

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

July 9, 2014

The meeting was held at President Joe Rettenmaier's home on SW Barton Street, Seattle, Washington, and was called to order by Joe at 6:40 pm. Joe's words of chalice-lighting wisdom: the WSUU mission statement. He read a nice note of thanks from Amy Hance-Brancati about her time on the Board.

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.

Peg took a group photo to be posted on the website by Shannon.

Thank You Notes

Thank you to Dejon Shegrud for all the caring outreach he does in our community. Thank you to Rose Sheppard and Regina Brennan for making our garden so beautiful, and additionally to Regina for all she is doing to organize our Food First efforts.

Minutes

The Board moved, seconded, and voted to approve the June minutes as drafted.

Treasurer's Report

Michael didn't bring hard copies of this month's report, but had reviewed the numbers yesterday and provided an oral report. Pledges are on track. Income looks very good due to one-time gifts.

Peg asked how much we have from last year's pledges (people still catching up in June/July). Michael said \$1,105 for this month. Stewardship Chair Jill Fleming wrote to people who owe on last year's pledges, including a statement saying how much they still owed and encouraging them to finish up. Shannon said the total we hadn't received in actual pledges (not our hoped-for pledges) was around \$5,000.

Reports

Lisa raised the issue of reports including Board minutes being buried on the website. Shannon and Lisa will figure out how to post and link more visibly.

Betsy is away at a workshop on intergenerational worship and didn't submit a report yet.

Staff Compensation

The board had a discussion about our desire to treat our staff well, including financially. We acknowledged that two staff members with significant and high quality service are below mid-point of the suggested UUA range for our geographic region and their education/experience. We also recognized that we are challenged right now to make sure we raise the revenue (in fundraising budget items) to fund the salaries we have now. We mentioned

next year's budget process, particularly our intention to have a conversation with the congregation about building salary increases into the budget as core expenses. General agreement among the Board that we should figure out a way to encumber ourselves to create stepped salary increases—perhaps a two- to three-year plan to get people to where they ought to be. This was referred to FC.

Finance Committee Charter

Joe said he intends to revisit charters of core committees in this coming year: bring them up to date and make sure they are carrying out the right duties for a congregation of our size. He would like to start with FC charter. He has been talking with Eric Winiacki about how FC could help improve our budget development process.

Joe shared the report that came back from FC when John asked for info about how committees were structured. This report could be the beginning of the chartering process for that committee.

Matt described the process of filling out that form and gave some history. FC is a fairly new committee for WSUU. The first year they were very engaged in the budget process but then later lost focus. General agreement that the Board should engage FC as a working partner throughout the year. FC needs a Board liaison and/or a leader to keep them engaged through the year and into the budget process. Joe pointed out that we're getting back into a better structure having last year's treasurer (Eric) be the chair of FC.

John asked whether we want certain elements in every committee that is chartered by the Board (e.g., how do people get on and off the committee, how does the leader get selected). Board should provide some guidance. He also reminded us that we are legally responsible for money (as a Board) so we have to be careful about how we delegate money matters to a committee like FC.

Peg suggested that we go back to John's work of last year and decide which of the groups are standing committees that the Board needs to charter. Joe suggested that if we help develop charter for FC first, then that might inform how we approach other committees. John said he pictures a back-and-forth process for chartering that starts with the Board communicating the list of tasks we have in mind for FC and have them get back to us with what they think is reasonable for this stage of our development as a congregation.

John pointed out that the Leadership Assembly in June generally agreed that there should be a group that focuses on coordinating/strategizing fundraising. Someone from FC should probably be listening in on the fundraising group.

Mention of the budget process document that John sent, which had the FC taking on certain roles as part of the budget process. The FC's role in the budget process is primarily analytical. Discussion that perhaps Board erred by not giving the FC a clear set of priorities (to fund) earlier in the budget process, and yet perhaps there is more the FC could be doing to inform prioritization and to help committees set realistic budgets for their work. Need to make sure FC membership has best skill set.

The strategic plan includes a (new) Income Strategy Task Force. The Leadership Assembly in June came up with the same idea. General agreement that we need to fire this up. Mention of the bell curve of active church participation—if we assume 10 percent of our congregants are the most active members/leaders, that would be

24 people. How do we get more people involved in leadership? Leadership Assembly will help with this, over time. Also keep in mind the power of invitations.

NEXT STEPS for the chartering process: Joe to send FC a list of possible tasks to include in charter (letting them know that we are using them as a model for our committee chartering process) and ask for their feedback. Board brainstormed the following list:

- Working with committees to track financial goals throughout the year
- Supporting annual budget process
- Creating policies for financial matters for consideration by the Board
- Analytic work such as providing Board with trends on expenses and income
- Providing guide rails for the Income Strategy Task Force
- Reviewing budget line items and seeing whether budget structure makes sense and is transparent; structural oversight of budget
- General process improvement
- Creating a budget template
- Year-over-year analysis showing trends for various months to help us understand when we might be off track
- Meeting frequency, how often they report to the board, what form
- How their ministry fits with the mission and with the four goals of the strategic plan
- Finally, what haven't we asked and what do you think should be your mission?

