

First Unitarian Church of St. Louis Policy Board Meeting
Monday, November 17, 2024, 6:30–8:00 p.m. – via Zoom
Minutes

President Charles (Chuck) Eby called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

Others in attendance: Larry Dusenbery, Vice President; Kathy Wilke, Treasurer; Sidney Watson, Secretary; Rebecca (Becca) McBride, Trustee; Betty Neill, Trustee;

Absent: Chris Kocher, Trustee

Church Council: Sherry Bassi

Staff: Rev. Kim Mason, Lynn Hunt, and Michelle Townsend Grove

Opening Words by Chuck, a short poem by Robert Frost, Nothing Gold Can Stay

Chalice Lighting by Rev. Kim

Reading of Board Covenant by Chuck is available at
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1cBWTB1BODfNv4Xks6vuDCH0RmnF5brnV/edit?usp=drive_link&oid=105183447557092303738&rtpof=true&sd=true

Process Observer: Betty Neil

Next month: Larry will give the Opening Words and read the Board Covenant

Process Observer: Betty Neil

Check-in: Chuck asked everyone to share their favorite side dish at Thanksgiving and the one they prefer to pass on to the next person.

Approval of the Minutes of the October 2024 Policy Board Meeting

Chuck asked to amend the draft minutes to reflect we “discussed the possibility” of having a website for the vision statement process. The draft minutes sound like we will have such a website, but we have not figured out how to do that.

Motion by Kathy to approve the minutes as amended. Larry seconded. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda

- Report of the Minister - Kim Mason
- Report of the Administration - Lynn Hunt
- Report from the President - Chuck Eby

Treasurer's Report

Kathy Wilke provided an overview of the two documents she presented for this meeting.

The Statement of Activity October 2024 reflects income and expenses from the beginning of the church year in July through October. We are early in the church year, but so far, we are on track with projections for the annual budget.

The Balance Sheet October 2024 is a statement of the church's assets and liabilities. Board members noted how much of the church's assets and liabilities are tied to the building.

Update on Active Hope Project: Tabernacle CDC The Hub pantry

Chuck reported that several members will go to The Hub tomorrow to help them stock their food pantry.

Updates from Liaisons to Committees

- Personnel Committee – Betty reported that the committee is finishing updating the Personnel Manual. The Board is likely to get their update later this month.
- Ministry Committee – Kathy and Rev. Kim reported that the most recent meeting was on October 21. The committee discussed the visioning process and the sabbatical and prepared for the election. Kim has been reading several books about evangelical congregations that tried to do DEI work and is considering using one for an educational program. The committee thought it would be helpful for them to be available to Rev. Sabrina as they serve as sabbatical minister.
- Sabbatical Committee - The committee will have another meeting in December with Rev. Sabrina. The committee held an open discussion for church members on November 10. The turnout was small. Those who attended were calm, rather than anxious, about Rev. Kim's upcoming sabbatical.
- Program Council– Sherry reported the Council talked a lot about website updates. They also discussed setting up a committee to transition the former bookstore into a family play space.
- Nominations: Sidney reported that chair Stephen Wilke said he has nothing to report and probably needs to find a few new members. Board members confirmed that the committee chair recruits the committee, not the board.

Sunday Church service Greeters pool

Chuck encouraged everyone to sign up to be greeters. Michelle is working on a 1-page set of bullet points to help greeters share information about children's RE with newcomers.

Michelle is also developing a Sunday Superintendent Program since we don't have a Sunday morning RE person. The Sunday Super will check in with the greeters, teachers, and parents to ensure they have what they need. Then the Sunday Super can go to service. Michelle has one Sunday Super volunteer and is looking for three more. The concept is to have each volunteer serve as Sunday Super once a month.

Updates:

- Refreshing Vision Statement

The Board debriefed after the first small group vision session on November 17. Based upon feedback from participants and facilitators, the Board will edit the facilitator notes, and Rev. Kim will revise the guided meditation.

Betty asked the small group facilitators to add information from their sessions to the spreadsheet she created to organize the data. There is a spreadsheet tab for each meeting. Do not worry about adding duplicate information. We are trying to record as much data from each meeting as possible.

The calendar and assignments for the next three sessions are as follows:

- Nov. 24 - Larry & Chris
- Dec. 8 - Chuck & Becca
- Dec. 15 - Larry & Sidney

We also discussed how to encourage people to attend the vision sessions. Michelle is working to get childcare for one Sunday to make it easier for parents to attend.

- Sabbatical planning

The Sabbatical Committee will meet on December 1. The committee held a post-service meeting to provide information to members. The group was small, calm, and not stressed. They were excited for Rev. Kim to have the opportunity for a sabbatical.

The committee is creating a sabbatical document that tells people who to call for what while Rev. Kim is gone.

- Church insurance policy and efforts to lower premium

Chuck said there is nothing to report besides what is in his written report as President. Kathy Wire is on holiday, but we will know more when she returns.

- Church building condition request to Facilities Committee

The Board discussed making a formal request for the Facilities Committee to obtain bids for an outside consultant to perform a building condition survey assessing the condition and repair needs for our site, building, and systems. We need to plan for the building's likely maintenance and repair costs to function as a church in the immediate, short-term, mid-term, and long-term.

Chuck will draft a written request and circulate it via email.

- Mid-Winter meeting

After considering several options, the Board settled on February 1 as the date for the mid-winter Meeting. Michelle will facilitate the meeting.

New Business

- Fundraiser

We anticipate a \$15,000-20,000 deficit in the church's 2024-2025 operating budget because of increased building premiums and the need for a building condition survey not included in the present budget. Chuck and Rev. Kim recommend a fundraiser to close the budget gap. We typically have a fundraiser every other year, and we did not have one last year.

Kathy moved to recommend to the Finance Committee the need for a fundraising auction to address an anticipated shortfall of \$15,000-20,000 for 2024-2025 and request that they form a committee to plan such a fundraiser for the spring of 2025. Becca seconded. Motion passed.

- Canvassing in March and recruiting a co-chair

Our canvass co-chair has moved out of town, so we need a new co-chair to serve with Erin Milligan. We want to find someone who can commit to two years, has a high profile among church members, and is a good speaker. Canvass starts March 1.

Wrap up

Process observer Betty noted that "we are 28 minutes over schedule." We got bogged down talking about the visioning process and the building condition survey. She suggested that we could have prepared better for the discussion about facilities.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

The next meeting is on Zoom, December 6, starting early at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sidney Watson

Secretary