

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

March 12, 2014

The meeting was held in the administrative office of the congregation's church building at 7141 California Ave SW, Seattle, Washington, and was called to order by President Joe Rettenmaier at 7:07 pm with virtual chalice lighting on Betsy's phone (Chalice Lighter app!). John provided brief words (*I am asleep... I dream of being awake*).

Present were President Joe Rettenmaier, VP Matt Aspin, Treasurer Eric Winiecki, Secretary Lisa Maynard, and Trustees Amy Hance-Brancati, Shannon Day, and John Britt, as well as Rev. Peg Morgan and DRE Betsy Lowry. Fred Matthews came later to discuss the endowment section of the by-laws.

Thank You Notes

To Laura White, who has been greeter chair since Dec 2013 and has jumped in with both feet and taken leadership. To Bert Gulhaugen for multi-congregation choir festival and musical theater fundraiser. To Team Clean for a great deal of extra cleaning around the choir festival and chaplaincy training. To Rose Sheppherd for taking on the Building Comm chair role.

Minutes

Lisa read aloud the changes to the draft Feb 12 minutes, based on suggestions that had been sent to her in email. Upon a motion duly moved and seconded, meeting minutes from Feb 12, 2014, were approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report

Eric distributed a hard copy of the report. He says we moved our accounts over to Umpqua Bank just in time for them to raise their rates. One new cost is 30 cents a check (we average 85 checks a month). Peg will find the letter of agreement and call Tim at Umpqua to see if we can get a break.

INCOME: We are on track with pledge income for the year. General fund income is at 105% for the year. Auction – the Africa trip was added as a negative number for the auction. We got about \$300 from the second chance auction email. The total auction take was around \$42K.

EXPENSES: General fund expenses are at 101% for the year. Betsy's retirement fund account is still being set up; will be retroactive to January. Landscaping expenses are low for now but probably they will be buying, now that it is spring.

Eric is working through the proposed budget for next year based on last week's meeting of Board and Finance Comm.

Reports

MINISTER'S REPORT action items:

- Bronze plaque. Board moved, seconded, and approved the proposed design for a plaque and to purchase and install it in time for the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday event. Shannon will talk with 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee about publicity for the party.
- Decision on buying new chairs is later in the agenda.

Board thanks Peg for including more about scope of program and scope of pastoral care in her report.

#### RE REPORT

Betsy handed out a hard copy of Jan report (for Dec) and Mar report (for Jan/Feb). Highlights: December was a warm, full, rich month. Some less familiar families participated in the “Season of Renewal” service she planned with Bert. She anticipated that January would allow some downtime, but her goal switched to just keeping all balls in the air. Offering three OWL sessions on top of everything else is a huge effort for the program, but the kids and parents who are engaged in that are very committed. Shannon reports that many people know how to run the dishwasher now! OWL is part of our values and social justice but it also brings families together in a rich and personal way. There have been several overnight events, with adults chaperoning and also coming early to make breakfast. Rand also offered an OWL class to a group of high-school-level homeschooled kids. We are seeking to bring high-school-level OWL to WSUU in the next couple of years. Kids are coming regularly to WSUU during the week and on Fri and Sat. Betsy wants to think about how to scale back her personal/direct involvement in the non-Sunday morning activities. Two of our youth participated in the chaplaincy training (along with other area youth) – we are pioneering the trail of offering chaplaincy service within our community.

Joe applauded Betsy for developing such a safe and attractive place for the kids to come outside of Sunday. Her personal presence outside of services and outside of working hours is a lovely consistent element for the families.

Joe suggested the idea of having mini-plays/pageants similar to the Christmas story but for the other main world faith traditions.

Lisa will send reminders to committees for other reports for April meeting.

#### Endowment By-Laws Change

Fred Matthews explained how and why the proposed by-law changes came to be. He is not a member of the (elected) Endowment Comm but acts an advisor to it. Allan Lang (chair) asked Fred to attend tonight in his place.

