

**Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church - Unitarian Universalist
BOARD OF TRUSTEES JULY MEETING**

July 19, 2017
DRAFT MINUTES

In attendance: Adam Slate - President, Jeanine Braithwaite - Treasurer, Ann Salamini - Secretary, Cindy Shepard, Karen Ransom - Past President, David Mick, Katharine Maus, Ian Sole

Absent: Colleen Anderson - President Elect, Annalee Durland-Jones, Erik Wikstrom - Ex Officio, Leia Durland-Jones - Ex Officio, Chris Rivera - Ex Officio

Guests: Laura Wallace, Cathy Lawder

DRAFT AGENDA

I. Opening--(25 minutes total) Opening/Closing Words (Jeanine), Snacks (Jeanine), Timekeeper (?), and Process Review (All)

Opening words – Jeanine

Check in -

1. Acceptance of Agenda

MOTION: Accept the Agenda.

Remove items 2 and 3 from the Consent Agenda. Staff Letters of Agreement are not ready. Given the new governance policies, Personnel Committee is full, so we don't need to add a member.

Unanimously approved as amended.

2. Public Comment –

Laura Wallace Came to share perspective on the possibility of this church changing its name.

Thanks for giving me time to share some perspective about the possibility of our community changing its name. The Considering Our Name committee launched in the summer of 2015 and became an official committee under the Admin Council. Jeanine joined me as Co-Chair, and we met through November before hitting "Pause." I wrote a Bulletin article in February of 2016, explaining that we were suspending because more congregational energy was rightly being directed toward Black Lives Matter and other action. (We also felt overwhelmed.)

Recently, because of the cultural upheaval over renaming monuments and institutions, interest in this question is resurfacing, so I wanted to share a few key things we learned.

Considering and implementing a name change, if our congregation is ready to do so, would be at least a two-year process. Particularly with a name as sensitive as ours. It will require a committed core group of I'd say at least 10 people, many meetings, and a comprehensive plan.

For me, the most useful insights came from Nick Lewis, then-President of the thriving, 100-year-old UU Congregation at Montclair, in New Jersey. Their name history is:

1897-Unity Church of Montclair

1961-The Unitarian Church, Montclair

2007-The Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Montclair

Nick's takeaway points:

- Some new members joined later who identified not being put off by the word 'church.'
 - They had tried it once, with a big Pro and Con annual meeting, and it was voted down.
 - Seven years later they tried again, taking well over a year. They met with EVERYBODY over and over. Nick said, "By the Annual Meeting everyone was so sick of talking about it that it passed with a voice vote."
 - His BIG advice: Don't try to rush the process; make sure *everyone* is involved.
 - Their committee contacted every single group in the church: Covenant Groups, Peace and Justice, Undoing Racism, the Quilters, the RE committee--and these overlapped a lot. By the end of Cottage Conversations, they'd caught nearly everyone. It was all about talking it to death and making sure *everyone* had a chance to be heard. Even people who disagreed -- by the end they felt they'd been heard.
 - It ended up being unanimous.
 - The possible name change we're talking about is a lot more sensitive.
 - The legal costs were under \$500 but making all the detailed changes was a pain. They did it over the course of a year.
-

Two final thoughts:

1) In my view, the PROCESS of taking that identity dive is much more important than the RESULT. If our congregation were invited to fully air all our thoughts about meaning, symbolism, public effect, internal loss and gain, and all the sparks a name can generate -- there would be no fire. There might even be new bonding and inspiration.

