

MINUTES UUCS BOARD MEETING 2022-07-13

In Attendance:

Board: Mark Lorenz, Bill Roman, Jack Hazerjian, Jackie Mills, Mary Matheny

Minister: Rev. Aileen Fitzke

Agenda

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6:45 Finance Committee Update

Description

- Report from the finance committee about status of revenues and expenses with respect to baseline projections at the start of the year. (Adam)

Goals

- Understand financial position so as to make informed decisions that impact UUCS finances.

Minutes

- UUCS's financial report for closing out 2021-2022 fiscal year was received by Mark just before the start of the Board meeting; accordingly, analysis of this report by all the Board members could not be properly done
- For the newest members of the Board (Bill Roman, Jackie Mills, Mary Metheny), a brief summary of observations that had been earlier made by the Board was provided to them:
 - *UUCS will operate next year with a projected deficit of about \$38,500, given the foreseen pattern of expenses (\$229,073) outpacing revenue (\$190,550, as based on \$186,850 in pledges, \$1,200 in sub-tenant rent, and \$2,500 in auction net proceeds)*
 - *There is in reserves and in investments an amount comparable to this gap between expenses and revenue, which could be covered this fiscal year, but there would be very little left thereafter; as such, the Board will have to grapple with reducing UUCS costs and/or increasing its income*
- UUCS Board will have this issue serve as the focus of its upcoming retreat, when the 30 or so budget line items will be scrutinized

- Rev. Aileen noted that other UUUCS congregations are facing the same fiscal challenges, and there have been informal discussions about church mergers as a means for containing operational expenses; Mark said that he is on the listserv for UU churches in the area, and that he would explore more deeply what they are doing, especially the smaller ones
- As an old business item, an inventory of UUUCS assets remains to be conducted for insurance purposes, which Jack volunteered to lead. The need to include monetary value of counted items was raised, but remained unanswered. An announcement to solicit volunteers had been drafted but not yet disseminated, and Jack suggested that it be undertaken immediately after a church service so that those in attendance could provide assistance. He also proposed that those active with Religious Education (RE) and with Tech Support for Livestreaming would be best placed to conduct the inventory of items under their use.

Action Items:

- Solicit volunteers through UUUCS communications to assist Jack with the inventory of UUUCS assets. Mark will include a verbal announcement in the next 4-5 upcoming Sundays and ask Jenny to include an announcement in upcoming editions of The Illuminate.

Decisions:

- None

7:10 Select Board Liaisons

Description:

Each member of the board will act as a liaison between a committee and the board. The objective is to ensure information flows to the committee (e.g. directive info) and information flows to the board (e.g. issues needing board support). Liaisons periodically attend committee meetings and provide a monthly report to the board.

- Committee on Ministry — Previous Jack; now no assignment
- Institutional Vitality Ministry — Previously Adam; now, no change
- Worship & Arts Ministry — Previously Mark; now no change
- Justice Ministry — Previously Sharon; now Jack
- Lifespan Faith Development Ministry — Previously Susan; now Jackie
- Care & Connections Ministry — Previous Rev Aileen; now Mary
- Welcome & Engagement Ministry — Previously Steve; now Bill

Goals:

- Ensure that activities of these ministries and their issues are understood by the Board, and that timely assistance is provided

Minutes:

- Mark explained that a UUCS Board member could provide supportive direction to each of the church's Ministries and update the full Board of activities and concerns faced by these Ministries. With the change in Board composition, there was subsequently a need to fill spots left vacant by outgoing members.
 - **Committee on Ministry:** While Jack has served on this Committee during the past year, Rev. Aileen noted that Board representation on the Committee on Ministry was not at all practiced at other UU churches. It was agreed that there may have been some value in Board presence for the first three years of Rev. Aileen's tenure at UUCS, when she was required to be annually reviewed by the UUCS Board and its Committee on Ministry, with assessments submitted to UUC's Ministry Fellowship Committee. It was accepted that, now that the three-year period has been concluded, no Board member needed hereafter to be on the Committee on Ministry.
 - **Institutional Vitality Ministry:** No change
 - **Worship & Arts Ministry:** No change
 - **Justice Ministry:** This ministry has been inactive for a while, and was earlier recognized by the Board as priority for revitalization; Jack was assigned to serve as Board representative, given that other Board members opted for sitting in on the other vacant Ministry spots
 - **Lifespan Faith Development Ministry:** Jackie volunteered to serve on this Ministry
 - **Care & Connections Ministry:** Mary volunteered to serve on this Ministry
 - **Welcome & Engagement Ministry:** Bill volunteered to serve on this Ministry
- We would like to provide each of the ministries/committees with some guidance and goals for the year that support our overall goals
 - As part of the retreat, we will consider board/congregation goals for the year and try to decompose those goals into projects/objectives for the various committees and ministries.
 - Liaisons for each of the ministries will bring their ideas to the retreat
- Jack requested the Board discuss a new topic that had been brought up as a concern by another UUCS congregant (and family member) – potential for a breach of privacy for those who attend worship service (in-person or remotely) and those who offer their joys and sorrows, given that the service is live streamed on YouTube to the general public.
 - It was clarified that any chat comments, as by those attending service remotely, are not archived on YouTube. Additionally, parents of young children attending RE are requested to sign a waiver that allows for their children to be on camera when in the sanctuary.
 - To mitigate potential risk of unauthorized exposure to online viewership, the Board proposed these measures:

- A notice should be added to the web page, so that those who click onto the livestreamed session of worship service are automatically granting their permission to have their comments and presented online
 - A sign should be posted on UUCS's entry door announcing that worship service will be livestreamed and that one's attendance in the sanctuary could be on camera
 - Chairs in the back rows that are outside of camera range should be designated for those who do not wish to have their images broadcast
- As another new topic, Rev. Aileen proposed that the online coffee hour after worship service be shown on the big screen in the sanctuary, so that in-church attendees could converse with those livestreaming from home.

Action Items:

- Put in place mitigation measures for limiting risk to unintended presence on camera during worship service – Mark assigned and will get help from Jenny for signage and web page notices. Also, make verbal announcement at the start of each service for a period of time (1 month)
- Prepare several bulleted ideas for ministry goals/objectives for the committees/ministries – all liaisons assigned for their specific ministry
- Coordinate with the Live Stream Operators and Worship team regarding use of the large TV for Coffee Hour – Mark assigned

Decisions:

- Each of the ministries was assigned a liaison.

7:30 Board Retreat

Description

- Once annually, within the first months of the fiscal year, UUCS Board sets aside a Friday evening and 4-5 hours during that Saturday afternoon for informational and planning sessions so that Board objectives are clarified, and Board operations enhanced.

Goals

- Promote greater effectiveness and efficiency of UUCS Board

Minutes

- Mark explained that a UUCS Board Retreat is usually held in August, and with Rev. Aileen's vacation plans for earlier that month and with an afternoon tea scheduled on August 20th for new and new-ish members, August 26 and 27 were then selected as the dates for the 2022 Board Retreat. Mark will make the preparations for Friday night (off-site) meeting venue and for Saturday's discussion agenda.

Action Items:

- Plan the retreat and make logistical arrangements – Mark assigned with support from Bill, Jack, and Rev Aileen

Decisions:

- We agreed to hold the board retreat on August 26 and 27.

7:40 Open Leadership/Committee Positions

Description:

- Identify open positions in the UUCS organization and make plans to fill them

Goals:

1. Fill open positions with interested people. Identify training and/or mentoring needed for that person to be successful

Minutes:

- Open Positions within UUCS that remain:
 - **Committee on Ministry:**
One or two members still need be recruited to join Kim Fitzgerald and Denise Lorentz.
 - **RE Coordinator:**
This position, with Rachael Roman's departure at June's end, remains open; it was noted the job scope seems to have been limiting or limited. Jackie, in discussion with Terry Dick, proposed that the RE Coordinator and RE Teacher positions be combined; Rev. Aileen cautioned that this would need to be first reviewed by the RE Committee, currently comprising Lisa Winter and Stephanie Roche.
 - **Stewardship Drive Lead:**
This position, diligently filled by Bonnie Lepoff last year, needs to have someone else step up before February 2023, when the campaign is set to kick off.
 - **Social/Racial Justice Lead:**
Another position that is urgently needing to be filled; no ideas arose on how to proceed on this.
 - **Endowment Committee:**
Two individuals are sought to help manage the particularly tenuous state of these set-aside funds.
 - **Chalice Lighter Ambassador:**
The board discussed the specific need for an ambassador. Rather, Mark (or other officer) will make semi-annual announcements regarding the contributions to the Chalice Lighter

Program. Mark will locate relevant information from the UUA for help in this announcement.