Major changes/clarifications with this proposed revision:

- Now states that “Principal of the Endowment Fund shall remain intact.” Previously, loans were allowed.
- Restricted gifts are now a minimum of \$10,000. Don’t want to be chasing smaller amounts. Smaller gifts will be kept in the general part of the Endowment Fund (EF). Other large gifts may also be put in the general EF instead of being designated/restricted.

- Responsibility for accepting gifts is with the Board, not the Endowment Committee (Board being better informed about particular needs).
- Endowment Comm wants a yearly audit by the Finance Comm.
- All investment decisions will be made by the Endowment Comm, which is looking seriously at investing in the UUA Common Endowment Fund (managed through UUA). Seems to offer a good way of investing that also addresses social responsibility.
- Kept language that “income from the EF may be distributed annually.” EC is looking at retaining all income until the fund reaches \$50K so as not to dribble out money and so that the corpus of the fund builds more rapidly.
- Language about when the Endowment Comm **shares (?)** the total amount.
- Endowment Comm’s primary job is investing and reporting.

Matt pointed out that Finance Comm may need to include in its charter the task of providing the yearly audit of the Endowment Comm. Matt will look for the draft Finance Comm charter.

Fred said the committee is aware of the Michael Green estate and discussed both parts of the Green distribution (initial \$6K plus final amount known soon) into Endowment Fund. Once we know the full amount, Board can decide to move it all into Endowment Fund. The initial \$6K is in the Memorial Fund.

Matt asked if Endowment Comm would provide advice to the Board. Joe liked the language that says we can get advice from whichever committee we want. Board would be the group that decided whether a restriction is too restrictive. Fred said it may be necessary from time to time to hire an advisor to determine whether to accept a certain gift.

This by-law change would get voted on by the entire congregation at the annual meeting in May. Joe asked us to consider whether we as a Board understand it sufficiently to put on the ballot. Next step would be posting it as a proposed addition to the by-laws. John pointed out that we should publicize the change and potentially write a FAQ that explains key changes and reasons for this change.

In its reports to the Board, Endowment Comm would differentiate restricted and unrestricted income.

Matt asked if we can look at the recommended fund (e.g., UUA Common Endowment Fund) and see breakout of investment fees, performance, etc. Eric asked whether the Endowment Comm could shift all funds into private management down the road. Fred said yes, they could. Fred has serious concerns about Endowment Comm being a committee that reports to the congregation and not the Board (because it is an elected committee, not appointed). Peg said we could change the model with this by-law change. John raised the concern that, with an elected Endowment Comm, a potentially significant amount of money is not under control of the Board, when the Board is legally responsible.

John pointed out that Board should be the ones who appoint the Endowment Comm. Shannon pointed out that it would be a relief to the Nominating Comm if the Board appointed the Endowment Comm. Board has no issues with current Endowment Comm functions or duties or parameters – the question is, where is the accountability?

Fred agreed that the Endowment Comm should report to the Board, not the congregation. We can vote at the annual meeting to bring the committee under the Board (to make Endowment Comm one of our standing committees). Then the proposed policies would become the job description of the Endowment Comm (adopted during chartering process).

When proposing this change, Board can explain to the congregation that having the Endowment Comm separately elected is more like a family-size congregation and not program-size.

Fred provided hard copy of Article XIII addendum about Endowment Fund (adopted May 20, 2001). Joe will call Allan Lang and explain that we like the proposed policies but we want to have that be the charter for the committee rather than part of the by-laws, and that we value the work of the committee.

### Policies and Guidelines Document

The policies and guidelines document is posted on skydrive. John read through it today. He pointed out that Peg sent it to us in August 2013. It contains a lot of various material, such as the employee handbook, job descriptions, by-laws, safety policies (how to lock up the building), and every policy we have passed on this board. He said that, just as a matter of principle, each policy should have a review date on it, and that someone needs to review each piece of the document. Shannon asked whether it made sense to him structurally. He said that, in his experience, policies (conceptual) are very different from procedures (how to). He also said you have to decide where the primary repository of a policy or procedure is, so that you only make changes once.

