

UUFBR Board Meeting February 27, 2025
Minutes

7:00 Gathering

- Chalice Lighting /Opening Words (Howard), Check-in (Claire), Vibe-checker (Patrick), Time-minder (Bill)

Present:

- Rev Edith Love, Trustees: Copresidents Rajeev Arora and Claire Smith, VP/Facilities Patrick Larson, Treasurer Bill Jensen, Secretary Judy Keiser, Carole Stephens, Howard Prentice, Lynn Smith
- Guests: Margie Manning, Connie Goodbread, Jes Martinez-Hunt, Mitch Major, Debra Weiss, Brenda Smith and Peter Penner, Betty and John Tilton

7:16 Rajeev called the meeting to order. With 8 trustees present, there is a quorum. Welcome to guests and visitors.

Approval of Minutes of previous meeting (1/24/25) with no objection.

Administrative Reports/Action items

1. Treasurer – We're on track. Stewardship report: 103 packages were sent. So far we've gotten 53 back. \$118,000 in pledges received to date. Goal: \$179,000. In the next 3-4 weeks probably will get another \$20-30k. We hope to have \$30k left over as reserve. So shortfall will probably be \$40-50k. Pledges are 65% of needed capital. Ideas for addressing shortfall: rent RE bldg, and add 20 new members with an average pledge of \$2k per member.
2. Finance Committee – on hiatus
3. VP-Facilities – Requested to wait til after guests speak
4. Sharex report – Requested to wait til after guests speak
5. Program Committees and Groups/Action items – wait til after guests speak

Guest presentation:

6. Hope for Us Program presentation: Rajeev welcomed and introduced the UUA guests and presented the context for their presentation.
 - a. Last fall Rajeev, Ron and Jennifer reached out to the UUA for help during Article II aftermath. In December Connie Goodbread mentioned Hope for

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Us, a UUA program for congregational conflict situations, and sent a proposal during Rajeev's absence.

- b. Connie report: Brochure At a Glance is being sent to us. She told the history of the program, which helps congregations assess needs around conflict management. It's been in operation for 5 years, after being described in the Widening Circle of Concern report. It's very organic, not cookie cutter, tailored to fit our needs. Team: Connie, Margie and Jes. They partner with other congs. They are our partners, not experts. They don't fix it, we fix it. They leave UUFBR with (no deadline or hurry) all being comfortable with process.
- c. Margie noted she has been lay leader in conflicts. The process of working through conflicts is painful and rewarding and deepens relationships. They will use storytelling and active deep listening to find Boca solutions.
- d. Des noted that Des loves disagreement- subtext of autistic neuropsychology notices subtext of how we are relating. Focus on wantings all to belong, nurturing love not shame. They listen learn and reflect back to us. Conflict is normal, people are reactive. The problem is the problem, not the people.
- e. They would propose to spend 200 hours with UUFBR, using methods including small group ministry. Agreement terms: need to be an Honor Congregation in relationship with UUA. We pay \$100/hour, payable over time if we want. Regional money is available. Ask Natalie Briscoe for a grant.
- f. Raj noted that the UUA team has spent 20 hrs already on UUFBR history: BLM, Article II, suspension, etc. It's a foundation, with more getting to know them before we are charged.
- g. Scenario: clarify expectations of work, fill out intake form, then they'll propose plan and we comment.
- h. Substance of Discussion:
 - Q: What goals should we anticipate? For \$20k we should get processes and goals?
A: We'll set goals together, for the long haul. Goal for us to be a vibrant blessing to world which needs us so much. Mistrust, camps in congregation, some left, Gadfly etc. 15 yrs/2017... plus culture of cong homeostatic realities. Relationship and process are mutual. We'll get a free

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systems theory module out of it. 😊 Constant 2way communication focusing on transparency kindness and honesty. TGoal to help us get back on mission and balanced back into covenant.

- Q: Who is the UUFBR team: the BOT or whole cong?

A: They want cong to be on board, BOT makes decision, and maintains the mission. Agreement will be signed by copresidents, after a congregational meeting. Share AT a Glance with cong. Video, articles for newsletter, informing cong. They will attend worship, do Q and A. They want to avoid surprise: surprised people behave poorly sometimes.

- Q: People bring conflict into cong. Sensitivity to conflict brought into congregation by members – how can we embrace conflict?

A: Jes' journey: discovered 8 years ago that Jes is gay and trans and autistic. Journey to rebuild self. Same journey for congregation. They understand unique context of Florida, which is so specific and different. Conflict is creative but we avoid that part of it. Lean in and get creative instead. A conflict is a relationship begging to go deeper. Later it becomes destructive.

- Q: Desire for data driven analysis, road maps, tools for interpersonal communication. Concern about broken internal systems. How will Help4Us help restore infrastructure integrity and financial transparency in spite of Board's limited energy?

