

Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

January 8, 2019

Board Minutes

Present: Tom Larson, Penny Reid, Karen Smith-Scott, Laura TaVoularis, Tessie Bond

Absent: none

Congregant Guests Present: Melanie Mickey, Lisa Burt McGloughlin, Erica McGloughlin, Helene Kamps Stewart, Lois Hoeft, Linda Plummer, Lynn Shad, Carol Vogel, Wende Carter, Liz Lippincott, Chris Lippincott, Tina Ramey, Michael Aiken, Martha Aiken, Jennifer Tucker, Sunnie Baber

Staff Present: Tyler Burley

Meeting called to order by Tom Larson, Board President @ 6:36 PM

Opening words offered by Laura TaVoularis

Agenda approved by unanimous consent

Process Watcher: Tessie Bond

Time Keeper: Laura TaVoularis

Business:

1. Sunday Service plans for January: (Katie Dalbey is not in attendance, but emailed report)
Worship Associates and speakers confirmed for all Sundays in January. One of four Sundays confirmed for speaker in February (Sharon Scholl, 2/24), but all Sundays in February have confirmed Worship Associates. Katie is hoping Phillip will be back in the pulpit by then.
2. Phillip's Contract:
Item to be delayed until after conversation regarding Tyler's contract, as Tyler is present in meeting.
3. Tyler's Contract:
Personnel committee (Tom Larson, Laura TaVoularis and Penny Reid) met just prior to board meeting. Linda Plummer was asked to give input due to her HR expertise. No substantive changes made, just "fleshing out". Personnel committee will have a conference call with Tyler next Tuesday after the Congregational meeting and can meet on Wednesday or Thursday.

Tyler asks for permission to ask questions of the board.

Question 1 (paraphrase): Do you support creating a covenant between board and staff regarding how we relate to one another?

General consensus of board is that this is a good thing. All are in agreement that it would be beneficial, there is some difference of opinion in what the purpose is (example board/staff or volunteers/staff)

Question 2 (paraphrase): An email was misdirected to Jennifer Tucker from Rebecca Wilcox regarding the lawyer she hired to produce a cease and desist letter that was sent to members of COM as well as Phillip and Tyler. The email was intended for Tessie Bond. Tyler is having difficulty believing Tessie's assertion that she was not involved in the hiring of this attorney. How do you, as a board member feel about that and what do you, as a board member, plan to do about it?

Karen Smith-Scott - I was disappointed by the response, I believe in giving complete answer – I have emotional difficulty with answer, but I'm not omniscient and don't know why she answered as she did. As a board member, taking lead from Phil who is waiting for UUA. If the facts state that someone was out of covenant, then they can't be on the board, myself included. I want to do no more harm than has already been done.

Laura TaVoularis – Agrees with Karen. Doesn't know how to proceed. Has moral issues with current situation.

Penny Reid – All of the above. There isn't enough information – doesn't want to surmise and make assumptions, wishes she had a magic wand.

Tom Larson – Was disappointed to see cease and desist letter come out and hopes we can learn from it and not repeat it.

Tyler asked further question to Tom: Have you asked Tessie for any supporting documents regarding her claim that the email was about liability insurance?

Tom's response: I asked her for background on liability – it's an item on agenda for tonight. We added terrorist coverage to our insurance policy.

Tessie Bond – (re: Staff/Board covenant) I told you I supported it.

(re: email) – discussed showing email in question to Tyler, "I will commit to showing you whatever you want to look at" Tyler asks for and receives permission from Tessie to affirm or deny to the congregation that he has seen evidence that clears Tessie of suspicion of being involved in acquisition of lawyer to help Rebecca produce cease and desist order. Tessie asks and receives commitment from Tyler to correct any misperception of Tessie's role, including on Facebook.

Tyler, addressing Tom Larson – Inquires about particulars of Tom sending John White board/church resignation letter out to congregation via e-blast. Penny Reid interjects that there were two resignation letters, one only 3 paragraphs long and the second, which was much longer and was e-blasted. Noted that second resignation letter was not sent to the board.

Karen Smith-Scott offers that she received letter in a forward, which she had explained at 12/11 board meeting, and that she would be happy to supply that email to whomever might need it.

Tyler questions why one was sent but not the other and if anyone had fact checked some of the claims/accusations in the second email as it had been sent out via official channel. It was confirmed that no fact checking had been done and that it was felt to be one person's view. Tyler asked if it was possible to send out some correction and it was felt by those involved in the discussion that it would be inappropriate and not helpful. Tyler expressed concern that some might see that letter as whole truth because it was undisputed.