Joe asked if there are policies and procedures in the manual that should be removed. Okay to have policies and procedures in the same document, but they should be formatted differently. Peg suggested making the employee handbook and by-laws standalone documents. That would make a much smaller policies and procedures manual, and it would be easier for someone to reformat.

Shannon said the document is difficult to work in right now because it is set up with antiquated styles. We need Office 2013 to work in the cloud. Board asked Shannon to remove the employee handbook and by-laws from the P&P document. All will be on skydrive/onedrive. John asked if we still need a review. Peg will make one review pass and look at the formatting with Shannon. The real version will always be on onedrive.

### Social Hall Chairs

John moves and Amy seconds the motion to purchase new social hall chairs as proposed in Peg's report. Board thanks Peg and Wayne very much for their generosity in donating money toward the purchase.

### Auction Chair

Joe impressed on us the urgency of getting an auction chair in place. Shannon suggested that we need a chair and a chair-in-training. Discussion of possible candidates. Matt said he is willing to help and advise and work on the catalog but can't take on leadership. John suggested assembling a semi-formal group of prior auction leaders who might be willing to step up as coaches/mentors.

## Budget for 2014-2015

Board finally began budget work at 8:50 pm. Joe said to look at the proposed budget with an eye for how Board would prioritize. John proposed that we ask the people with larger pieces of the budget to give their priorities. For example, ask Betsy "Of the requests that you've made, which are the absolutely critical pieces?" She is in the best position to know and help us prioritize her requests.

Finance Comm proposed timeline:

- > March 16 "Full Requests Budget Report" finalized and sent to congregation.
- > March 23 meeting for Board to discuss "Full Requests Budget Report" with any congregant.
- > Apr 20 all pledges turned in.
- > Apr 23 Board budget meeting to create "Proposed Annual Budget" based on income and priorities.
- > Apr 30 another Board budget working session if needed.
- > May 1 "Proposed Annual Budget" is completed.

Joe brought up a proposal by the Finance Comm for the Board to look at areas of the budget that are a priority based on strategic plan. For example, after our 'dots' session with the Transition Committee, our highest priority was staffing, then organizational structure, then leadership development. From that point of view, we would first build out staffing with any increased pledge money. John pointed out that there is a little over \$50K in staffing requests (this is a big jump). He handed out a document that he created (WSUU 2014-2015 Budget Notes) to allow us to look at personnel and facility as categories.

John asked what our process will be for the budget cutting process. Last year the Board went line by line to see what could possibly be cut. Last year's priority was to pay the mortgage in full.

Joe pointed out that we are entering into a year-round stewardship model with this pledge drive. Peg said the team would continue to follow up on folks who never get their forms in and help make sure that members who join throughout the year make a pledge (outside the March pledge drive).

Eric suggested that at the Apr 9 Board meeting we identify our key priorities and also budget requests that are likely to drop off at the Apr 25 mtg.

Joe asked for volunteers for the Mar 23 noon meeting to answer questions about the proposed budget from congregants. Shannon, Eric, Joe, John at front end, Amy at back end, maybe Matt.

## Executive Session

Peg asked for an executive session. Board reviewed at the salary recommendations from UUA for staff.

Meeting adjourned at 9:53 pm.