A: If we're not in right relationship it doesn't matter how we govern ourselves. Models used include transformative community conferencing (David Hooker), small groups, narrative as way to understand multiple truths. No mediation/right and wrong. All have both right and wrong. UUism provides tools like Covenant and pluralism, which will lead to transformation. Restorative justice needs individual responsibility. First we need to create space to deeply share and listen. Understanding people better mends relationships. If relationships are broken, structure won't work as wanted.

- Acknowledgment of recent progress with relationship mending, building momentum and harnessing the recent rise in popularity of Unitarian Universalism.

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- Q: How will Help4Us empower leaders to actually do the work, instead of depending on a few strong institutionalists to attend the workshops?
- A: The team can always stop or pause the process and let us catch up. This work is about long haul relationships.

Raj will share proposal and materials with all.

Old Business

1. Sharex Report: Two potential Sharex partners: Silec during the school day, Boca Arts just Mondays 8-3. Issues: city objections, requirements to widen driveways, trustees not sure if either is the right thing to do, confusion of current Board stance.

Discussion: Suggestion to hire RE broker to search (Patricia worked with an agent) note that we're renovating to make it more attractive. Interpretation of current use – if it's part of UU, no problem to run classes. Has to be UU, not just nonprofit – must further mission of UUism in Boca. May need to let these potential partners go if the answer is no. Research is needed into UU value-led programs. Group was interested in UU values-oriented preschool. Senior day care is also needed. There are agencies that could run it but need space. Consensus: say no to these two groups and look for acceptable partners. Nader is interested in participating in search.

3 minute breath break

2. Annual meeting plans:

Consider removing Endowment Loan forgiveness issue from Annual Meeting agenda:

- a. Mitch summarized the process, from Nov memo to BOT, unanimous approval, publicizing to congregation with Sandy Troiano's memo and February town meeting and Q and A, and second Endowment Committee unanimous vote to proceed. Choice: vote to totally forgive loan or suspend

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another year. Question: Would new data change the motion to be voted on?

- b. Rationale: Loan is within one entity so legally there's no loan. There is no separate endowment/foundation.
- c. Discussion: Comments from Brenda Smith, Peter Penner, Carole Stephens, Lynn Smith, Mitch Major, Judy Keiser. Substance of comments:
 - Whether there was too little discussion of this issue, not enough time given to opposing viewpoints, lack of familiarity with bylaws, history of raising money and loans to the congregation, lack of understanding of process of fundraising for RE building and promise to run capital campaign. Fact that few in congregation are well informed, whether through reading Annual Report or budget. Willingness to fulfill that promise now.
 - Perspective that congregation made a covenant with ourselves that is breached by cancelling Endowment loan, and there are adverse consequences of that breach. Reminder that pioneer members gave personal loans, new members don't value their commitment, disregard "old money."
 - Perspective that the easy road is not always the right road, desire to build leadership that will try to find solutions not just pass motions, desire for continuing to try to find other solutions; desire to take our time instead of jumping to action, and allow ideas to germinate and clarity to emerge. Need for patience, commitment, and ability to concentrate despite distracting stresses. Suggestion to wait longer before taking drastic action. Observation that conflict is part of a healthy process and not something to avoid.
 - Question whether actions taken are untrustworthy, or whether process of discussion, fiduciary consideration, collaboration of Board and Endowment Committee constitutes a valid and legitimate process that the congregation can trust.
 - Purposes of endowment funds here and in other UU congregations, primarily to support congregation in bringing UU values into the world.

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- Need to generate enthusiasm and energy to inspire new members to join existing members in giving, and risk that allowing issues to persist will erode the confidence members need to give generously. .
- Concern for image of Board and Endowment Committee portrayed during congregational meetings, concern about lack of bandwidth for doing more work.
- Money shortage is chronic issue, and Endowment issues cause donors to go to great lengths to avoid giving to Endowment. Perception that capital campaign to reduce loan will be a hard sell and will reduce money available for operating fund, resulting in continued shortage of funds.
- Observation that either/or paradigm is not the highest and best way of approaching difficult questions, and suggestion that we keep in mind cooperative methods of exploring these topics.

Question whether anyone thinks we should NOT present the question to the congregation. After further discussion, question was clarified as whether agenda should be amended to remove this item. Consensus: leave agenda as it is.

Discussion of nominees for Endowment and Nom Com: Question about 1 year limit? Consulted Bylaws, which allow members of Endowment Committee to stay on past annual meeting to fill previous member's term (unlike Board).

New Business (tabled):

3. Staff evaluations
4. Board Retreat March 15-16
5. Leadership bylaws project and how we are allocating our resources with that – Judy to spearhead.
6. Procedures for emergencies.
7. Need to refer all requests for \$\$ to the minister.
8. BOT welcome schedule.
9. Support group for minister.

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9:17 The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Keiser

Secretary