

Minutes (Amended)
Board of Trustees Meeting
Emerson Unitarian Universalist Church
March 24, 2015

Dinner for the Board of Trustees was provided by Tony Collins. Present were Richard Loftin, Mike Condit, Barbara Crotty, Craig Miller, Kris Taylor, Beth Hammer, Shannon Thurmond, Victor Koosh Wade Greiner, the Revs. Becky and Mark Edmiston-Lange, Business Administrator Karen Van Horn and Board secretary, Mary Ann Stanley.

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 with thanks to Tony for dinner. After the Chalice lighting Becky read a piece on leadership by Peter Morales entitled *Bless the Imperfect*.

The **minutes of the February Board minutes** were amended to include Mike Condit as present at the February meeting. Barbara Crotty moved and Tony Collins seconded that the minutes be approved as amended, and the motion was approved.

Welcome New Members: long time UU's couple Daniel Rigney and Alida Metcalf who have expressed appreciation for our emphasis on climate change. She is a professor of Latin American History, historical cartography and history and architect of Rio de Janeiro at Rice. He is a retired Sociology professor.

Consent Reports:

- **Ministers:** *Outsmart* ad told that we'd do 25 weddings as soon as it is legal. Emerson's ad will run during the highest readership months. Sabbatical plan for next year beginning the Monday after Easter to fall next year was included in written report. Planning for this includes strengthening the worship committee. Becky provided pulpit coverage at the Woodlands UU church one Sunday in February. Mark conducted a "Blessing of the Animals" for Pet Sunday after church. The memorial service demonstrated that a new CD player is needed for the AV system.
- **RE Director** Brief because of illness in her family
- **Business Administrator**
 - **FEB Operating Account total income and expense figures:**

▪ Feb. 2-014 Income	\$ 39,963
▪ Feb. Expenses	59,603
▪ Feb. Deficient	(19,640)
▪ 22015 YTD Surplus	\$ 75,302
 - Water bill was very high, possibly because of the leak. The price has also just gone up.
 - Way over on 2014 pledges; Questions about getting through the summer. On target. As a response to concern about how the budget will be met in the summer, Tony and Karen assured the Board that we are in good shape.
- **Treasurer** not present
- **Committee Liaisons:** SAC is moving toward a planning calendar and a place to put the calendar of coming events in the Gathering Place. Karen suggested that Beth come to the office and talk about how we can organize the SAC events and make them known to people. Beth is asking for a free standing sign to advertise what and when SAC is scheduled to do. She also asked that it be clear on the web site.
- **Communication Committee:** Shawn Collier volunteered to help re-do the web site.

- Web site big discussion Kris should we do a redesign now or a add. Redesign logo? Tag line?
- Mary will meet with Sean. Question: redesign with changes of focus or just redesign first? Mary will send a report on her meeting to the committee. Being able to have a calendar of events that is easy to access is important. Karen reminded the group that when booking an event at Emerson, the time required for set up must be included in the asking for the space. Barbara remarked that the calendar is very hard to find on the web site.
- There was a request for **liaison list** which will be resent.

New business:

- **Dissolution of the SWUUC** –point out it is being subsumed by the Region The District SWUUC has a small endowment. A vote will be taken at the Annual Meeting to decide what will happen to said endowment.
- **UUA Contribution for 2016** - Out of the change above there has been a change in how UUA assesses “fair share.” Instead of being assessed “per person,” they will send us a request based on our reported 2013 expenses. They said Fair Share was 7%, but they will take 6%. Tony suggests we make it 6% of \$39,000 instead of \$35,000, which we can pay over 12 months. If we make it \$3,250/ month over our entire financial year, that would be a pledge of \$19,500 within their accounting period, which might come as a shock. Mark and Becky have been telling them of the dissatisfaction surrounding the change of method of sustaining the UUA Region. It was agreed that although the changes over time that have come in with some of the new personnel have lost a lot of money on fad projects, the UUA provides enormous services. Becky pointed out that changes reflect that all religious bodies are trying new things to stay alive. The sense of the board was to postpone a decision until the next board meeting, hoping to have the bill by then
- **Sabbatical Proposal** – The ministers have chosen to explore and experience the intersection of landscape and spirituality, with particular attention to how the idea of localized “sacred space” can be globalized such that a moral relationship with the entire Earth can be fostered which will inspire and sustain efforts to address climate change.
 - In response to a question, Becky reminded the board that by contract neither they nor the board can sever the contract for a year.
 - They will be in town a great deal so that they can respond to any major emergency and probably any memorial services.
 - Lay Ministry team will be on call during that time.
 - Some pulpit coverage by UU preachers in the area.
 - Opportunity for a “task force” to fill in for the time.
 - While on sabbatical in 2007 they came back to discord, and for a couple of years the church was in recovering mode. “The church is different now so we feel we can go and come back to the same thriving community.”
 - Mike Condit moved, group second, motion approved unanimously

Old business:

- **The Auction 4/25** --pitch for everyone to come. Door prize dinner for 2 at Union Kitchen Chain with child care.
 - BOT Wine Pull: bring it to board meeting
 - Fund-a-Need update: Vic waiting for auction to get set before announcing Fund-a-Need. Bonnie is getting estimates for the list of absolute needs plus wants on AV needs: wires that don’t work; speakers that are on the blink; collapsed CD player.
 - Door Prize and discussion of things we can do for the auction

- **Kilgore Lecture follow-up:** Thanks to Leo Vandermeulen and Gabe Gelb for thinking of Eagleman for the speaker. Thanks to the Communication Committee and Lori Reeder for getting the word out.
 - Next lecture? Ideas? Suggestion: Naomi Kline author of *This Changes Everything*.
 - Who asks is important!
- **Interfaith Ministries**
 - Some initial donations (approx. \$7000 of \$25000) with the quiet campaign Richard started to feel very elitist – not good. The sense of the Board was to wait until after the auction and we get half the required amount and then make it public.
- **Outreach Committee**
 - First Meeting is April 12th following the service. Richard will visit the meeting. Gabe already thinking of how to succeed.
- **Stewardship**
 - There is no systematic follow-up with New Members regarding pledging
 - Huelbig gathering follow-up—quite pleased; whole different crowd; pitched it the same and should probably have done it differently. More senior members but not well connected. Becky and Mark will send individual letters to fill in missing blanks; felt they talked too much. Should have been asking more questions. Need to rethink these kinds of events. One of the obvious truths is that we’re getting people who are already giving, not those who aren’t or who are way below; needs to be a mixed group. The tricky part is getting them there; for this gathering we purposely invited people that Larry knew.
 - Process in place for getting pledges from new people.
 - Talk of expected fiscal support prior to joining; pledge card in the new-member packet.
 - Next small group gathering? Need to look at the process. Hosts do feel that they are somewhat responsible for the results and help with the inviting.
 - Draft letter to members who haven’t pledged in over a year—Purpose that we want? Not about \$\$; it’s the pledge. Feels at cross purposes. Is that really what we want to do?
 - Paid and not pledge? “Would you like to treat your contribution as a pledge” will be asked of those who have paid but not pledged.
 - Those currently not pledging -- at the end of March. Nine families have paid and not pledged.
 - Becky reported conversations with Ministerial colleagues who are wondering why UU churches are culling our membership lists over money and possibly alienating people who while not active now might be at some future date; why aren’t we broadening our definition of membership?
 - People who haven’t pledged in over a year – lists supplied by Karen.
 - Bigger conversation than that now. This needs to be a separate meeting to discuss this issue because it is so important. Richard will send out a message for week night to discuss.

Closing reading Becky on “Keep your dreams alive.”

Adjournment to Executive Session.