Minutes recorded by Lisa Maynard, Board Secretary

## MINISTER'S REPORT

Rev. Peg Morgan

March 10, 2014

Two action items:

- 1) I recommend you approve Rose Sheppard, of the Building Committee, to purchase 150 chairs which she has selected after quite a lot of investigation. I am donating \$1500 and Wayne \$800. That leaves \$1412 which is about what is in the "Funds to be allocated by the Board. We would get two 32 chair holders and a two tiered 84 chair holder. Getting the two tiered holder which would hold most of the chairs we wouldn't use too often, reduces the foot print in the social hall. The price total is \$3712. It is really reduced from their "retail" price as we are purchasing in volume. I'd really like to get these before the Jewish Synagogue rents our space on 4/15 for their Seder supper ritual. I think we would keep the vinyl brown chairs for the back of the sanctuary and we are using them in fireside for our owl classes...we may want some in the library too. But we would get rid of the heavy blue chairs.
- 2) The other morning, before church, Laura White and I were talking about the narthex entryway. She is experimenting with different arrangements of the greeting tables (RE and general greeting), and I very much encourage her investment in evaluating what is working and what could be better...she is a real gem for us! In the process of conversation, she told me something that simply stunned me. She said, "When I first came to this church I came into these doors and saw the Baptist plaque and just about turned around. I thought I was in the wrong place. There was nothing saying Westside or Unitarian Universalist when you look at that wall...just Baptist!" We have also had several Baptists (3 or 4 that I know of) who have come in expecting us to be Baptist. We welcomed them warmly, but they didn't stick! I so appreciate her feedback, because I have never been a stranger coming into this church, so I wouldn't have wondered if I was in the right place (Unitarian) as she did.

Ironically, this coincides with a topic the 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday folks and I were discussing recently...adding a ritual prior to the service on June 1st which is our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration Sunday...The ritual would be to dedicate a Westside plaque that we had investigated when we moved in, but then tabled. This would be a ritual in which our President surrounded by Board members and others who come, would unveil with some celebratory words...and I would probably say some words also...Seems the culmination of our 50<sup>th</sup> birthday is an excellent time to do this, as the plaque has our birthday year on it! We could affix a letter/dedication program from our 2010 dedication and the June 1<sup>st</sup> ritual to the back of our plaque, for posterity.

Attached is the design we came up with at the time...Mike Cox and Mary Houlihan as architect and printing experts, and Mark Newton as Chair of the Building Renovations Committee were the folks delegated to look at optional design and specs and vendors...(THE BLUE BACKGROUND IS NOT REALLY THERE... It would just be the bronze color). We had considered placing it all on marble stone, thus the blue background to depict the stone, but that would have been too expensive and would have required opening up the wall). So it would be the 20" x 10", which is just ½ inch taller than the Baptist plaque. We would put this right above the Baptist plaque; we

would not cover up the Baptist plaque... thus respecting and keeping the history of the building intact.

I have an up to date bid of \$428.00 including tax to get this from a monument company on Aurora. Steve Burrows would be asked to install. I think we pay for it out of the \$8,000 or so in the memorial fund, specifically from the \$2,000 of that fund which is left from donations for the narthex window improvements. (The other \$6,000 is from Michael Greene's estate.)

## PROGRAM REPORTS

*Covenant group* leaders are writing really good sessions. This is a really important ministry of the church. Patti McCall, Mark Mackay, Joe Rettenmaier and Julie Charles (who doesn't have a group but is part of the leader team). A total of 33 people participate in the groups.

*Spiritual Study Group*...there are 12 people attending each month as we finish the John Makransky book...it has been some deep introspective spiritual work...and those folks seem to value the opportunity. It is a mix of members and non members.

*Circle Suppers*: are ever popular, with an average of five dinners each month and an average of 35 people each month. Coordinated so ably by Ursula Hamm.

*EXCEL*- this Friday twice a month group led by Fred Matthews is a solid group attended by 5-8 people. The format is brown bag visiting, check in and then launch into a topic...topics recently have included:

*Men's Group*...Way of the Peaceful Warrior run by Richard Clark. He has a core group of 5 men and another 4 who come sometimes. Here is their format as reported by Richard...I have never attended...can't pass the physical ☺ :

First 10 minutes is a guided grounding meditation; Next 10 to 20 minutes is a check-in from each member - how the past week or two has been like since we last met; Next hour is in discussion of significant issues; Closing with a reflection of what take-away has been discovered, or how one sees them self in the future, or what intention is to be set; Then hugs of support.