2) My top concern is that if this idea is raised to the congregation again, it not become a vanishing initiative. If and when the time is right, considering our name should be done with full awareness of the planning, support and follow-up that would be necessary. Comprehensive listening and transparent reporting would

allow every outvoted member to feel at the end -- *Well, we didn't pick the name I wanted, but I was heard and valued every step of the way.*

Discussion -

- This topic comes up again and again. Where is the energy coming from right now? - Personally it's from evolving comments I've heard. I want the process to be entered intentionally so the congregation benefits from a deep introspective learning and bonding.
- What are you asking of the Board? - Nothing; I just want to share these insights so leadership realizes this is both an exciting and a potentially controversial undertaking.
- This will come up in the Board retreat. We will rely on you for expertise at that time.
- What is the point of changing the name of the church? - The Thomas Jefferson part is problematic because of his legacy as a slave owner in addition to his stand on religious freedom. Some object to the idea of a religious community memorializing anyone. The church part can be a problem for those who associate that word with Christianity. Our culture is having an identity crisis about what we call ourselves and how we see ourselves.

Thank you, Laura.

Cathy Lawder came to express willingness to help with the Pulse Survey.

I'm concerned with the level of dissatisfaction in the congregation and feel the survey can help separate facts from emotions. By repeating the survey as originally constructed, trends will emerge. I've talked to Laura Horn, who was involved with the construction of the original survey, to learn the steps involved. I would like to know when the Board plans to run the survey this year.

Discussion -

- We will set our priorities at the retreat and let you know.
- The original intent for the survey was to generate trends; changes go against that intent.
- It's important to be sure the expectations for what the survey can show are reasonable.
- David and Jeanine would like to be involved with the survey this year.

3. Correspondence - none

II. Reports

1. President's Report (written) – Adam Slate
2. Vice President's Report () –
3. Treasurer's Report (written) – Jeanine Braithwaite

Currently there is an artificially wide deficit between expenditures and income but checks are still coming in from outstanding pledges which have not yet been deposited. The DAF and Treasurer expect to end the year with a small deficit. The books on FY2016 will be closed in August. At the August board meeting, they will bring ideas on how to handle the remaining deficit.

Chris will return from leave just as Jeanine leaves the country for two weeks. Jeanine will miss the August board meeting but will send her written report. Jeanine will follow the practice of sending the financial reports to board members via email so these documents don't linger on google docs. Currently the reports include actual compared to budget, but not year to year numbers. Year to year numbers are provided at the close of the books at year end.

Adam will supply confidentiality agreements so the board can discuss pledges.

4. Minister's Report (on vacation) – Erik Wikstrom
5. Director of Faith Development Report (on vacation) – Leia Durland-Jones
6. Director of Administration and Finance Report (on vacation) – Christina Rivera

7. Membership Report (written) – Sally Taylor
Membership Committee did some posts on Facebook about new members joining. Adam got positive comments about that happening so soon after the event.

8. Board Liaison Reports
Katharine reported on a comment the Committee on the Ministries received, concerning proxy voting at congregational meetings. Is there a way to do that? - It is not allowed at present, though people can submit written comments to be read into the record of the meeting. Investigating proxy voting would be a task force job.

III. Consent Agenda / Electronic Motions

1. Approve June 2017 Board Minutes

MOTION: Approve the Consent Agenda
Unanimously approved.

IV. Old Business

1. Next Steps Weekend - Jeanine (10 min)
Thanks to Cindy and Colleen for agreeing to arrange Friday dinner and Sunday lunch. This is the schedule as it currently stands:

Friday August 25th

- 6PM - dinner at church for the board, senior staff and Mark Ewert.

Saturday August 26th is reserved for meetings with lay leaders and critical people in the church. Jeanine has lined up at least one person for each group below. Board members are off on Saturday unless they are involved in a committee.

- 8AM - buildings and grounds
- 9AM - social and racial justice
- 10AM - finance committee and treasurer, endowment growth
- 11AM - annual pledge drive and major fundraisers
- 12PM - lunch with a couple youth, a couple newcomers, a couple old members, a couple of people who were active but are no longer active. Jean Newland will arrange lunch.
- 1PM - membership committee
- 2PM - worship, including Leia, Alex, worship weavers, covenant groups
- 3PM - short break
- 3:1PM - religious education and Leia
- 4:15PM - pastoral care, Carenet

Sunday, August 27th -

- Mark Ewert will be at worship at 10, followed by coffee hour.
- Noon to 2PM - lunch with board to discuss next steps. He will give feedback on what he's learned and share what other churches do.

