important next step is to go through a chartering process for our standing committees. We have started with Finance but need to move on to Membership. TC and John will research some best practices for membership committees. Board needs to create a structure where we assert what the standing committees are (e.g., Finance, Membership, Leadership Assembly) and make that transparent to the congregation. Need to put the chartering process in context.

Is TC willing to come back quarterly for continued discussions (November)? Yes, in an advisory role.

Board needs to think about best channels of communication for a group like TC that is taking a big picture view, to share their insight and also to receive feedback.

Leadership Assembly and Fundraising Task Force Update

Leadership Assembly – John wants to do a chartering process for LA by January 2015. Next LA is Sept 21. Possible process/timeline: send a list of proposed tasks to LA ahead of the Nov mtg, for discussion at that mtg. John would like to report to LA that the Board is working on setting up the income strategy task force (at previous LA, the group asked for an oversight group that would coordinate fundraising scheduling).

Vetting and coordinating functions need to be part of the income strategy task force.

Communications: Shannon has been mulling over how to make e-news shorter and more pull than push. She will write guidelines for members who want to communicate news and will present them at LA.

Moving forward, maybe LA will divide into groups with overlapping interests. Betsy's former congregation had a leadership council that was a decision-making body that took on many of the tasks that our Board now does. It had official members (chairs of certain committees). Maybe we will be moving in that direction.

Meeting adjourned at 9 pm.

MINISTER'S REPORT

Peg Morgan (Aug 11, 2014)

TWO ACTION ITEMS

1. Ministerial officiating authority

I'd like to write down ministerial officiating authority, and put in our policy and procedure manual so we don't forget the different situations; State law authorizes anyone that is authorized by the religious body. It is up to us to figure out how/who authorizes within our power and organizational structure. So let's be clear how we do that here at Westside. The question came up when Barbara Burke came into our midst as a retired minister. After thinking about it and consulting with our UUMA Good Offices person, here is what makes sense to me...my notes have been around for a couple years but summer schedule allows me to get this written! Joe reminded me that we would send this policy out to the congregation for review...as we do all policies prior to final adoption. But first a chance for you Board members to comment.

Authority to Officiate Rites of Passage (Includes weddings, memorials, baby/child blessings)

Called Minister: Westside's called minister (voted by congregation to be "settled" on-going minister) automatically is authorized to perform and supervise rites of passage for the congregation.

A Lay Member (not an ordained UU Minister): The Board can commission a non-ordained lay member to officiate at weddings and memorials, and other rites of passage, in the name of the church. This can be for a single ceremony or on-going authorization. Many of our UU congregations call these positions "Chaplain." This person should be under the supervision of the "called" minister. A record of officiating should be kept in the church office. Our called minister should agree to this appointment.

UU Ministerial Students and Candidates for Ministry: The Board may be asked by the settled minister for students and candidates to have authority to officiate. That includes official Interns. Candidacy status is awarded by the UUA's Regional Ministerial Fellowship Committee.

Ordained UU Ministers: Ordained UU "fellowshipped" ministers who find their way to the congregation, whether retired, working in the community or otherwise, have authority by reason of the power of ordination and their continued fellowshipped affiliation with the UUA and UUMA, to officiate. They do not need the Board's approval. Custom and courtesy require that they have settled minister's permission to function in a ministerial role in the congregation, however. So they can officiate out in the community when asked by someone outside of the congregation. If the wedding will be at the church or directly connected to the church, then the settled minister gives permission. This is true of all services they provide at the church, by UUMA guidelines. Ordained UU ministers who are members of our church have written covenants with the settled minister.

Rentals: When a wedding rental couple asks to have a different Officiant, someone not associated with the congregation, there are protocols to follow...because the very fact of the wedding (or memorial also) occurring at our church building, reflects upon us. Thus the settled minister approves all outside officiants and asks for

written indication on the orders of service, or at least verbal recognition, that the Officiant has been chosen by the couple/family, and is not affiliated with the congregation.

2. Admin job description

Secondly, I would like to submit a revised job description for Shannon's position. Highlights are a change of title and hours. We have also added some new responsibilities that she has taken from my work load. That includes web updating, questions about pledges, and creating and processing pledge statements. See attached. Re the title, the UUA guidelines have several "office" positions, including admin assistant, office administrator, congregational administrator (does budgeting and supervises other staff), and business manager. As we get bigger we might, for instance, hire a membership secretary to do the myriad of membership data, pledge entries and statements, etc. Then our Administrator would get into supervision. I believe Office Administrator is the appropriate title, making this position more responsible and self-starting than the admin assistant position which takes directions on most all tasks. The Office Administrator's salary guidelines are what we used for the budget this year. So there are no budgetary effects from this change.