UU Choir Festival: what a proud moment for Westside to experience the festival. He built on the previous year's festival, making it even more special, by having all singers singing together. He worked hard with all the music directors, and pulled off a wonderful collaboration. Word is out in the district about how successfully joyful and spiritually moving that it was.

## FIANCIAL REPORTS

*Michael Greene Estate*: Fred Matthews is handling communications with the estate attorney. This process feels like it has taken way too long. We have no idea how much it will be, but my estimate is 4-6,000. "The report today is: they are preparing the final documents and will meet with the Personal Representative (PR) in the near future to review and then file them. Once the final documents are filed, copies will be mailed to the beneficiaries who have 30 days to file any objections. If none are filed, the

PR has 5 days to send out the final distributions. So we should see whatever we have coming sometime in mid to late April.” So I think we will know the amount in March and receive it in April.

*Second Chance Auction:* Shannon has been fielding emails from people regarding extra seats at auction events. So far we have brought in a few hundred dollars into the auction revenue!

# **RE Report to the Board**

## **March 2014**

### **(This report will address the months of January and February.)**

January kicked off with huge momentum! I had the expectation that January would allow some relief from the full pace of December, and I had several projects planned for January. My experience from the prior year's January time was also my first month in this position, so I was surprised a bit with the extraordinary momentum of this January. It's been good to experience this time of year in the continuity of my role and an active RE ministry. January is not a down time in RE programs, it's a kick-off! Now I know!

### **Highlights**

- Our Sunday morning RE classes are deep into the swing of things, and they are engaged in a range of projects from investigating the interconnected web of life through dead tree branches, to creating Shrinky-Dink emblems for their UU stoles, to making prayer flags and quilts, to crafting window and mirror panels that reflect how they see the world and how they think the world sees them.
- Our Sunday morning teachers are reporting that they feel very well supported with Gabbie's helpful, and timely care in her role as Teacher Support Coordinator.
- Our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders had their second OWL overnight in the church. We covered three OWL sessions with them, focused on community building and bonding, had a worship by candlelight on the floor in the Sanctuary late at night, played hide-n-seek in the semi-dark all over the church building, ate a LOT of food, watched a movie together, and generally had a fantastic time! We also had four brave parents stay for the night, and a few others helping with food. Nice bonding time for the adults too.
- We started the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade OWL class with 19 kids participating, and three teachers – Michael Franzen, Shannon Day, and me. The kids and their families attended a 2.5-hour orientation session together to kick-off the program. We had a full house!
- Our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders had their first overnight in the church, again with great parent support. They loved it so much that they keep asking when we're doing it again.
- Our 6<sup>th</sup> graders enjoyed a special social event just for them on a Friday evening, since our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders have had so much bonding time through OWL. The 6<sup>th</sup> graders played games and music and shared pizza, big surprise!
- Ten middle school youth met at WestSide Baby for a tour, and to offer their time to assist in sorting clothes and stuffing diaper bags. Several of them shared ice cream time at Full-Tilt afterward.
- Our middle school youth met at the Southgate Roller Rink for a skating party and pizza night.
- Our multi-gen Ukulele Band rehearsed and played for the service on January 12<sup>th</sup> and February 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Our Middle School Rock Band started rehearsals in the basements of their houses, which is apparently way more cool than playing at church. They are playing the prelude on March 16<sup>th</sup>.
- Our Children's Choir rehearsed and sang in our March 2<sup>nd</sup> service, with several multi-age instrumental accompanists.