Discussion -

- Is this his routine consultation? - Yes, he's conducted this sort of interview process with over twenty congregations of all sizes. He has requested a great deal of data in advance.
- What question is he answering? - Where are we with stewardship and giving and where can we be? What are our financial strengths and weaknesses. What strategies have other congregations used? What is best practice on pledge gathering? He knows we want to hire a new staff member.
- Why meet with buildings and grounds? - He needs to understand the physical plant and what our capital campaign needs may be. The Saturday meetings are about programming so we can ask for money to support our programming. RE, for instance, is a major constituency. He'll be looking at how 'bought in' various parts of the congregation are.
- Why is he not asking to meet with Personnel Committee? - I'll ask him about that.
- Is this a one shot deal or can he potentially assist with other needs, such as a capital campaign? - He could help with other needs.
- Is it being advertised? - Yes, it was mentioned in the June congregational meeting, there was an article in the June newsletter and Jeanine spoke of it in her sermon of July 16th.
- Some background on Mark Ewert. He is one of four people who write an excellent blog called Stewardship For Us. They live stewardship.

2. Finance Committee appointments - Jeanine (5 min)

Jeanine and Ann held five video interviews of people who were on the Finance Committee or expressed interest in being on it this year. Four are ready to join and one seems likely to join in the fall. These four people are ready to serve: Stan Walker, Rosalie Simari, Gloria Morgan and Marian Wendelin. If anyone else is interested in serving, please contact the Treasurer.

Finance Committee is being revitalized. Before TJMC had a Director of Administration and Finance (DAF), they created the draft budget and spread sheet. The 'new' committee will work on policy to implement the goals of the congregation and board to raise money for stewardship and revenue we need to be the racial justice centered, program size church that we are. They will also take the lead in fleshing out the program budget to be more informative and meaningful so the congregation can see what's going on.

We asked candidates how they are connected to TJMC now and whether they want to work on finance to support a racial justice centered program size church. That was a new lens for many of them. We told them we have an accountant in the DAF. What we need are people who will work on finance as part of a spiritual commitment to support the stewardship recommendations of the consultant and the fiduciary work of the church. Candidates seemed energized by that new mission. They will use their financial acumen toward making the program budget a more meaningful document and relieving the DAF of that work. The Finance Committee will meet regularly by video conference.

Discussion -

- The reason the focus of the Finance Committee is changing is they are really meant to serve the Treasurer. You are bringing the new vision to their work.
- There have been serious conflicts between the Finance Committee and the board over who is in charge of budget creation, approval and implementation. We really weren't able to come to an understanding between those two groups.

MOTION: Enter executive session.

Unanimously approved.

MOTION: Leave executive session.

Unanimously approved.

Summary - I was not able to reach everyone on the former Finance Committee for an interview. If anyone wants to be on finance, they should contact Jeanine. This is a beautiful outcome. Thanks for your work on this, Jeanine.

MOTION: Approve the appointment of Stan Walker, Rosalie Simari, Marian Wendelin and Gloria Morgan to the Finance Committee.

Unanimously approved.

BREAK AND GRATITUDE CARDS (10 min) - Please think of people the Board should

recognize for their recent contributions to our church community.

V New Business

1. Staff assessments - Karen (35 min)

The church and staff have developed and refined the staff assessment process over a period of years. This is the system we are currently following. It seems to produce useful guidance as to the priorities the staff are to follow in carrying out their work.

