

Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

A Loving Community of Seekers: Living with Integrity – Nurturing Wonder – Inspiring Action

Board of Trustees Meeting

April 26, 2016 5:45 PM – 7:45 PM

Attendees: Melinda Staveley, Board President; Susan Plummer, Vice President; Keith Strohmaier, Treasurer; Carol Schwyzer, Secretary; Craig Bennett, Bonnie Lassen, Charlene Little, Ted Tazer-Myers, Rev. Julia Hamilton, Lead Minister; Rev. Caitlin Cotter, Assistant Minister, Erin Wilson, Director of Administration

Absent: Eileen Bunning

Visitors: Cheryl Snell, Karolyn Renard, Karen Bradstreet, Onolee Zwicke

Process Checker: Gun Dukes, Nominating Committee

Time Keeper & Parliamentarian: Charlene Little

I. Opening Reading Charlene Little read an Earth Day Prayer

II. Check-In There was no check-in.

III. Open Forum There were several observers and guests but no speakers for Open Forum.

IV. Minutes The minutes for March 22, 2016 were approved.

V. Executive Report Rev. Julia

A. Middle Hour Proposal The RE Visioning team is proposing a restructuring of the RE Sunday schedule. The proposal is influenced by the findings from the Children's RE survey. The second service would be moved to 11:15 to allow for an hour between services for the Children's RE program. Note: this is not a policy matter, but when an important change is envisioned, it is helpful for the Board to be informed. The Board supports staff in moving forward with this change. The proposal would:

Allow for community and points of connection with families and volunteers.

Make it easier for adults to volunteer or being involved with Children's Religious Education.

Give the congregation in between services to do more, shifting what coffee hour means for everyone.

B. Sanctuary Cushions A donor, currently anonymous, has offered to provide the funding for new cushions in the sanctuary. Cushion renewal has long been wished-for (the cushions are at least 40 years old and show it) and has been part of the planning for the sound system funds in case excess funds were raised. The board discussed the policy around accepting restricted gifts. Does our Lead Minister have the authority to accept restricted gifts? What are the guidelines? To be accepted, a restricted donation should support our Ends and not demand more staff time and other resources than is consistent with our overall and current program and goals. In this case, the gift is gratefully accepted as a contribution to our Sunday worship services and the inspiration that can be created in a beautiful, welcoming and comfortable space.

C. Wellspring Wednesdays/ Adult RE Staff will be rethinking Wellspring Wednesdays in the light of a lack of volunteers to prepare the dinner and an increase in RE programs outside of Wellspring Wednesdays. It may be that the format is too restrictive. Although this matter is operational, it is a significant change and is appropriate for the Board to be made aware of. The Board supports staff in retiring the current program and investigating alternative ways to organize adult RE. Caitlin will soon be meeting with adult RE leaders to make plans.

D. District Assembly April 29 and 30 Julia, Caitlin and the Board are grateful to Erin for her work in making arrangements for District Assembly, and to Chris Shorb for organizing the volunteers.

E Budget Process Treasurer Keith asked if we were aware that as the schedule stands, the budget will be presented at the Town Hall meeting (May 22) before the Board has seen it. After discussion, the Board decided to hold a special Board meeting on May 12 in advance of the Town Hall meeting, at which the Board can tentatively approve the draft budget. At the Board Meeting on May 24, any input from the May 22 Town Hall meeting can be considered and the budget can be adjusted, if the Board so decides, before the budget is published along with the annual meeting agenda. Per our bylaws, this must take place ten days before the annual meeting, which is June 5 this year, so the publication date must be by the 26th. This year the Board held a forum on Ends. Next year the Board may want to consider how best to allow for linkage with the congregation regarding the budget as well, as Julia made the point that detailed budget discussions can be problematic when they touch on individual staff members or sensitive personnel matters. Congregational budget meetings need to be planned carefully with this in mind.

The board created the following calendar of budget events to allow for congregational input into the Budget calendar:

- 5/5 budget proposal from budget committee
- 5/12 special Board meeting at 5pm to discuss input from forum on 2016 goals, and to give preliminary budget approval
- 5/22 Town hall Meeting for preliminary budget presentation, discussion
- 5/24 regular Board meeting to include final budget approval
- 5/25 notice sent out of the finalized budget, giving more than bylaws-required ten days notice.

Due to lack of time, agenda item VI was postponed.

VII. Process Observation Gun Dukes observed that it was exciting to see the Board living with policy governance, and seeing the policies translated into real work.

VIII. Closing Reading Ted Tazer-Myers read from *Fireflies* by Rabindranath Tagore

IX. Adjourn 7:45 PM

NEXT MEETING: May 12, 5:00pm

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: May 24, 2016, 5:45 pm