- Our Coming of Age kids have been attending class sessions every other Sunday morning from 10-12pm, and also had a fieldtrip to Issaquah to see a show performed by and for teens, called "Trust Me." We were invited by Ryan Han, who also helped to orchestrate a discussion time afterward with the actors.
- Our Youth Group has been meeting every Sunday evening, engaging in deep question activities like creating their own ten commandments, and also sharing Pho dinners and having very merry unibirthday parties.
- The RE Council held a teacher mini-retreat on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, offering inspiration, relaxation with yoga, a delicious breakfast, some training, and time for teaching teams to plan.
- Our new version of the Youth Adult Committee (YAC) started meeting in January. All of the members are attending, and there is great enthusiasm.
- Good planning happened to support the Raise the Paddle Nursery Refresh for the auction, which was highly successful!
- Westside hosted a beautiful Youth Adult Chaplaincy Training weekend at the end of February, for the Pacific Northwest District. We had thirty participants who slept in our church, and claimed to have had an amazing experience. Two of our youth and three adults also participated.

## Administration Updates

- Classroom Space –
  - We are using the build at a high level of capacity. Our junior high OWL class fills every inch of the Fireside Room, as they need a private space for their discussions. Our 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade OWL class meets on the carpet in a community circle in the Social Hall, with curtains as a visual partition to try to maintain a sense of privacy and safety for our discussions. We used the whole building for our Youth Adult Chaplain Training, and for our youth overnights. We juggle meeting space with other groups and projects both during the week and especially on Sundays.
  - Our new youth room has not only captured the interest of our high school youth, but now our younger kids and middle school youth are curious about it too. Next year we have seven 8<sup>th</sup> graders who can join the high school Youth Group, and we're already scheming about how to fit everyone in the youth room!
- Web Site Development –
  - Rob Fenwick has done a beautiful job of creating a new section for RE that features our teachers with bios and photos. I am collecting bios from more of our teachers, and we will soon make this public. You can check it out here: [http://wsuu.org/re\\_teachers.php](http://wsuu.org/re_teachers.php)
  - Rob has also created a blog for RE that is designed to look like a natural part of the WSUU web site. You can check out the shell for it here: [http://wsuu.org/re\\_blog/](http://wsuu.org/re_blog/)
  - We now have a closed Facebook group that our high school youth and advisors use to communicate about Youth Group activities and events. I moderate this group. Lewis Brancati set it up for us, and Mia Shaughnessy uses it to share information in her YAC leadership role.
- Professional Development for DRE –
  - I will be attending District Assembly in Spokane this coming weekend, March 13-15. Thursday is filled with LREDA meetings. Friday I will attend a professional development with Rev. Dr. Thandeka, titled "Love Beyond Belief," the District Assembly theme, and Friday evening and Saturday I will attend sessions, returning Saturday evening.

- I will participate in a Renaissance Module on teacher development in Ohio at the end of April.
- I will not attend GA this year, but will instead support Shelby Greiner to go as a sponsor for Lewis Brancati (our graduating senior who will bridge at GA), and Mia Shaughnessy.
- The Partner Church team has invited me to join the trip planned for Transylvania in August. If we are able to fund this trip, I am planning to go. I really relish the thought of this amazing opportunity!

## Attendance Data

Average for each class	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14
Nursery	1.0	0.5	1.5
Story Time	3.3	3.8	3.0
Spirit Play	4.8	4.0	3.3
K-1	8.7	8.3	6.7
2/3 grade	4.0	5.0	3.7
4/5 grade	7.0	8.8	5.3
6/8 grade	6.0	6.0	6.0
High School	4.0	5.0	5.0

% of students present per class	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14
Nursery	17%	10%	25%
Story Time	41%	54%	38%
Spirit Play	48%	40%	33%
K-1	46%	43%	33%
2/3 grade	22%	29%	20%
4/5 grade	39%	49%	30%
6/8 grade	23%	23%	23%
High School	80%	100%	100%

TOTAL Average # of students			
Average # each Sunday	38.7	37.5	34.5
% present each Sunday	39%	36%	38%