

**FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH OF WILMINGTON, DELAWARE
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

MEETING: Board of Trustees Meeting, July 20, 2015 **TIME:** 7:00 p.m. – 9:25 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ostin Warren, Linda Sanders, Leslie Dickerson, Anna Hamilton, Marilyn Hyte, Donna González, Jacqueline Kairis **NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:** Steve Cohen, Marina vanRenssen, Dale Megill **MEMBERS ABSENT:** Becky Laster, Doyle Dobbins

Recording Secretary: Ostin | **Process Observer:** Marilyn | **Centering and Chalice Lighting:** Marilyn

Note: To better ensure follow-through with action items from Board meetings, areas for specific follow-up are **highlighted in red font** throughout this and subsequent meeting minutes and Board decisions are **highlighted in green font**.

Monthly Thank You : Nancy Pinson was asked to join our meeting to receive appreciation and praise for her dedication to so many aspects of our church. From the Annual Report, to Membership, to being a governance guru, and much more—Nancy is an ever-present and most helpful person who has gone above and beyond in her duty to First U. She was provided with flowers and personal words of appreciation by board members.

REPORTS

Year End Treasurer's Report and Stewardship Update: Steve presented an overview of the monthly Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet statements, as well as an update on the stewardship campaign. Looking back over the last year, Steve had a very positive report for the year's end with our operating income being more than it was in the previous two years. Our pledge income was more than it was in the previous year. Ostin provided specific acknowledgement and praise for the work of Marina and her team in soliciting unpaid pledges from the previous year—which came in at 158% of budget. It was encouraged that such an effort would occur again, even if the returns might be less than fiscal year 2014-15 due to how many pledges came in. Looking toward next year, Steve reported a positive pledge drive campaign that resulted in more pledge dollars than the previous years, and which received 100% of pledge unit goals and nearly 100% of pledge dollar goals. Ostin noted that nearly half of our pledge income comes from a relatively small number of top donors, and that the Stewardship Team is encouraged to give special attention to broadening the base and amount of other donors. **Ostin will follow-up with this encouragement with Bill Hardham.** Anna noted that many people gave more for fiscal year 2015-16 due to the idea that we are having a “fresh start” at First U, and following through on this momentum and change will be critical to keeping our income figures on positive footing in the coming years. **These positive reports was accepted as presented.**

A brief discussion of the importance of the Heritage Fund ensued. The Board and Treasurer expressed their opinion that Heritage funding needs to be more of a priority for the church. The ongoing funds provided by the Heritage Fund are an integral part of our budget, and a way for members to provide funding for the church well into the future. Steve noted again that heightening awareness of and donations for this fund were a key aspect of a previous stewardship consultation by professionals examining our stewardship campaigns.

Incidental Report: Marina presented the incidental report. She encouraged Board members to provide Facebook and Yelp reviews, and to encourage others to do so. Marina reported that the recent spate of June storms left some tree damage that was cleaned up through the work of Chase and the Sharpley Civic Association. One of the new roofs was found to have a small leak, and that the company who replaced the roof has been contacted to address this issue.

BETL #4.5: Ostin provided a monitoring report on BETL #4.5. He noted that the Board and ET have worked especially closely in the last year at communicating well to refine ET reporting on Ends and Executive Limitations. They have also worked collaboratively to decrease the length of reports while retaining enough information for the Board. Ostin noted that the current Ends statements should be enhanced, refined, and clarified. He cited a “Developing Ends Statement” document of the UUA which notes the “developmental process” of Ends creation that starts with global statements, which we have currently, but typically progresses so that “the Board goes down a level and further specifies sub policies as a nested set.” Dale and Marina both noted that having more guidance on Ends reports, as well as more concrete Ends would be helpful to them. **The report was accepted as written, and passed unanimously. The next steps toward making change to Ends will be discussed at the Board retreat in August. Ostin will contact Jeff Lott, the primary progenitor of the current Ends, for his input.**

Report on Executive Limitations Nos. 3,4,6 and 9: Marina answered questions about these reports. Marilyn requested that the engineering assessment report discussed on Page 12 be sent to the entire board, in partial fulfillment of EL #8. Marilyn also requested that appraisals discussed on Page 30 of the report be sent to the full board.