○ **Annual Church Auction Lead:**

At the last Board meeting, Jack volunteered to take on this responsibility; also, Jackie Mills and Nancy McCormick have both offered to provide support administrative/logistical support, and Shelly Roman expressed interest in serving as live auctioneer.

At this session, the Board agreed upon setting the date of the 2022 auction on the Saturday preceding Thanksgiving, namely, November 19th.

Jack proceeded to provide a summary analysis of last year's auction in PowerPoint, as based on data from "32Auction" software, which had been used to compile information on auction items, identification of winning bidders, and revenue from each auction item. Highlights of this analysis:

- **77 items were offered** for bidding at last year's auction:
52 (67.5%) as physical objects (e.g., houseware, knitted hats, artwork)
25 (32.5%) as experiences (e.g., dinners, teas, home organizing services)
- **189 winning bids were recorded** from individuals who had bid once or repeatedly:
68 (36.0%) on physical objects (mostly one bid per auction item, raffle tickets being an exception)
121 (64.0%) on experiences (multiple bidders per auction experience offered)
- **\$10,616.50 raised from winning bids:**
\$2,611.50 (24.6%) raised from winning bids on physical objects
\$8,005.00 (75.4%) raised from winning bids on experiences
- **121 winning bidders were recorded** from individuals who had bid once or repeatedly:
38 (31.4%) bidders (single or repeat) on physical objects
83 (68.6%) bidders (single or repeat) on experiences

Note that these 121 bidders were identified as belonging to 35 households from among the 68 households (51.5%) whose members currently comprise the UUCS congregation.

- **\$8,005.00 raised from winning bids on experiences:**
\$2,920.00 (36.5%) raised from winning bids on non-dinner/tea experiences
\$5,085.00 (63.5%) raised from winning bids on dinner/tea experiences (\$57.70 average bid amount)
- **34 items on offer DID not garner a winning bid:**
19 physical objects offered that did not sell
% of no-sale objects among the total number of objects put up on auction:

$$21.8\% = 19 / (19 + 68 \text{ won bids}) = 19 / 87$$

15 experiences offered that did not sell

% of no-sale objects among the total number of experiences put up on auction:

$$11.0\% = 15 / (15 + 121 \text{ won bids}) = 15 / 136$$

Conclusions that could be drawn from this analysis:

Auction participants were more active in bidding on experiences that were offered, than physical objects, even granting that experiences allow for multiple bidders, compared to most physical objects. More critically, the disproportionate share of revenue raised (75.4%) came from experiences. From this category, two out of three dollars raised came from dinners and teas, a sum which also represented nearly one of every two dollars overall raised by the auction. Perhaps the opportunity to attend social events organized by fellow congregants, in light of the lengthy period of isolation provoked by the coronavirus, has a certain appeal.

A valid point raised at this Board meeting was that not every UUCS congregant has enough disposable income to accommodate generous bidding; only about one-half of the households constituting the current congregation placed a winning bid. The analysis did suggest that more careful consideration be taken to ensure that the array of auction items encourages greater auction participation by UUCS members and that there are more desirable items offered (given that more than one out of six items did not sell).

- Approximately 40% of UUCS congregants are already engaged in church group activities – which includes those on UUCS-sponsored book clubs and social groups, as well as those serving on the Board, Committees, and Ministries; Rev. Aileen noted that this is about twice the proportion of members from other UU churches.
- Mark re-introduced ideas raised from past Board meetings:
 - Create a volunteer bulletin board to advertise leadership/committee positions, with provision of related information and contact information of those currently active in these positions. Mark will assign the Arts and Aesthetics Committee the action to select and post this bulletin board.
 - Organize a committee fair after a Sunday service to have members of committees explain to others what volunteering would require of one's time and effort. We agreed that the committee fair will be on October 2 after the worship service. Mark will coordinate with committee leads for their participation.
 - Create a spreadsheet/database of congregation members and their histories of serving on UUCS committees, so that analysis of individuals' volunteer service and experience (and leadership potential) could be facilitated. Jenny and Terry have created a master spreadsheet of members/friends that can be use for this purpose.