When working with committees and staff in next year's budget process, we should ask: how did the money you used this year promote the mission and goals of the strategic plan?

What are our core standing committees? Finance and Worship Council to start. We can discuss further at retreat in Sept.

Do we need to point everything back to the strategic plan? Not always, because the strategic plan doesn't call out areas of the congregation that were going well at the time the plan was written; it focused on the parts of the congregation that needed our attention.

New Email Service

Shannon is getting feedback (from congregants and from communication professionals such as Bill Coniff) that the e-news is too full and rich and busy. Bill met with Peg and Shannon about it. He suggested thinking about what is core and make sure that is there and to put repeated or lengthy info in links to PDFs on our website. He also suggested setting hard limits about content (and sharing the limits with people who may submit articles/blurbs). Shannon would like to have one or two other people help her think about those kind of limits.

She says that our website is clean and beautiful but it is old (maintained in HTML). It is not in HTML 5 so is not scalable to different devices.

We need to switch to a bulk email sending service because right now Shannon can only send 50 recipients per email so any congregational mailing takes 11 messages from her. Mailchimp is free but clumsy and no support. Constant Contact (CC) is \$35/month or \$60/month but is easier to work with. Both have good reporting back (such as how many opens, how many clicks on each area). iContact is the highest rated one but she couldn't try it. With the higher-cost CC you get event packages where payments can be submitted through PayPal. CC makes it easy to include social networking buttons in the e-news. They will create your template based on the styles already in your website.

This would be a new expense. This year we could use the trust money (\$689 from an old donation that we didn't completely spend). Cost for the higher level CC for the rest of the year (Aug–May, 10 months) would be \$600. Board gives Shannon the authority to decide between the \$35/month and the \$60/month version depending on her needs.

By this decision we are adding a \$720/year expense to the yearly budget. Michael will ask the bookkeeper to add expenditure and revenue lines to the current budget. Moved, seconded, approved.

Strategic Plan – Updates, Action Items

Joe had talked with the new Board members about which of the SP goals were most interesting to them. Other Board members changed SP goal group memberships. Joe asked each group to meet once this summer and update its status before the Sept 10 Board meeting. We are headed into year 2 of the three-year plan. New SP goal group membership:

Goal I: Maintain and enhance our close-knit community. **Shannon (lead)**, Joe, John, Lisa

Goal II: Refine our organizational and management structure. **John (lead)**, Matt, Glenn.

Goal III: Ensure our financial stability. **Matt (lead)**, Michael, Shannon

Goal IV: Enhance our building. **Joe (lead)**, Michael, Lisa

Glenn and Lisa suggested that we report back to the congregation on the status of these goals in interesting ways, for example video at the beginning of the church service.

John suggested that we calendar out the key themes that the Board needs to talk about each month so that we don't lose track of important things we want to discuss, and to provide time for larger issues.

Board retreat

Agreement to have a half day retreat. Joe asked Shannon to send a Doodle poll for a half-day retreat for a Sun afternoon or a Sat morning for Aug/Sept/Oct. John suggested that if we can't find a date, we could do a couple of Board meetings with extended discussion sessions.

Meeting adjourned at 8:48 pm.

MINISTER'S REPORT July 3, 2014

Rev. Peg Morgan

Some happenings in the works...one potential action by the Board underlined:

1. A video to be placed on our home web page "Welcome from our minister." Thanks to John Britt for the idea, encouragement and a sample to watch from Plymouth Congregational downtown.
2. I'll be meeting with Sweet Pea preschool CEO by mid August, to discuss our relationship and next year's contract (starts Sept 1). They honored us with a very nice poster this week (which we will hang in the social hall), telling me we are such great landlords and that they can't believe it has been 4 years already!
3. The booksale that Patti McCall managed raised \$500+ for our fundraising efforts! She is planning more.
4. We are continuing our Thursday meditations throughout summer, will have an A-frame sign (thanks to Patti and Charlie) out this week inviting people to attend, and I'm working with Bert to get live music for it. Two theological students, Will Haggerty and Charlie Wilson, plus Shelby are sharing the weekly responsibilities with me.
5. Bill Coniff volunteered his professional skills as the internal communications director for Horizon Air, to work with Shannon and I to re-envision our eNews, as it has become so very long. Shannon has just taken over the updating of our website from Laurie Radin, which is related because we may create links to more detail. The concept then is that eNews becomes a menu of topics and people click to get more details on what they are interested in. Our web site updating is not a friendly program as she has to work in HTML rather than a more user friendly webpage package. She has to reformat with programming things like bolding text...we will use pdfs when possible...We do want to consider other options for our website down the line. Also, our email system HAS to be changed as it takes Shannon about 11 emails to send out any message...as our server company now only allows a limited number of email addresses per email...(I think about 50) we have 500+ on the list. We would like to convert to mailchimp or a similar program but it would cost a monthly fee which we don't have..probably 1000 per year. Actually, as I think about it while I'm typing, I think that would be a value added expense using special funds...for instance...we could use the money we just got back from Seabeck as a refund on a deposit for our fall women's retreat which isn't happening...or we could use the money in the "To be allocated by the Board" money...I don't recall how much is in there...but we can look by running a balance sheet...or we can use 1000 from the memorial fund. I would be in favor of this allocation only because it would make a huge value added/staff time saving/creative options for subgroup emails/quality addition to our program church functioning. Think about it... and perhaps Shannon can get a firmer price on Monday to share with you.
6. I have been asked and have said yes to doing a webinar series (3 sessions) on pastoral care for the Pacific Western Region of the UUA. First session is in October.
7. Thanks to Charlie for engineering a solution to make sure chairs don't fall off the top row of the chair racks; maybe the bottom row too. He's so talented.