Other items:

Personnel: All performance reviews of staff have been completed.

We are relieved to get guidelines from our Bookkeeper's professional bookkeeper's association indicating that our payment of our staff medical premiums and copays either directly or to reimburse our employee is not taxable/reportable because we do not have 50 employees.

Chico's: The fundraising 5 days at Chico's reportedly raised nearly \$1000.00 for us. I will put that in the rummage book sale revenue line, unless you tell me otherwise...when it comes. Cherie Tucker and the manager there plan to do them seasonally...next one later in fall with hopefully more publicity!

Rummage Sales: Shelby Greiner has definitely decided not to do any further rummage sales. She blesses anyone who wishes to do rummage sales, or ebay or whatever in whatever way they decide to do it, with no attachment to her systems. She will take some last valuables to an auction house. I believe this means there are some things in the alley room which we will want to arrange to sell or ?

She would like devote her time, instead, to organize some orientation to what it is like to attend a General Assembly to encourage folks to attend the June Portland ORE assembly.

Worship Council: we will be deciding upon protocols for the unlikely, but possible, interruption of a worship service by a protester, such as happened recently at the New Orleans congregation. I'll report back on this.

Intern Committee: Lisa Reitzes reports that the Intern Committee will continue with members Lisa, Larkie G., Fred M. and Debra Duff.

In general I am super busy making programming decisions for adult classes, considering sermon topics, and supporting and providing pastoral care for our members, supporting staff, and greeting and encouraging newcomers. It's a great life!

MUSIC DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Bertram Gulhaugen (Aug 13, 2014)

Summer music: I started planning summer music in March and am pleased with how well summer worship music has gone. Volunteers have stepped up to the plate and we're set through the beginning of September. Our professional music staff, John Hansen and Larry Jones, and volunteer staff, Lisa Maynard, Michael Germain Mothershed and Linda Anderson, have been an invaluable part of the success of the program.

Music Leaders: Our volunteer music leaders have been doing an excellent job stepping in when I'm gone as well as offering input with worship service planning. I am deeply grateful for their stewardship, their gifts of time and talent, and feel comfortable handing over the reins to them when necessary. I will have surgery at the end of September so they will be leading Chorale rehearsals and worship services for a couple of weeks. I will be able to do planning from home but leading rehearsals and worship services won't be possible.

GA: I walked at the Service of the Living Tradition making my UUA music leadership credentialing "official" and was very pleased to have the in person support of Shelby, Lewis and Mia. I also sang a solo during the sermon. During the week I participated in much of the music and in between rehearsals got to a few workshops including a very interesting one on building a multi-cultural community. GA is a great opportunity to network with other UUMN musicians. I have been tapped for music leadership of some kind for GA in Portland. Possibly including serving as the GA choir director, but it all remains to be seen at this point.

UUMN Conference: I was recognized as a credentialed music leader making the official recognizing officially over. I was also invited to serve on the UUMN Board of Directors as a member at large. Being a board member will mean monthly conference calls, an annual face to face meeting somewhere in the country, and showing up a couple of days early to the annual UUMN Conference. Besides that, I developed closer relationships with many more musicians from all over the country, went to many excellent workshops, participated in the "contemporary" band which really rocked, enjoyed my first conference without the obligations of the credentialing program, and found the event to be inspiring.

Choral Conductors Workshop: I attended the annual Choral Conductors Workshop the first week of August. The workshop has proven to be an invaluable experience and my conducting and rehearsal style has been powerfully informed by my experience working with the clinician Rodney Eichenberger. There are also many UU musicians who attend regularly, particularly from Portland/Eugene, and we have developed close friendships along the way. The workshop is intense, 6 hours per day for 5 days.

Looking forward: The Chorale will have their first ever overnight retreat at Camp Burton on Vashon Island September 6 and 7. I was finally able to form a planning committee of music directors (not an easy task) for the Puget Sound UU Music Festival scheduled for March 6 and 7 (possibly with Brian Tate) and we had our first meeting on August 9th. I'm looking forward to another exciting year of music.

Budget: GA and the UUMN Conference were paid for with my professional expense. The Choral Conductors Workshop was paid for with the generous credentialing gift I received last June, funds from Earthrise Choir, and my own pocket.

