



# Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis

## Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, January 30th, 2024

6:45pm- 8:55pm

Hybrid Meeting

Zoom Link: Meeting ID: 922 5263 7488

### Approved Minutes

**In attendance:** Rev. John, Kari Alperovitz-Bichell, Carrie Kotcho, Jan Bird, Mike Wanhatalo, Rev. AZ, Jenn Pollitt-Hill, Nicole Bruno, Staff Warren, Laticia Hicks

**Guests:** Ann Parsons, Jen Larson, Sarah Devlin-Tremble

### Check-in

### Chalice Lighting

### Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis Board of Trustees Covenant 2023 – 2024

As members of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis, we covenant the following:

- To interact with honesty, authenticity, and compassion;
- To work cooperatively toward our goals while appreciating each other's talents, perspectives, and lived experiences;
- To listen deeply to each other and assume positive intentions;
- To practice collective responsibility for time and topic management by keeping discussions focused on the current topic and using language that is clear, positive, and future-oriented;
- To fully honor each other's ideas;
- To be prepared for meetings and to honor each other's time
- To speak with one voice regarding Board decisions;
- To conduct our relationships with love and consideration of our impact on each other and the congregation as a whole;
- To work in the best interests of the congregation;
- To practice the 8<sup>th</sup> Principle to accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions in all deliberations;
- To utilize the Subtle Acts of Exclusion (SAE) Model \* and encourage its use throughout UUCA and;

- To hold ourselves and each other accountable for our words, actions, and this covenant.

### **Approve minutes from November meeting**

**Action:** Motion by Carrie to approve the November 28, 2023, meeting minutes. Seconded. Discussion. **Approved.**

### **Finance Officer report – Staff**

Staff reports that there is a difference in the initial end of year which was reported as 22k is actually 18k when final totals were reviewed. He also remarked that paid pledges were higher than ever in the past and shared that he is working with staff on streamlining the payroll process for cost savings and efficiency. He reported that UUCA was awarded funds from the Green Foundation (\$25K in December). Staff also shared that Margaret Martin reported the final steps to hand off UUCA spaces back to us as the BEEC2 project completes. Lastly, Staff noted that the County will start billing us for public water soon.

### **Board communications-Nicole**

Nicole recommends that we create a mechanism beyond posting the Congregational Meeting minutes on the website. She wants to volunteer to do Board communications with the congregation around those meetings as well as our monthly meetings. Board members agreed to start doing this. The Board will close each meeting with a quick note of what is important to share out via Nicole and *In the Know*.

### **BEEC2-Jan**

### **Survey/ Census/Ministry Review Team-Jenn**

Jenn reported that ten folks have met twice as a full group. EPIC recommended doing a Congregational Census, and this group is pulling together the surveying and ministerial review data collection approach in order to streamline the process. They have subcommittees exploring tools, communication planning, and content collected. The Census is planned for late March or early April 2024. The next piece will be the ministry review survey. February 8<sup>th</sup> is their next full group meeting.

### **Nominating Committee-Kari**

Kari shared that there are 2-6 nominating committee positions and 2 at-large and 1 secretary position to fill on the Board. The Nominating Committee has a number of people interested in serving on the nominating committee. Kari noted the committee is using a variety of methods to reach everyone in the congregation including personal outreach, sandwich boards, and other communications tools to stimulate interest. It is a significant lift, and they are asking for more Board outreach and help in identifying interested members.

### **Endowment Committee-Jan**

Jan spoke with Caroline who leads the committee and reported back to the Board at this evening's meeting. Members to the Endowment Committee are appointed by the Board since it is a committee of the Board. Two-year terms with up to 3 total two-year terms ( 6-year term limited.) The committee wants a review of how they operate and clarifications on how the Endowment can be used. There will be an informational session by the committee on 2/25. When Stan finishes his term, two positions will need to be filed in addition to the two listed below.

**Action:** Motion by Jan to appoint two new members to the Endowment Committee.

- Peter Morse
- Jamie Harms

Seconded. Discussion. **Approved.**

### **Stewardship-Jenn**

Jenn asked the Board to model good stewardship by making our own pledges in a timely manner and visibly support the stewardship efforts by attending events like the 2/10 visiting steward training or doing a testimonial. The Board is invited to attend a stewardship kickoff event on 2/24/24 4pm to 7pm at Evelyn Spurgin's home. Details to follow. Rev. AZ added that we are asking for a 7% pledge increase and will be sharing more about what we plan to achieve in the coming year.