8. I am very proud of Bert Gulhaugen ...not only for achieving his accreditation, but also for moving into continental leadership. He is achieving a working relationship with our top UUA music leaders. He is being asked to serve on the UUMN (musicians' network) board. Note that during the Service of the Living Tradition, during the sermon, he had a dramatic surprise solo of Rumi's "Come, Come, Whoever you are"!

9. Amy Youngblood has taken the UUA Liaison role for now. She is not sure where she will end up living so it may or may not be long term. She is excited to bring more information to the congregation about what the larger UU world is doing! Amy is still a member in Texas and so is not a member here. So she isn't in the directory.

RE Report to the Board July 2014

Highlights

- Our RE Celebration Sunday seemed to be a success! It takes an extraordinary amount of work to make it all happen and manage the many players, but it seemed to go well. We had several visitors that week, and they had positive things to say to Peg and to me about their experience. All of them said this was one of the warmest and most welcoming congregations they had been to. An older couple with no children said they loved how vibrant this service was, and that we are on the top of their UU church-shopping list!



Looking Ahead

- Summer Project List (not all-inclusive) --
 - Rewrite the Coming of Age curriculum for Westside's program.
 - Identify curriculum selections for each level for Sunday morning classes, become familiar with each, and prepare materials.
 - Recruit remaining teachers and RE volunteers and provide training.
 - Update and solidify our RE Safety Policy.
 - Create a new RE blog and web-based formats for communications with families and the larger community.
 - Create an online registration system solution.
 - Clean and organize the RE office, supply closet, and resource room.
 - Complete the Nursery and Quiet Room Refresh project.
 - Hold RE Council and Youth Adult Committee retreats.
 - Provide trainings for story tellers and for youth working in the Nursery.
 - Explore how to serve families for 24/7 faith development, using technology tools.
 - Update the RE section of the web site.

- Some Programming Updates for Next Year –
 - OWL –
 - We had a very successful K-1 OWL offering this June, serving seven children in a camp format for a week. We will offer K-1 OWL again across four Sunday afternoons in the fall.
 - No other OWL sessions will be offered next year. However, we are likely moving to a yearly offering for single grade levels beginning in 2015-16 because of our increased numbers.
 - Next year I will focus on establishing and training OWL teams for each level.
 - Coming of Age –
 - This will be offered in a similar format this year as last – from September to April, meeting every other Sunday morning plus outside events.
 - I will teach COA this year, with John Monahan, Lorelei Amato, and Steve Burrows.
 - We have eight incoming 9th graders who can take COA.
 - We will likely offer COA every year after this.
 - Middle School Youth Group –
 - I am planning to create a more structured middle school youth group and youth program next year, with a consistent advising team. This will serve 6th-8th graders, and will include social action activities.

- DRE Professional Development –
 - Multigenerational Worship Workshop –
 - I am in North Carolina now, attending this training with DREs and ministers from across the country. The first day has been full and rich, and I look forward to sharing what I'm learning!
 - LREDA Fall Conference –
 - I am on the planning team for the fall conference for my professional association, and will attend that conference in October in Atlanta.

**DATA
ANALYSIS**

Average for each class	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14
Nursery	1.0	0.5	1.5	2.8	2.0	3.5	4.0
Story Time	3.3	3.8	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.7
Spirit Play	4.8	4.0	3.3	5.0	4.0	4.3	5.7
K-1	8.7	8.3	6.7	6.8	4.5	6.7	6.0
2/3 grade	4.0	5.0	3.7	6.8	7.0	6.0	5.7
4/5 grade	7.0	8.8	5.3	7.3	7.5	8.3	8.7
6/8 grade	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.8	7.0	4.3	7.0
High School	4.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	3.5	5.0	

% of students present per class	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14
Nursery	17%	10%	25%	47%	33%	58%	67%
Story Time	41%	54%	38%	31%	31%	33%	33%
Spirit Play	48%	40%	33%	50%	40%	43%	57%
K-1	46%	43%	32%	32%	21%	32%	29%
2/3 grade	22%	29%	20%	38%	64%	55%	52%
4/5 grade	39%	49%	30%	40%	42%	46%	48%
6/8 grade	30%	30%	30%	34%	35%	22%	35%
High School	67%	100%	100%	100%	70%	100%	

TOTAL Average # of students	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14
Average # each Sunday	38.7	37.5	34.5	42.8	38.0	40.8	39.7
% present each Sunday	39%	44%	38%	46%	42%	49%	46%