

Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

January 13, 2019

Board Minutes

Present: Karen Smith-Scott, Penny Reid, Lara TaVoularis, Tom Larson, Tessie Bond, Bowen Barrs, Jennifer Tucker

Absent: Elizabeth Dion

Congregant Guests Present: Sunnie Baber, David Seiken, Mark Dickens, Helene Kamp Stewart, Mark Stewart, Martha Aiken, Elizabeth Anthony (livestreaming meeting via FaceBook)

Staff Present: Virginia DeRoy

Meeting called to order by Tom Larson, Board President @ 3 PM

Opening words offered by Tom Larson from UUA Pathfinder packet and packet passed through board members for perusal.

Agenda Approved by unanimous consent

Process Watcher: Penny Reid

Time Keeper: Tessie Bond (who notes there are no times listed for any items)

Business:

1. New Board members agreed on term lengths as follows:

Bowen Barrs – 1 year

Jennifer Tucker – 2 years

Liz Dion – 2 years

Karen Smith-Scott – 3 years

2. Selection of 2019 Board Officers as follows:

President – Tom Larson

Vice President – Penny Reid

Secretary – Karen Smith-Scott

Treasurer – Liz Dion *(Liz is out of the country at present and is expected to return on 1/22/19. Laura TaVoularis has agreed to assist in the transition to get authorized signers verified by the bank.)

*Note – There was extensive discussion and expression of concerns and issues regarding the selection of President due to methods of communication towards fellow board members and staff that were felt to be disrespectful or inappropriate, as well as

concerns regarding meetings held with select members of previous board to which all board members were not notified or included. A discussion period followed which allowed board members and guest congregants to voice their questions and grievances.

A motion was brought by Karen Smith-Scott and seconded by Tessie Bond to record all future meetings by audio at a minimum and by video as a preference and that a means to make those recordings available to the members should be made. These recordings will not apply to executive session, as a matter of non-discoverability, but executive sessions should be rare, brief and only when absolutely necessary. Motion was passed with a unanimous vote.

Following this motion, Tom Larson was selected as President. All officer selections were then reaffirmed.

3. Portfolio leaders were selected as follows:

Inreach Portfolio – Tessie Bond
Outreach Portfolio – Laura TaVoularis
Operations Portfolio – Jennifer Tucker
Stewardship Portfolio – Bowen Barrs
Parliamentarian – Tabled until February 5 Board Meeting.

4. Board Calendar was discussed. Next Board meeting will be held Tuesday, February 5, 2019 @ UUCJ Fletcher Room from 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Preliminary Treasurer's report from 2018 will be due at that meeting. Secretary will provide a schedule for Opening Words for the year. Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for December 15, 2019.
5. 2019 Board Retreat is set for Saturday, March 2, 2019. Location TBD. On the agenda for the retreat will be modifying the Board Covenant, reviewing UUCJ By-Laws, investigating Robert's Rules of Order and a general introduction to the workings of the board, as well as discovery of what is needed to ensure board members feel heard and valued. President will distribute to all members his suggested goals for 2019 board.
6. Question was raised about how to proceed if Phillip Baber does not renew his contract by 2/1/19. Karen Smith-Scott voiced concern that we should not make a plan for immediate replacement and should instead work on continuing to resolve the issues at hand that led to his resignation in the hopes that this will help. There was a general discussion regarding advisement Phillip has received from UUA regarding not engaging in written or large scale discussions of the issues, (described as a kind of a "gag order". Penny Reid expressed some hope that Tyler might reach a place where he could come back in the future and there was a brief discussion on how to handle the RE program going forward, but no resolution was agreed upon at this time. A letter from Katie

Dalbey, chair of the Worship Committee was read. January services are covered and she is working on February. There is one speaker confirmed for February and all Sundays are covered for Worship Associates.

7. Karen Smith-Scott brought up a need for apology letters to be sent to Phillip Baber and to Tyler Burley from the board. Tessie Bond stated she did not want to apologize as she still feels hurt and angry and she would prefer to handle that personally. Draft letters of apology will be submitted to board for edits and approval.
8. Information regarding the UUA Pathfinder plan was discussed, along with non-UUA alternatives. It was noted that the non-UUA alternatives were not preferred due to financial and principle/philosophical/spiritual reasons. The plan is to proceed with the Pathfinder program, but we are waiting on further contact from the UUA. Tom will distribute copies of the Pathfinder information packet to the board.
9. There was a brief discussion addressing the motion passed in the Congregational Meeting to work on a preliminary timeline of the events leading to the current schism in the church and it was agreed that it would be wise to reach out to former staff for input.
10. The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 PM.

Pre-existing business: Penny was asked to continue as Vice President of the Board on an interim basis until the board was fully seated following the next Congregational meeting on Jan 13, 2019, at which time the offices of Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary would all be selected for the year. She agreed and the board consented.

New Business: Three items of new business were introduced.

1. Tom has been in communication with Connie Goodbread of the UUA Southern Region regarding the current conflict at UUCJ. He has sent two letters to her. The first was drafted by Tom and shared with the rest of the board for edits and suggestions, then finalized and shared with the board upon sending. It proposed issues that we would like the UUA's assistance in resolving. The second letter requested that she help in proposing language on how people should handle the UUCJ page on FaceBook. Laura noted that she had not seen this email and Tom admitted that he had not sent it to the remainder of the board as an unintentional oversight. He agreed to forward that communication, as well as any responses, to the full board.
2. Tom notified the board that he has received a request from Phillip to meet. A date and time were proposed and a list of attendees was discussed and agreed upon. A discussion regarding the need to create a process for establishing smart goals for the Minister as per the By Laws was discussed briefly and all agreed that such a process should be created.

3. Tom advised the board that he had received a letter from Tyler asking for specific commitments and undertakings from the board that would allow him, in turn, to commit to negotiating his return to UUCJ as DRE. He advised the board that he had responded to that email and that he would forward to the board both Tyler's letter and his response.

Following these items, Penny advised the board that an agenda for the Congregational Meeting scheduled for 01/13/19 must be posted to the congregation no later than 12/31/18.

The meeting was closed by a review of upcoming meetings, a confirmation of understanding of the decisions and actions items addressed and an evaluation by the Process Watcher.

Tessie Bond departed the meeting at 4:17 as per a previous understanding as she had a previous commitment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:41 pm.