Ostin presented his concern that the evidence for compliance on EL 4.1 is not entirely in line with the wording of that limitation, referencing Page 20 of the report. The policy states that the ET shall not “expend more funds than have been budgeted for the fiscal year.” The ET routinely expends more than is budgeted in the “new reality budget” when pledge income is higher than anticipated, as in this year, but they also find themselves in compliance with this policy. A discussion of this ensued, and it was jointly decided that Part B of their evidence for compliance on page 20 should not be utilized going forward. Part B states that the Executive Team “will be in compliance with this policy when the anticipated year-to-date expenses is greater than the amount of actual expenses.” Marina agreed that this can be taken out of evidence for compliance for future reporting. EL 4.6, on the Heritage Fund, was again discussed, with the board expressing some hesitancy about full fulfillment of this policy, and noting the importance of the Heritage Fund for our church’s ongoing fiscal health. Dale noted that it has been difficult to find someone willing to lead the charge for soliciting bequests to the Heritage Fund, although efforts to discuss its importance and solicit donations have been ongoing. Steve stated that the very small amount of donations to Heritage over the last few years is highly concerning.

We again discussed the Board’s requested frequency of these reports and whether they are overly burdensome. **A small committee consisting of Linda, Ostin, Marina, and Nancy will look at the BETL #4 timing chart and see if we can make some changes** to lessen the impacts on the ET, leaving them more room to focus on ministry, and us more room to focus on visioning.

The EL reports presented were accepted unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

June Board Meeting Minutes: Minutes were made available in the pre-meeting packet. A change to correct the spelling of Donna’s name was made. A motion to accept the minutes without Addendum #2 was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

MONITORING/GOVERNANCE Business

Roberta’s Housing Allowance: Roberta requested that \$40,000 be allocated for her housing allowance. This figure is in line with the previous minister’s housing allowance amount. Anna questioned how that number was determined, and Linda looked up IRS regulations and provided verbiage for guidance. After a general

discussion about the Board's role in housing allowance allocation, the **Board unanimously approved a motion to allocate \$40,000 for Roberta's housing allowance.**

Board Retreat: **Ostin will send out a specific timeline and agenda in early August** for the retreat to be held Aug 14 (6:00-8:30) and 15 (9-3). **Marilyn will send out sign-ups for food for the potluck.** The retreat will focus on four areas: membership issues, governance structure and practice led by Rev. Dr. Richard Speck, and regionalization and collaboration efforts by Paul Pinson, and the clarifying/refining the Annual Vision of Ministry.

Healthy Congregations Workshop: A reminder was provided about this workshop, and the hope that most Board members will attend. Several have already signed up, and some others are considering.

202 Sign: Marilyn provided a follow-up to last month's discussion about the sign. The parts to fix the sign were ordered, and volunteer Jim Davis is hoping to get the sign up and running in August.

Board Work Plan: Ostin provided a brief overview of the work plan schedule. He is working on assigning reports for the work plan for the year, and asked individual board members to provide him any of their preferences for the reports the board must complete (BETL and GP reports). **Board members will provide Ostin with any preferences before the next meeting.**

Membership Report: The board briefly reviewed the Membership Report for third quarter provided by Nancy Pinson. These reports will be provided to the board going forward. An open question for the Board's retreat was assigned to all Board members: What is the board's role in the membership domain? Board members are expected to reflect on this question for a discussion and action plan to be discerned at the retreat.

Closing: Marilyn provided process Review and closing words, involving a reading and colored stones that were passed out to members. Meeting adjourned at 9:25.