- Each quarter the board reviews the priorities which have been set with staff. They rate their progress on each. Depending on the dynamics of the particular year (think of the 2016 election results), some priorities may be downgraded or eliminated, others may be added.
- There is an invitation to board members and other church leaders, including the Committee on the Ministries and RE Committee for instance, who interact with senior staff to fill out staff assessments. This year Dawn Dirks of the Personnel Committee has collated the results for the presidents to look over. This year the board will come into the process earlier than in the past. The overall assessment results will be presented to the board in closed session this evening
- The staff also do self assessments and assess each other.
- When all the assessment steps have been studied, the presidents and Dawn will meet with staff for discussion. Yearly paperwork is signed. This comes to the board for approval.

MOTION: Enter executive session.

Unanimously approved.

MOTION: Leave executive session.

Unanimously approved.

Summary - The comments on each senior staff member were reviewed with the board. Possible goals for individual staff were discussed.

2. Racial Justice Steering Committee Debrief on July 8th activities - Adam (15 min) (Discussion of Board's leadership around racial justice issues - debrief July 8th activities and planning for August 12th)

No one from the racial justice group was able to be here tonight, but they are welcome anytime.

3. Orientation – Adam (15 min)

(Setting the stage for a successful year - Expectations, sign ups for Opening / Closing Words, Snacks, Board Liaisons)

- On first Wednesdays the Executive committee of the board (Exec) meets to create the agenda. Exec is comprised of the officers and some of the senior staff. On third Wednesdays the full board meets.
- Presidents and staff will meet this year for an hour twice a month, once a month with just presidents and once a month the presidents meet with one staff member, rotating so that each quarter there is a private meeting with each senior

staff member. (This represents a reduction in the time spent in these meetings. Presidents and staff have been meeting for 1 ½ hours every week.) In the past there has been redundancy among the meetings. Going forward, there is recognition that issues needn't be discussed in all venues unless shaping is necessary.

- Adam may ask a board member to investigate an issue to see if it needs to come to the board or if it can be handled informally.
- As board members we have a different kind of relationship with the congregation. The board will develop unified opinion on important issues confronting the church. As individuals we may also have personal opinions, which can be expressed, but we need to be aware of our responsibilities to the board and the congregation. We should not speak in opposition to board decisions.
- Three personal underlying goals for the board this year are financial stewardship and financial health as we undertake a deficit budget, leading the church in racial justice efforts and strengthening membership.
- I've asked Racial Justice Committee to lead the board in leading the church in racial justice work. We will leave a space for them when they want to meet with the board.
- Strengthening membership - Our church community needs to be mindful of the responsibilities of being a member. The role is not that of customer, but more of being a family member.
- We will be scheduling our board retreat as soon as possible in the fall. We will set our goals for the year and reaffirm the board covenant and board mission. Often we have a study session. Kate Fraleigh wants to do some racial justice training with us. We will certainly be discussing the results of the Next Steps Weekend.
- On using google drive. When putting documents there, be sure to cut and paste word documents into the google doc format. That way they will be editable. If it is for reference only, a pdf is fine. There is currently a projects folder in the 2017-18 board documents file with thoughts on the expectations of membership. You can also find the church directory, bylaws, policy manual.

Discussion -

- In addition to next year being TJMC's 75th anniversary, this fall will mark 25 years that Leia has been our DFD. (September 15th was her hire date.)

VI. Closing Activities (5 minutes)

1. Process Review (all):
 - This will be a challenging year. We've just identified three priorities: stewardship and financial wellbeing, racial justice and strengthening membership. We need to stay strongly focused and avoid getting distracted. It will get uncomfortable. That is a good thing because you don't get change without getting uncomfortable.
 - The board should consider writing a statement to the congregation on the results

- of staff assessments.
 - We see the senior staff up close in a way that few congregants do. We see them at night meetings and know how hard they're working.
 - A fourth priority needs to be communication.
2. Things to do / communicate –
 - Colleen will survey us to pick a retreat date.
 - David and Jeanine are interested in helping with the Pulse Survey
 3. Closing words - Jeanine