To: Westside UUC Board of Trustees

From: Transition Committee (Lisa Reitzes and Laura Pierce, with board liaison John Britt)

Date: June 2014

Re: Transition priorities and recommendations

Purpose and Vision for Transition Committee

The purpose of the Transition Committee is to lend consultation and make recommendations to the WSUU Board of Trustees aimed at improving management and operational structures and processes to support WSUU making a smooth organizational transition from a Pastoral Congregation to a Program Congregation.

The board's vision for a successful transition, as expressed at the December board meeting, include the following elements: smooth internal communications and coordination, clear roles and processes, swift channels to engagement, less reliance on the minister as the hub, more mentoring and leadership development. Hoped for results include high impact ministries, high quality worship services, greater engagement and shared leadership, and increased ability to turn outward and do good work outside our walls (social action and service).

Approach

This church year, we have been meeting along with board liaison John Britt with the goal of discerning next steps to support Westside's successful transition from a pastoral to a program church. Our inquiry has included conversations with the board, our minister Peg Morgan, and UUA consultant Tandi Rogers. We have reviewed policies, staffing and committee charts, and other documents from program churches in our region, and done some reading about church life stages.

There is no magic or standard formula for transition, but we have come to embrace the following general principles:

- Proactively thinking about how to grow and evolve will help us move through the process more gracefully
- Change takes time and leaders must manage the pace of change to both maintain momentum and keep the "heat/friction" at a tolerable level.
- Pacing change appropriately requires setting some priorities, achieving wins in some areas and then moving to others to build the needed capacity over a period of several years. We can't do it all at once.
- Our success will be tied to our ability to recognize that others have walked this road before us and that we have much to learn from other churches and denominational resources, and that this is a good time to connect with district and national UU resources and models
- We need to celebrate our successes, ranging from establishing a congregation-wide social justice focus and hosting the first intercongregational UU choral event, to practical victories such as the new folding chairs in the social hall!

We also believe that our strategic plan is a useful document with many ideas that move our church toward being a healthy program-size church. For example, the establishment of the Leadership Assembly and the creation of a Stewardship Committee are important steps. We should continue to align our efforts with the plan in the coming years. Also, as time passes, we will need to refresh and/or revisit strategic planning to keep the priorities relevant.

Priority Areas and Recommendations

Staffing – We endorse the current staffing growth proposal put forward by Peg. In particular, we endorse the following actions:

- We believe that expanding and professionalizing the administrative position into a **church administrator** position over time is needed. Expansion of Shannon’s hours is a good first step, and we recommend a review of the job description and title as well. A church administrator will free up the minister for ministerial and pastoral work. It is also an important step in leadership succession planning, as it will affect our ability to recruit an excellent minister in the future.
- A **ministerial intern** is also a great step toward extra capacity. Given that our ability to afford the full cost of an intern in future years is uncertain, Kevin’s focus should be on capacity building with an eye toward cultivating volunteer leadership to help sustain the initiatives he works on.

We also recommend the following actions:

- The **role of the minister** is different in a program church. We recommend a review of Peg’s letter of agreement, reflecting how her job has evolved and will evolve with the presence of the new staffing configuration and the ministerial intern. This process can be informed by the literature regarding the ministerial role in larger churches.
- As we expand staffing, it will be important to examine what level of skill is needed for various tasks and to delegate basic tasks down, allowing our professional staff to maximize their contributions.

Taking a longer view, we predict that our church will need to grow staff further. Areas of future investment may include a part-time building manager/sexton/janitor, a youth minister and/or a staff person with oversight of lifespan learning for all ages, and additional administrative staffing. We may also need to invest in staffing to support our social action work.

Committee Structure – As we grow, more formalization is needed for committees. The board should annually review the committee structure and make changes that might improve efficiency, communications, etc. This might be done in collaboration with the Leadership Assembly. In particular:

- The board should determine what standing committees are needed, and appoint chairs.
- Some committees may benefit from term limits, and all committees should be thinking about inviting new members and rotating leadership responsibilities.
- Standing committees should have a written charter that is approved by the board.
- The chartering process will be especially helpful to clarify and update the role of committees that are crucial to our evolution to a program-sized church, and transition committee would

welcome the opportunity for dialogue with committees about best practices in areas like membership and facilities management.

- The Leadership Assembly should clarify its role and create a charter and clear guidelines for participation.

