UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION OF ASHEVILLE

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING

July 7, 2020 via ZOOM

PRESENT: Board members Laurel Amabile; Louise Anderson; Michael Beech; Cecil Bennett, outgoing Vice-President; Karen Dill; Judy Harper, outgoing Clerk; Julie Stoffels; Ryan Williams, President; and Rev. Mark Ward, ex officio.

ABSENT: Clyde Hardin

OPENING: After a brief time of conversation, the meeting was called to order at 6:15 and opened with a reading by Mark.

Ryan explained the links to documents on the Agenda to the new board members. Mark explained the difference between the Executive Work Plan, which is formulated yearly, and his monthly What's Happening reports which are presented to the board at monthly meetings. He also went over the 2019-2020 Work Plan with us, which included specific goals in the areas of Worship, Faith Development, Stewardship and Justice, pointing out where our successes lie, as well as some failures, some of those due to the interruption of our church year by Covid19. He pointed to our participation in the Martin Luther King, Jr. march and our efforts with UU the Vote as examples of successes.

BUSINESS

WHAT'S HAPPENING: HIGHLIGHTS from Mark

REOPENING: Mark reported that we will probably delay reopening for services to next May, as recommended by the UUA, although he foresees that we may not be able to reopen even by then. He would like to announce a unified decision to the congregation as soon as possible. Linda has formulated guidelines for safely meeting in small groups at the church, such as staff meetings.

VIDEO: Ten staff and lay leaders recently took part in a Video Training Academy run by Peter Bowden, a video consultant for UU congregations. We must adapt our entire operations for the foreseeable future to a "video first" presence. Worship will continue to be mostly recorded in advance, although Rev. Claudia Jimenez, Minister of Faith Development, is experimenting with a live service on July 12, which will include some recorded elements and which will also be available for later viewing.

JUSTICE FUND: Mark recommended to the board that we work with members of the congregation, particularly those active in Social Justice work, to educate ourselves about systemic economic injustice and the need for reparations to the black community, after which we would meet with representatives of the black community in Asheville, with an eye to dispersing the $34,000, left over from the Wake Now Our Vision fundraiser, at some point next year, after a congregational vote to approve the dispersal.

CONTINGENCY FUND: Mark discussed at length the uncertainties with our budgeting process at this point due to the Covid pandemic. Although we received federal funds to cover payroll for a couple of months and presently project a surplus of $80,000 to $90,000 for 2019-2020, due to many members fulfilling their financial commitments in lump sums and church costs going down since our building closure, weekly receipts are down to a quarter of the usual amount, and we have no way of knowing whether members will be able to fulfill their pledges through the 2020-2021 church year. Our Contingency Fund is presently full at 15% of the operating budget; normally, the surplus would be transferred to Capital Maintenance and Repair.

However, under the uncertain circumstances we now face with respect to continuing income, Mark asked the board for approval to leave these monies in the Contingency Fund for now to cover operating costs and to withdraw from that fund as needed, without prior board approval for each withdrawal, until the fund is drawn back down to 15% of the Operating Budget, with board notification of withdrawals in monthly reports, and with the provision that if the Contingency Fund is still well above 15% of the Operating budget at the time of church reopening, those monies will then be transferred to the Capital Maintenance and Repair fund. **A motion to approve Mark's proposal was made, seconded and passed unanimously.**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Our RE program for children is suffering due to the inability of the children to interact with each other. Participation is now down to less than 20. Programming for older youth has been similarly unsuccessful. Rev. Claudia and RE Coordinators Kim Collins and Jen Johnson are working on ways to keep children and families engaged this summer and throughout the year. Adult Education has been more successful, with ZOOM participation in Jeff Jones' UU History Class and a book discussion class led by Mark and by Melissa Murphy on "Raising White Kids," as well as Covenant Groups, Buddhist Fellowship, CUUPS, and Peacemakers, which continue to meet via ZOOM.

ANNUAL REPORT: The 49-page Annual Report will be made available to all members of the congregation.

FAC MINI-REVIEW: The UUCA Mini-Review of Accounting Procedure Compliance report, submitted by Clyde Hardin and Bob Lane, with assistance from our off-site bookkeeper Christine Magnarella Ray, was accepted by the board. They found no irregularities.

FINANCE REPORT: This Agenda item was not addressed, but members of the board received the document in the shared Google drive for review. The document includes income and expenditures from July 2019 through May 2020 and shows a projected surplus of $80,000 to $90,000 for the 2019-2020 church year.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY REVIEW: A report from General Assembly, including workshop reviews from our delegates Nancy Bragg, Shawn Landreth, Julie Stoffels and Ryan Williams will be included in the E-News.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: As Susan Andrews' name was left off the ballot for the Annual Meeting, **a motion was made and seconded to ratify her service on this committee, and the board approved her unanimously.**

MINUTES: The May and June minutes were moved and approved unanimously. There was no actual board meeting in June, but a brief explanatory report was filed in its place.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS: Board officers for the 2020-2021 year were elected as follows: President – Ryan Williams, for a second term; Clyde Hardin, Vice-President; and Laurel Amabile, Clerk. **The slate of candidates was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.**

PLANNING FOR THE COMING YEAR

END OF YEAR REVIEW: This was not addressed at the meeting, but board members have access to the document in the shared Google drive.

FEEDBACK FOR THE FUTURE: Ryan asked eight involved members of the congregation for their feedback to four questions and presented a collation of their responses for our consideration.

1. What would you like to see the board focus on in the coming year?
2. In what ways do you think the board could support/act on this focus?
3. How do you think the board could operate more effectively and meaningfully in general during the current conditions due to Covid?
4. How do you think the board could help foster increased participation/engagement/connection?

2020-2021 PRIORITIES PROPOSAL: Ryan presented the following priorities for our consideration, although no decisions will be made immediately.

1. Choose an Interim Minister.
2. Congregational Connections and Support during Covid.
3. Community Connections and Support during Covid.

Priority 1 has not changed, although it was postponed for a year due to the Covid pandemic and our lead minister offering to stay for another year. It is pretty clear that the committee formed last year for this purpose can simply continue its work this year, with input from the congregation, as we approach Mark's retirement and the hiring of an interim minister next spring.

Priorities 2 and 3, however, will require more thought and planning. To that end, the board broke into two groups to discuss bullet points designed to help us determine what resources we can turn to within the congregation and our staff for pertinent information to possibly guide our work in these areas. Board

members took different bullet points and will fill out this document within the next two weeks on the shared Google drive.

BOARD ORIENTATION PLAN: Our previous discussions about putting together a Board Orientation process were briefly mentioned. We would still like to put together some sort of orientation process for new board members or a Board Retreat for the entire board at some point in the future, which obviously cannot happen any time soon. This item was tabled for further consideration.

BOARD TASKS SCHEDULE: Since we must now hold our meetings via ZOOM, board tasks have been reduced to two – that of opening and closing readings at board meetings and the production of a blog for the E-news after each board meeting. To that end, board members will access the document in the shared Google drive and sign up for these tasks for the 2020-2021 year.

CLOSING: Mark did the closing reading, and the meeting was adjourned.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Tonight's meeting ran overtime, and board members left the meeting immediately after the closing.

Submitted by Judy Harper, Outgoing Clerk

NEXT BOARD COUNCIL MEETING: Tuesday, July 29, 2020

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Tuesday, August 4, 2020

AUGUST BOARD TASKS: Opening and Closing Readings - Ryan
Board Blog - ???????