

Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara

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

Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees (BOT)

October 27, 2015

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

Time Keeper & Parliamentarian: Charlene Little

- I. **Opening Reading** was read by Craig Bennett.
- II. **Open Forum** –There were no speakers for Open Forum.
- III. **Minutes** – The Board approved the Minutes of the September 22, 2015 meeting.
- VI. **Means Reports**
 - A. **Executive Report**- Julia expressed her happiness with the installation and thanked all those who contributed to it. The Executive Report was well-received and appreciated for its integration of information and its relevance to the Board. The Board discussed the new COSM approach to receiving and responding to member appreciations, concerns, and suggestions, which includes a note for members to fill out. The BOT decided to combine the Board Is In table and the COSM table for a trial, calling the table "Appreciations, Concerns and Suggestions" or something similar. Christine Boardman is starting a new 20's and 30's group. The auction was both fun & a financial success, grossing over \$40,000, with auction offerings building community throughout the year.
 - B. **Role/Org Chart of USSB Finance-Related Committees** – Created by Erin to guide the Board & congregation in understanding the accountability and authority of the Society's financial groups. It is unchanged from last month.
 - C. **Updates** - There were no updates.
- V. **Policy Governance/Ends Reports**
 - A. **Endowment Board Report** - Endowment Board President Jeff Carmody presented the Board with a much-appreciated presentation about the Endowment Board. The Endowment Board was formed in 1991 to manage a fund of then \$45,000. It has been well managed by Society volunteer managers and now stands at \$1.4 million due to growth and gifts. In June of 2014 the Congregation voted to divest from Carbon Tracker 200 fossil fuel companies. Because mutual funds usually include fossil fuel investments, it was decided to seek professional management. After extensive research, the Endowment Board chose Trillium Asset Management over the UUA pooled fund. Trillium has a fossil free fund, in which we are now invested. Current Endowment Board members are Jeff, John Gilbert and Gun Dukes. President Melinda Staveley and Treasurer Keith Strohmaier also attend meetings of the Endowment Board. The Board thanked the Endowment Board for its excellent stewardship of the Endowment and the Society's financial health.
 - B. **Board of Trustees, or Directors or Stewards?** The Society Bylaws uses the term "Board of Trustees." Thus, all written and verbal references to the oversight body of the

Society should use this term, rather than interchanging with Directors and/or Stewards for clarity and consistency.

C. Board Forum vs. Quarterly Form – The Board engaged in a lengthy discussion about the most effective way(s) and times to connect with the congregation about the Society's mission and vision. Ultimately the Board decided to keep the Open Forum on the Board meeting agenda as well as educate members about the function of member input at a Board meeting. It was suggested that it would be helpful to articulate a defining statement to clarify the process for member input and suggestions, including the COSM process, and to disseminate the statement in various ways. In preparation for our next Board meeting, Melinda asked that each Board member bring suggested topic or theme for a first 2016 Quarterly Forum to be held on a Sunday sometime in January – March between services.

D. Treasurer's Report

1. **Financial Dashboard** - Pledging for 2014-2015 is \$15,000 less than what was projected. Staff will make adjustments to spending and are considering an additional fundraiser. Wedding bookings are increasing.
2. **Reserve** - Keith reported that the Finance Committee has been discussing Charlene's research on the creation of a reserve fund to be used for unforeseen expenses and expenses that are not otherwise covered in the annual budget. They are developing a proposal to the Board to allow a larger percentage of unrestricted gifts to the Society to be directed to USSB rather than to the Endowment for the purpose of funding a reserve.

E. Lead Minister Interpretations - per Julia's & Melinda's discussion, the Board will finalize agreement on interpretations then address "how to monitor" each interpretation. We were reminded that as USSB is new with Policy Governance and agreeing on interpretations and monitors that we be patient with ourselves and realize that "perfection" is not the goals. A *reasonable interpretation* is the goal. Julia and Carol will review the current Board policies to determine if there are needed changes to support this work. Julia offered her observation that the trend in UUA congregations is to have simpler multi-year plans rather than ponderous and complex long-range plans year-to-year. The Board will consider changing terminology in the policies accordingly.

1. Policy 2.1 Shared Ministry (revised Monitoring portion) This policy accepted by the Board as being a reasonable, comprehensive interpretation.
2. End 1.4.3 "engage in lifelong learning, utilizing reason..." - Postponed to next meeting due to lack of time.
3. Policy 2.5 Financial Condition/Activities - Postponed to next meeting due to lack of time.

F. Moral Owners – No update

G. Board Coffee Chat - Board members reminded to make their appointments. Erin will re-send the scheduling spreadsheets.

H. Board Calendar Review & Update- No update. See calendar in the Executive Report sent with the Board packet.

VI. Process Observations – Joya Sexton from COSM complimented the Board on its process & noted that she appreciated & learned a lot from the presentation by Jeff Carmody on the USSB Endowment.

X. Closing Reading – Julia

XI. The meeting was adjourned at 7: 35.

The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 17 from 5: 30-8: 30 in Jefferson Hall

draft minutes submitted by Carol Schwyzer, Secretary, October 30, 2015