

**Minutes**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church**  
**May 19, 2015**

Following a fine meal supplied by Beth Hammer, the meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm. Present were Richard Loftin, Mike Condit, Barbara Crotty, Craig Miller, Shannon Butler, Victor Koosh, Beth Hammer, Wade Greiner, Tony Collins, the Revs. Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange, Business Administrator Karen Van Horn, Director of Religious Education Katy Carpman and Board secretary, Mary Ann Stanley.

**Presentation on Renewable Energy**

Ann May and new member Daniel Rigney presented a proposal to switch Emerson to renewable energy and to buy offsets for the energy we use that we can't reduce. Since the cost of renewable energy has gone down, we may save money. Daniel called climate change a "slow motion emergency." Ann and Daniel are part of the newly formed climate action group at Emerson.

Emerson's annual electric bill is about \$44,000 with StarTex. Karen reported that we are 6 months into a 30 month contract that would cost of \$25,100 to break at this time. StarTex does not have a renewable energy option. A second option for support of renewable energy is purchasing off-sets. Ann asked that members be encouraged to purchase off-sets in the church's name and Barbara suggested that the project become a plate project in the next year. Mark strongly encouraged educating the wider congregation to become confident advocates. Richard would like to see a task force to shepherd this to fruition.

Mike suggested a solar project since there is now creative financing for solar projects. Richard thanked Ann and Daniel for all the work they have done already. For those who would like to look into renewable energy for their homes, the web site "My Best Plan" was recommended. A copy of the handout from Ann and Daniel is attached to these minutes.

**The Chalice lighting** and a reading by Becky from Henry ~~Horton's Life~~[Horton's Life](#) *Prayers* opened the Board meeting.

The April Board **minutes** were approved.

**Consent Reports**

~~Ministers~~[--Ministers --](#) The ministers' written report was received without comment and is included with these minutes.

**Director of Religious Education Katy Carpman** – The Sunday School is at its annual transition: summer Sunday school starts May 31. Katy will get in touch with all the people who said they would help. Katy will be away for one week in June and three weeks in July.

**Business Administrator Karen Van Horn** – April Operating Account total income and expense figures:

- |                            |           |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| ○ April 2015 <b>income</b> | \$ 45,667 |
| ○ April <b>Expenses</b>    | 65,156    |
| ○ April <b>Deficit</b>     | (19,489)  |
| ○ <b>2015 Surplus</b>      | \$ 50,490 |

- **Highlight:** variance explanation: money in "Miscellaneous income" is rebate on insurance from Church Mutual; Chiller repair was over \$4,000; to replace the 50-gallon water heater, \$3,000.

- **Auction:** very successful and still bringing in money; complete report next month.
- **Fund a Need:** \$35,070 in contribution over and above the \$20,000 from an anonymous donor.
- **Discussion items:** *Raising the Bar*, our summer tenant, is taking a sabbatical this summer but expects to return next summer
- **Outreach and Reserve Funds:** Tony Collins moved to create two new funds, the Outreach and the Reserve funds. Seconded by Craig Miller. Passed unanimously.
  - ~~Tony Motion~~ Tony Motion authorizing merger of newly adopted Outreach Fund with Innovative Projects Fund #67. Seconded by Beth Hammer, passed unanimously.
  - Craig moved that the newly adopted Reserve Fund be merged with Building Maintenance Fund # 52; seconded by Beth; passed unanimously.
- **Treasurer** – Emerson still needs a treasurer, preferably someone with banking experience.

### Committee Liaison Reports

- **Mike Condit/Adult Ed Committee:** The task force for Adult Ed worked 3.5 hours on a recent Saturday, reviewing accomplishments and sketching out next year with topics and people.
- **Mark Edmiston-Lange:** **Communication** will soon be visiting with Shawn Collier, a website guru to make ours considerably more easy to use, interactive and interesting.
- **Barbara Crotty:** **Membership** had an ice cream social for new members at Deborah Landis' home which was quite successful. New folks found out ways to get involved with the church. New Member recognition will be held on May 31 in the service.

### New business

- **General Assembly Delegates** Barbara Crotty moved and Mike Condit seconded approving Deborah Landis, David and Ann May, and Jane Collins as official delegates to GA, and the Edmiston-Langes as pastoral delegates. Tony moved that the ministers be approved to certify delegates from Emerson that might show up. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent.
- **Statement of Purpose for Investment Committee.** The Investment Committee asked the Board to clarify the expected focus of the Investment Committee as it manages our money. The question is between going to “socially responsible investing” or to continue to invest/reinvest for prudent and reasonable returns. Richard reiterated that it is the Board’s responsibility to make this decision and then to instruct the Committee to follow that guideline. Currently they are charged to invest our money for the maximum return that is prudent and reasonable. .
  - Mike Condit expressed the majority opinion that “socially responsible investing” has a murky definition similar to “family values,” and on average returns less from the investment. Mark suggested a need to get congregation involved.
  - Becky suggested including some socially responsible investments, knowing that kind will not do as well. The sense of the Board at present to the Investment Committee: Carry on like you have! The board will talk about this more at the August 29 retreat.
- **Green/Socially Responsible Investing** – included in previous discussion
- **Carbon Neutrality/Energy from Renewables** ~~Only~~ only – referred to material furnished by Ann May and Daniel Rigney.

## Old Business

- **TXUJMJ rep** (replacement for Gavin Mason) – send Richard name of a possible replacement.
- **Interfaith Ministries Fundraiser** – time for a public announcement. – ~~deadline~~Deadline will be in about seven weeks. Karen has set up a place to process to receive such funds. Richard will do the announcement on Sunday.
- **Stewardship** - no report
- **BOT Retreat Follow-up:** Richard passed out notes from the BOT ~~Retreat~~Retreat in the summer. Saturday, Aug. 29 as summer retreat
- **Definition of a Member:** Richard reported that most “mainline” churches declare membership when the “letter” is moved, the profession of faith is given, or a person declares that he/she wishes to be a member. In accepting a person into membership one church adds the sentence “and your financial contributions are a wonderful way for you to sustain your membership.”
- Richard stated ~~“We”~~“We will finish this at the retreat because we will have to take something to the congregation in the fall. Southern Baptist churches have the same church polity as we do. Also, what do you get with membership?”
- **“Gift” program:** We received the bill from UUA requesting \$46,170, based on 7% of our budget for 2014-15. This amount is 35% more than we contributed last year and more than double what other congregations pay who are charged \$77/head. A lengthy conversation ensued that touched on UUA’s need, fairness, and alternate suggestions. Tony reported that the finance committee settled on 6% of our budget to be about the same as we contributed last year.

**Tony moved that we pay \$39, 574.14 as our fair share. He included in the motion a proviso that monthly payments begin in January, 2016. The motion was seconded and passed without dissent**

- **Required Check Signatures:** At present, the chair of the Outreach committee must sign the check for plate recipients at the end of the month. To facilitate getting the money to the recipient **Tony moved that Karen be authorized to write and sign the check for recipients.** Seconded by Beth, and passed by unanimous vote.
- Closing reading by Becky from John Muir

Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann Stanley, Board Secretary