### **Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee - Jan**

The CCEC will be asked to present to the February Board meeting.

**Action:** Motion by Jenn to appoint Jamie Harms and Diane Moreau as co-chairs of a Capital Campaign Exploratory Committee with authority to recruit committee members centering 8<sup>th</sup> Principle considerations. Seconded. Discussion. **Approved.**

### **EPIC-Laticia/Mike/Nicole**

This committee did not meet this month but will meet again on 2/26.

### **Ministers' report - Revs John and Anastassia**

Rev. John shared pride that we are up to 110 children in our Faith Formation programs and our move to two services has maintained good attendance so far. There was excitement on Sunday for the radically welcoming efforts and middle hour training was well attended by 60 people who provided positive feedback. He observed that the new Peace Center is working very much as planned and noted the amazing increase in our pledging that exceeded our expectations. This was matched by high numbers of members volunteering to serve in different ways. He reports that the budget work for next year is honest and fair and presents another stretch for the congregation.

The Director of Admin is moving to full time; and the new posting is attracting BIPOC folks. Rev. John reported that he has a committee supporting his work to identify and recruit a 25-hour a week new music director for UUCA. Four interviews are underway. The 2 music positions have been combined and a higher wage is offered plus a budget for hiring other musicians as needed. The ministers are hoping to have both positions hired in about a month.

Rev. AZ noted that our processes seem to be working as planned transition to 2 services, more job candidates and highly qualified, managing our property well, and making progress on stewardship. The pledge letter begs the question what is next – what is it that we are focused on for the next few years.

Rev. AZ asked the Board a question about the Lawrence Ave Property "Where is the board on balancing time urgency versus money urgency regarding Lawrence Avenue. Is there a minimum amount under which we would choose not to sell?" She noted that there are 2 offers on the table but not attractive enough for Rev. AZ to act on the offers. The County is unlikely to approve another septic well, so we are down to 1 septic well which limits us to 1 property and lower zoning. 175k

is the current best offer. We bought it at 240k. She noted that we can negotiate with an offeror or be patient and wait for more offers etc. She requests the Board discuss an acceptable lowest bid number and timeline needed for funds with Rev. AZ. The Board discussed the benefit of having the PERK test done and maximum development level from the County determined sooner rather than later to in order to settle that matter for the current offers and any future ones. Board members agreed this will help us understand if the offers we are getting are appropriate or low. Kari mentioned that a "Yes in God's BackYard" bill is now in MD Legislature. Its purpose is to allow churches to develop their property more easily. She is asked for more details on how that may affect our Lawrence property sale. Rev. AZ will investigate.

Laticia noted Nicole's comments on the Ministers Report and asked which group it refers to. It was the Arnold Covenanted Group. Nicole wants to do an audit of all the small groups later in the year. The Board discussed the share-the-plate process and asked for clarifications in the Minister's report about this. Rev. John committed to updating NAACP and BLUU donation information in the report.

Nicole asked about the BEEC2 celebration we had previously discussed. The ministers noted this can happen once we have the delivery date on the glass doors. The Board discussed possible press and community outreach about the reopening. There will need to be a small subcommittee to make sure we plan a proper thank you to all stakeholders, contributors, and managers of the process...including staff. Board agreed to put this on the February agenda.

Laticia also noted that the Minister's report must be complete and that the comments Board members leave should be addressed in the document and at the next Board meetings. She asked for more details on Ministerial scheduling and a sabbatical plan in writing. The Board discussed whether the report needs to be voted on to accept it vs just submitting it to the Board folder. It is not currently required that the report be formally accepted via a vote. Ministers were reminded that the report is due the Thursday before the Board meeting. Rev. AZ clarified that she would provide the Board with a written Sabbatical plan addressing information requested in the Board comments to this month's Minister's report and Rev. John will make corrections and updates as requested to this month's report.

**Evaluations of Executives and Board - Jan**

These evaluations are due to be done this spring according to UUCA policy. We need to address the review of the process started last year soon in order to stay on the timeline for completing the process in time for 2024. She asked for other Board members interested in helping with this to reach out to assist Jan in this effort.

**Any other business?** Discussed lighting from the parking lot to the church that needs repair. Rev. John offered to follow up on that.

**Adjourned and enter executive session at 8:55pm**

**Check-out/Closing/Extinguish Chalice**

**Submitted By:** Carrie Kotcho, Secretary

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