Action Items:

- Create announcement for the open volunteer positions. Include request for help with the auction. - Mark

- Create/purchase a bulletin board for advertising leadership/committee positions – Mark to assign to the Arts and Aesthetics Committee
- Organize committee fair for October 2. Mark to contact committee leads for participation and will create announcements
- Issue Semi-Annual Chalice Lighter announcements – Mark will put on the board calendar and locate UUA information on the program.

Action Items:

- None

8:00 Social Justice Kickoff

Description:

- Activities sponsored and led by UUCS to demonstrate congregants' ethos of wanting to make this a better world, especially for those disadvantaged and/or denied full participation in social-economic settings.

Goals:

- Live by UUC principles.

Minutes:

- Mark received no input from those who had been previously engaged with social justice activities; the upcoming Board retreat will delve into this issue of finding ways to revitalize UUCS's involvement in this area.
- The question arose if UUCS will continue its split plate donations to Backpack Coalition and Mobile Hope. In response, UUCS's past experiences in trying to sponsor other charities was recounted:
 - Contributions to multiple charities resulted in small, seemingly insignificant amounts of funds being disbursed.
 - Opportunity to engage with other needy organizations requires someone from the UUCS congregation to actively serve as a liaison and contact person, as had been done by Alyssa Lum for Backpack Coalition and Yvonne Centala for Mobile Hope; no one else stepped forward to take an active role in bridging UUCS to an outside organization and in generating interest in that organization's cause.

Action Items:

- Create announcement for a date to agree on split plate beneficiaries.

Decisions:

- None

8:10 Carry-Over Suggestions from Last Year

Description:

- We will schedule various events and involve ourselves in the community to “get the word out” about UUCS and to draw folks into the congregation.

Goals:

- Identify means by which to sustain and attract interest in UUCS from, respectively, current and new members.

Minutes:

- A suggestion was raised to offer a second, money-raising event at another period in the year; no one actively responded to this, though.
- Church picnics that have been organized within the past year have proven to be relatively well-attended. Accordingly, this practice will continue while the weather remains accommodating. The next church picnic is scheduled to be held after worship service at Claude Moore Park, Sterling on Sunday, September 11th. Rather than offering sandwiches (purchased in unwieldy, plastic containers from Wegmans and not easily served at an outdoor setting), UUCS will ask that this event be a potluck. Hesitation on organizing potluck events in the recent past had been based on concerns of risk of exposure to the coronavirus.
- During one worship service on a Sunday in January 2022, Mark had presented his “State of the Church” address, and he believes that it might be worthwhile to again offer to the congregation such an overview of UUCS -- its engagement with the surrounding communities, its financial status, and any organizational concerns. He conjectured that there might be benefit in delivering this more frequently than once annually. It appears that posting such information online via “Illuminate,” “Beyond these Walls,” and UUCS Board reports (annual and monthly) is not the most successful means for disseminating information to fellow congregants. Action Mark
- Rev. Aileen proposed that, for the benefit of promoting among the UUCS congregation a greater sense of transparency, as well as visibility and awareness, there be inclusion at each worship service of a brief update on the different activities under way by each UUCS Ministry or Committee; as such, the lead of each group would offer a “Ministry Minute.” Action - Bill
- She added that, as has been done at UUC/Binghamton, a member of the church board makes themselves available to congregants after each worship service to engage in discussion and answer questions (“Ask the Board.”). Action Rev Aileen.

Action Items:

- As noted in text above

Decisions:

- None

8:20 Summary of Upcoming Events

- **August 26-27: Board Retreat** (Mark lead)
- **August 20:** Afternoon Tea for new and newish folks (Membership team lead)
- **September 11:** Picnic at Claude Moore Park Pavilion. We wish it to be potluck salads and desserts so vegetarians, dairy and gluten-free folks have options. (Membership team lead)
- **November 19: UUCS Auction:** (Jack Hazerjian lead)
- **March: Stewardship Drive**

Parking Lot Items – as time permits

- There has been, perhaps, sufficient lapse of time since February 2022 when the Board invited, through Rev. Aileen's intervention, Megan Foley to provide guidance on how to re-think UUCS's mission and vision statements and its covenant. She had cautioned that there was need for UUCS and other church groups to submit to a "resting" phase from the aftereffects of the coronavirus pandemic, before undertaking a "processing" phase.