Tyler to Tessie Bond: Asked if she had met with John, Laurie and Rebecca to discuss any board related business before you were on the board?

Tessie Bond – Yes, just as I have with (lists several past board members and presidents. Have met before congregational meetings to discuss scripts and scenarios.

Back and forth conversation among Tyler, Tessie, Laura TaVoularis regarding the nature and attendance of the meetings (established there were two meetings at Panera Bread) also attended in part by Tom Larson (to discuss the budget). Laura expressed that she would have been very interested in attending these meetings, but she was not invited or made aware and Tessie responded that Laura had never asked her.

Laura TaVoularis – It seems odd because that happened prior to the 11/13/19 board meeting where 3 board members accused 3 other board members of inappropriate behavior and the 3 board members doing the accusing had been part of a meeting that the 3 being accused were not aware the meeting was happening.

Tyler Burley – Asking because John, Laurie and Rebecca had come to 11/13/19 board meeting saying they had no prior knowledge of a contract but when they came to that meeting they were kinda prepped with arguments using the bylaws against Phillip’s contract and the process that was used, and again I think that’s kind of odd that right after they met with you that’s the very next thing that happens. They claimed they had no idea, but people knew ahead of time, Phillip knew they knew about the contract and then when they came in they had all these arguments and bylaws ready to throw the book and these were people that to my understanding hadn’t ever really understood the bylaws until that day.

Discussion between Karen Smith-Scott, Tom Larson, Tessie Bond and Tyler Burley establishing how many meetings with partial board occurred, when they occurred and who was in attendance. Partial board meeting on 11/12 at Mellow Mushroom which was discussed at 12/21 meeting with Phillip had not been yet been included in the report of partial board meetings. Extensive back and forth discussion ensues to discover the details of the meetings such as content, notifications and agendas. Tom Larson and Tessie Bond stated that Phillip’s contract was not discussed at the meetings and that they did not know about any contract until 11/13. Sunnie Baber and Penny Reid point out that salary increases for the minister were included as line items in the budget submitted and presented on in October and November, so they must have known the salary was increasing (which would suggest a contract negotiation).

Tyler Burley asks if all board members were invited to the meeting on 11/12 at Mellow Mushroom. Laura TaVoularis and Penny Reid confirm they were not invited.

Chris Lippincott asks if we have a sunshine agreement.

Karen Smith-Scott asks for clarification of Board Covenant regarding “lobbying among Board members” . A brief exchange with Tessie Bond discusses the differences between committee meetings which would not require all Board members be included, and general interest meetings to which all Board members were not invited. Discussion then resumes between Laura TaVoularis, Tyler Burley, Tessie Bond, Liz Lippincott, Tom Larson and Lisa Burt McLouglin about the necessity and propriety of the three partial board meetings which became heated. Tom Larson called the meeting back to order and requested we treat each other well. Tensions remain briefly high in conversation between guests.

Laura TaVoularis states that as a member of the finance committee, she had been approached by Tom Larson and Carlos Fraticelli and told that she had been doing wrong and had “gone to the darkside”. She asks how she can be accused of that if they didn’t even know about the contract. She further states that she had then been told that a copy of the contract was had by the people who claimed not to have it, clarifying for Tyler Burley that Carlos Fraticelli had told her that he did actually have it. She addressed Tom Larson to ask him why he kept insisting he did not have a copy and asking for a copy leading up the to 12/9 congregational meeting when she now knew he had a copy a along? States that it makes her wonder what else might not be true. Tom Larson replied he was sorry for things that had been misspoken, had no intent to deceive and asked to move forward and get beyond it.

Tyler Burley spoke about Restorative Justice, making amends and accountability for all, then asks about publishing the 12/4 letter to the Board from Phillip’s Good Officer, as he feels the level of mistrust is high and the letter should be made public. Discussion ensues regarding why Phillip went to the Good Officer instead of the Board and it is noted that it was required per his contract. Tom Larson expresses personal disappointment that Phillip did not come to the Board.

Tessie Bond asks if discussion over Tyler’s contract is finished and that she would like to see a clause added about due process. Tom Larson and Tyler Burley plan to meet with Personnel committee next Wed/Thurs to discuss contract. Helene Kamps Stewart inquires if it would be appropriate for CYREC chair to attend this meeting and Tyler agrees that would be acceptable.