Volunteer Leadership Development – We recommend a stronger focus on mentoring and training leaders within our congregation. Elements might include:

- Encouraging members to attend denominational training and leadership development opportunities
- Reviewing our lifespan learning opportunities
- Clarifying the “path to leadership” at Westside and increasing awareness among members of the opportunities and supports available to prospective leaders.
- Educate committee chairs regarding expectations, supporting and training emerging leaders and leadership succession within committees, sharing leadership, etc.
- Embracing of “Robbie’s Rule” (Robbie’s Rule was presented to the congregation by our high school youth last year. It is a UUA practice of making space in any group/circle for newcomers to join the conversation—a practice of radical hospitality and inclusion)
- Examination of our culture, and encouragement for a culture of service as opposed to a culture of consumerism.

Upcoming opportunities for inter-congregational sharing and leadership development:

- Seabeck retreat with Shoreline and Evergreen
- General Assembly in June 2015 in Portland, Oregon

We want to especially underscore the opportunity for WSUU to send a sizable contingent of adults as well as youth to GA when it is in our backyard next year! We recognize that funding is limited, but we can encourage congregation members to build this into their summer 2015 planning now.

Communications – We need to ensure multiple avenues to communicate important news to the congregation and keep everyone up to date. With our busy lives, we all need to hear information multiple times and in different ways for it to be absorbed. In addition to the enews, the order of service, the website and other existing avenues, we hope that the Leadership Assembly will be helpful in disseminating information, and we also suggest using clusters and other small group ministry groups (women’s and men’s groups, covenant groups) as forums to share important updates. This would require heightening awareness of group leaders and asking them to serve as information conduits on a regular basis. This verbal, face-to-face communication can complement written communications. We also encourage dialogue around the issue of “push” and “pull” communications. How can we shift Westside’s culture to where congregants are engaged and demand information from the leaders, as opposed to hiding behind “nobody told me”?

Membership – Ensuring that new members are welcomed and encouraged to serve is critical. Westside already does a pretty good job of engaging new members. However, we believe our success moving forward is tied to our ability to increase ownership and leadership among members. This may include new approaches to engagement of new members (for example, grouping new members who

enter around the same time into cohorts), as well as intentional efforts to re-engage members who have been at WSUU about 7-10 years and have differing needs and interests.

Facilities – Building stewardship is an important part of our growing up as a church. Typical initiatives at this stage of church development could include developing systems to better anticipate building maintenance issues and establishment of a repair and maintenance reserve fund to prepare for known and unknown maintenance costs. Over the next few years, staffing in this arena may need reevaluation, as program churches often add a part-time janitor, building manager (sexton) and/or engage a handyman to manage building maintenance.

Budget Process – Though difficult and time-consuming for board leaders, the “budget crisis” this Spring did result in greater engagement by more members in understanding and discussing our budget. We believe that the more people engage in the budgeting process, the more broad ownership and stewardship will result among members. We encourage a process of adequate length to allow for many voices to be heard. In particular, the committees can naturally be engaged more next year via the Leadership Assembly. Broader understanding is likely to result in increased pledging by members over time.

Stewardship – We wholeheartedly support the move toward a year-round Stewardship Committee that takes a more holistic view of revenue generation—including but not limited to the annual pledge drive. This year there will be a need to try a thoughtful mix of new and proven fundraising strategies that are judged to have a good potential return on the investment of effort. We also encourage the board and Leadership Assembly to explore new sources of earned income to support the church.

Pacing Ourselves – Our church is ambitious in our desires for excellence in all areas of church life. During times of growth, we will face times where our resources have not yet caught up to our aspirations. Our leadership, including the many councils and committees that oversee various aspects of congregational life, may need to “right-size” our activity levels to fit available resources (financial, staff and volunteer). One way to frame discussions about scope is to talk about core versus extra/enhanced activities or programming. Another strategy to right-size the amount of programming is to look for synergy across different areas. For example, aligning our youth service activities with our social justice initiative, or offering youth choir in the summer when there are fewer other offerings, etc. We encourage the Leadership Assembly to think in terms of establishing a firm core or foundation and aligning and coordinating programs rather than thinking of itself as a forum for generating new program ideas.

Conclusion

We hope this summary is helpful to the board. Our charge is fairly broad and even these initial thoughts have required extensive discussion to formulate. We are grateful for this chance to consider what is important to strengthen our congregation, and wish to again recognize the work of the strategic planning process in setting a useful foundation for our work.

In each area discussed, there is some literature that can help us delve deeper with the appropriate committees or ad hoc groups. We look forward to further discussion with the current board to refine our recommendations and align our efforts with yours.