Dates to remember -

August Exec meeting - August 2, 2017

August Board meeting - August 16, 2017

Next Steps weekend - August 25-27, 2017

October 15, 2017 - congregational meeting after 2nd service

June 3, 2018 Annual Business Meeting after 10AM service

Upcoming topics -

August - 75th anniversary

REPORTS:

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My first week as Board president was consumed by preparation for the events organized to neutralize the July 8 Klan rally. A lot of people inside our congregation and in the larger community did great work. Unfortunately, there is not time to congratulate ourselves, with a much larger and more volatile white nationalist rally coming on August 12. Our Board leadership will be essential as members of our congregation engage in this event individually and collectively. We must be aware that the physical and emotional well-being of many people is at stake. We need to keep our UU values front and center in terms of how we frame our role and support our church.

At the same time, there are other essential priorities before us. Financial stewardship objectives and transitions will press us all year. Right now we are preparing for the stewardship weekend at the end of August, collecting on FY17 pledges that didn't come in by end of year, adding new members to our finance committee, and getting ready to work on a job description for our new stewardship position.

And we will have other things on our plate in the coming months that I want to highlight for you: working through the recently approved governance changes, considering a plan to survey the congregation for feedback, and preparing for the congregation's 75th anniversary next Spring.

And we are about to survey you about when you can attend a Board retreat to plan goals for next year. Look out for that email. We want to schedule it as soon as we can.

A lot to think about, and it will take cohesion and innovation to steer the congregation successfully through these objectives. I'm encouraged because I *have* seen tremendous cohesion among board members, and in our support of our new budget we have *already* committed ourselves to being innovative. Does any one of us know how we will get there, or what the church will look like on the other side? I think not. Yet we have all signed on to make the trip together, and frankly, I'm delighted.

I'm looking forward to an exciting year supporting each other as we work to accomplish great things at TJMC.

Faithfully,
Adam

TREASURER'S REPORT

I am happy to report that I was able to reconcile (balance) the checking account of TJMCUU for December 2016-May 2017, and I will reconcile on a monthly basis going forward. Reconciling our accounts is one of the key duties of the Treasurer.

Another priority was to revitalize the Finance Committee. When I accepted to be nominated as Treasurer, it was on the condition that the Finance Committee would shift to meeting primarily by video/phone as I work full-time and live a healthy commute away from our TJMCUU campus. Potential committee members were interviewed by video/phone and a slate of proposed Finance Committee members will be presented at the July 2017 Board meeting for action (approval) for this Board-appointment committee. The 2017-2018 Finance Committee has an important charge going forward of implementing the congregation's priorities for staffing a program-sized church with a vital social and racial justice mission, and will work on making the program budget presentation more useful to the congregation. I thank those who will serve our congregation on this important committee.

I also spent significant time on organizing logistics for the Next Steps Weekend on August 25-27, 2017. Mark Ewert, a UU Stewardship consultant, will undertake a review of our financial situation and stewardship potential during the Next Steps Weekend. An article about this UU stewardship review was placed in the July bulletin, and I am grateful for all those contacted who are stepping up to make this weekend a success.

I also report on church budget-year year-end financials. We ended the year with expenditures of \$501.5 K, or 94% of the budgeted amount, thanks to vigorous expenditure management by our Director of Administration and Finance and other staff. I am not reporting on year-end revenues, as final pledge payments are still arriving, many in response to the year-end letter we sent out under my signature on 1 July. Further, the Board and I will be making some follow-up calls as well, and final income accounting will occur in August when staff return to office. So please look for the August report of the Treasurer for the year-end income figure and deficit. A small 2016-2017 deficit is likely to exist, and we will have recommendations on how to handle it at the August Board meeting.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of May 31, 2017: 427

Add:

Vicki Shackford, 6/18/2017

John Shackford, 6/18/2017

Drop:

TOTAL MEMBERSHIP as of June 30, 2017: 429 members