4. Business moves to discussion of Phillip's contract. Contract has been extended to end of January and Phillip is unwilling to negotiate until the non-contract (feelings of hostile work environment) issues are worked on. He can meet after his return from Chicago, Jan 28. Tessie Bond inquires if contract can be extended again. Laura TaVoularis states the he may not be willing to come back to work until issues are resolved. It is noted that Phillip is supposed to preside over a funeral on 2/9 at UUCJ. There is some discussion between Tessie Bond, Laura TaVoularis and Penny Reid about possible inclusions in contract. Tensions again briefly run high in comments from guests.
5. Business moves to discussion of progress on request to UUA for assistance. Pathfinder program takes 3-5 years and will cost church approx. 9K. Other outside organizations were briefly discussed and Helene Kamps Stewart inquired about an in house committee such as Committee on Ministry. Lois Hoeft explained why that would not be a viable option. She states that we all need to learn how to say negative things in a kindly manner.

Chris Lippincott notes that there appears to have been some triangulation that has led to the current difficulties.

6. Brief discussion about upcoming Congregational meeting on 1/13. Scripts to go out to board members.
7. Business moves to discussion of LDC recommendations for Board Candidates. Candidates are: Bowen Barrs, Elizabeth Dion, Wendy Jureski, Karen Smith-Scott, Jennifer Tucker and Eli Wolf. There are 6 candidates and 4 open seats. Penny Reid notes that Tom Larson could have filled all 4 seats by appointment, but that the optics of that were not good and it was felt the congregation deserved more input.

It is decided that nominations will not be accepted from the floor at the congregational meeting, as nominations were opened to the congregation prior to selecting the candidates. Tessie Bond moved to approve the slate and this was seconded by Penny Reid. Motion to approve slate was passed by unanimous vote. Lois Hoeft will forward the slate and ballot to Tina Ramey and Virginia DeRoy and will contact the candidates not in attendance. Method for breaking a tie was discussed and agreed upon and will be explained to the congregation at the time of election.

8. Business moved to Preliminary Treasurer's report. Two income items (memorials/misc income) are not in current year income as some goes to the Foundation. Year has not been officially closed in Power Church program. December is still in processing.

Pledges for 2019 are currently 218K, budget is estimated at 246K.

9. Business moves to annual UUA certification, which is due 2/1. Expenses must be certified by 2/1. Dues will not increase more than 5%, maybe 10%. If we make the payments we remain an honor congregation.
10. Business moves to Old Business items.
 - A. Should we opt out of Terrorist Coverage in our insurance? After brief discussion, Penny Reid made a motion to not opt out of the coverage. Karen Smith-Scott seconded the motion and it was passed by unanimous vote.
 - B. Penny has received updated charter from the Congregational Life Committee. This charter will tentatively be approved at Feb Board meeting and the remaining committee charters will be approved in March.
 - C. The condition of the storage area under the Anthony room and the apartment were discussed. Both are in need of extensive repair. Issue was tabled for future discussion. Condition of south wing Ladies restroom was discussed. Chris Lippincott will send details of needed upgrades/repairs to David LaFitte and cost of repairs is estimated to be 1K against the 7K reserve outside of Buildings and Grounds.
 - D. Lighting plan drawn up by David LaFitte was discussed. A proposal was given a few years ago, but never voted on or finalized. Approximate cost at that time was 16K. It is unclear if he received any bids on the project. Will follow up at future meeting.
 - E. Membership in Florida Immigrant Coalition was tabled to future meeting.

- F. Defining partnership for non-church groups was tabled to future meeting.
- G. Discussion regarding implementation of Breeze church management program. Tina has submitted a report on her findings thus far and is present in meeting for discussion. She states the financial information for the church has been loaded into both Power Church and Breeze and that they appear to be in agreement. Carlos Fraticelli will follow up with this to be sure. Sunnie Baber states she used the program for Mission Funding and Sunday Evening Services and she loves it. States it was much easier and has good data points.
- H. Review of last year's Mission Funding Effort: Sunnie Baber will come to February Board meeting to discuss this.

11. New Business: Little Free Library has been repeatedly vandalized and rebuilt. It will be relocated and affixed to a more secure post to be less enticing to vandals. This plan was agreed upon by general consensus of the board with no dissenting voices noted.

12. Next Board meeting is set for Tuesday, Feb 5, 2019 @ 6:30 PM in the Fletcher Room.

13. Meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:37 PM.