There was also recognition that congregants would need to feel re-connected to the church before they could meaningfully assist in revising the church's mission and vision statements and its church covenant. The premise was that both the passage of time and the organization by the church of several, small-scale events, done for socializing, agenda-free, purposes would facilitate this. Action: Rev Aileen will get us on Rev Foley's calendar to discuss the Mission, Vision and Covenant work.

- Mark proposed that we consider holding a second session with Megan Foley to re-begin the process of formally considering:
 - "Who were we (as a church) before the coronavirus pandemic?"
 - "Who have we become during this pandemic?"
 - "Who should we become hereafter?"
 - Is UUCS ready to move forward on this effort?

Action Items

Action Item	Action	Assigned	Status
2022-07: 01	Solicit volunteers through UUCS communications to assist Jack with the inventory of UUCS assets. Mark will include a verbal announcement in the next 4-5 upcoming Sundays and ask Jenny to include an announcement in upcoming editions of The Illuminate.	Mark	Verbal announcement crafted and sent to Worship Associates. Notice also sent to Jenny for posting.
2022-07:02	Put in place mitigation measures for limiting risk to unintended presence on camera during worship service. This includes a verbal announcement at the start of each service, a sign near the door and a notice on our web page/Illuminate. Get help from Jenny for the sign and web page/Illuminate	Mark	Verbal announcement crafted and sent to Worship Associates.
2022-07:03	Prepare several bulleted ideas for goals/objectives for your assigned committees/ministries – all liaisons assigned for their specific ministry	All	In-work
2022-07:04	Coordinate with the Live Stream Operators and Worship team regarding use of the large TV for Coffee Hour	Mark	Sent message to the LSOs asking for thoughts on design of this capability.
2022-07:05	Plan and coordinate the board retreat to be held on August 26-27 at Emilo's Pizza (Friday 6:30pm) and UUCS (Saturday 1pm)	Mark	
2022-07:06	Create a broad announcement to be given during the service for the open volunteer positions, including the auction.	Mark	
2022-07:07	Contact the Arts and Aesthetics committee to purchase/create a bulletin board for posting volunteer positions and for sign-ups for help at events, etc	Mark	
2022-07:08	Organize committee fair for October 2. Contact committee leads for participation and will create announcements	Mark and Rev Aileen	
2022-07:09	Issue Semi-Annual Chalice Lighter announcements based upon board calendar entries. Locate UUA information on the program.	Mark	
2022-07:10	Create announcement for a date to agree on split plate beneficiaries. Hold the meeting and agree on beneficiaries based upon attendee inputs	Jack	

2022-07:11	Schedule and deliver Quarterly “state of the congregation” message to the congregation. Consider verbal (recorded video?) and written	Mark	
2022-07:12	Coordinate Ministry Minutes to be given by Committees (in addition to Committee Fair) at least once a month	Bill	
2022-07:13	Schedule board members to participate in worship services as board host. Coordinate with Worship Associates for training	Mark	Schedule was emailed to the board; Need to put it in the worship calendar. Coordinate with Worship Associates for training
2022-07:14	Get us on Rev Foley’s calendar to initiate the Mission Vision, Covenant work	Rev Aileen	
2022-07:15	Ask the Membership Team to create a plan for facilitating the recruitment, organization, and promotion of the church’s social engagement activities	Bill	
2022-07:16	Prepare for organizing online presentations on either artists/art history or foreign films for adult recreation at UUCS	Jack	

Board Decisions

Item	Decision
2022-07:01	Board Liaison assignments are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee on Ministry —no assignment needed anymore • Institutional Vitality Ministry —Adam • Worship & Arts Ministry —Mark • Justice Ministry —Jack • Lifespan Faith Development Ministry —Jackie • Care & Connections Ministry —now Mary • Welcome & Engagement Ministry —Bill
2022-07:02	We agreed to hold the board retreat on August 26 and 27.

Parking Lot Topics (Deferred to Future Meetings)

Owner	Topic

Next Meeting: August 10, 2022 @ 6:30 pm