

**All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY**  
**Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Saturday, September 28, 2024**

**Board Members Present Via Zoom:** Robert South, Amy Summerville-Loomis, Karen Hall, Eleanor Allen, Janine LaClair, Kelly Sackheim, Alabama Dane

**Board Members Absent:** Erica Gardner

**Board Members Excused:** None

**Others Present:** None

**Preliminaries:** Robert confirmed a quorum and read the Board Covenant to us.

**Call to Order:** Robert called the meeting to order at 9:32 and everyone in attendance accepted the agenda, with a couple additions.

**Minutes:** Amy moved to approve the August 24<sup>th</sup> BOT minutes. Kelly seconded, and the motion carried.

### **Officers' Reports**

#### **President's Report**

Robert went over tomorrow's congregational meeting agenda, but he will send out a revised Order of Business to us tomorrow. There will be a NYSCU (New York State Convention of Universalists) meeting in Buffalo later in October; Robert will share details with anyone who wishes to attend. Eleanor wants to raffle Sing Fling tickets among those in attendance at tomorrow's congregational meeting. Robert reported that he attended the Interfaith meeting recently to discuss what was being done about homelessness.

Due to technical difficulties at her home, Eleanor left the meeting temporarily to set up her laptop at the church.

#### **Secretary's Report**

Karen summarized the emailed conversation that occurred 8/25/24 through 9/2/24 between trustees regarding the establishment of a board policy on electronic congregational meetings. After several iterations of the wording, a majority of five trustees voted via email to approve the following:

Karen read aloud, as follows, the Board Policy on Electronic Congregational Meetings (In reliance upon the Consolidated Laws of State of New York, Chapter 51):

“Article 2, Section 28, this policy of the board of trustees establishes guidelines and procedures for meetings conducted partially or solely by means of electronic communication. The person acting as chair of a meeting of the congregation is authorized to count individual online participants as present or absent. Any active member present may object to such declarations or raise a point of order regarding the legitimate presence of an online participant, in which case a simple majority of voting members present can decide the question, with or without debate (at the discretion of the chair). The secrecy of ballots cast online is unreliable, so online participants cannot expect vote privacy.”

### **Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee**

Eleanor noted that the income we receive from the UBS investments was not included in the August 2024 Profit & Loss Budget Performance report from Angelo. After checking, Eleanor reported that we did, in fact, receive the money, but it was not included in the report. We had budgeted this year \$ 2,000 a month from the endowment in order to meet our budget. UBS has been sending us \$1,800. She will speak with Bill Couch to change that to \$2,000. Also, we have not heard anything from Rebecca Carr and JD (Jesus) for the overpayment on his work on the lawn. He accidentally received the money that was supposed to have gone to John Crupi, ASUUC custodian. As the Outdoor Supervisor, Kelly volunteered to contact Rebecca.

### **Other Standing Committees**

#### **Membership and Activities Committee**

Robert reported that the goal is to provide a Friday night activity every week, and would like the board's unofficial approval. The second Friday evening of the month is devoted to Kat Hammond's Craft Night; the third Friday is Game Night; the fourth Friday will be Discussion Night. According to Kelly, Joanne Harter is interested in reviving CUUPS meetings on the first Friday evening of each month. There was no objection to this plan.

Kelly proposed switching the traditional Thanksgiving dinner at ASUUC to the next day (Friday) instead of holding it on Thursday, the actual day of the holiday. She reasoned that this would maximize the participation of people who had other plans on Thursday. Eleanor reminded us that the dinner was originally supposed to be for folks who would be all alone on the actual day of Thanksgiving. She suggested raising the idea of holding it on Friday at the congregational meeting tomorrow, for feedback. Kelly volunteered to do so.

#### **Religious Exploration**

Robert noted that a plan is in place, but currently there are no children attending RE. The committee met, and Frances Mercer is back in charge. Kathy Ashland will still help out. Volunteers must do the online training program.

#### **Worship**

Eleanor reported that Frances is taking charge of Sunday services. Kelly said that she and Frances will be conducting the service Oct. 6 on deep listening. Frances is working with Sylvia Heap on an interesting UN service.

#### **Task Forces:**

##### **Housekeeping**

Robert reported on the status of the alarm system. He said that for years, the sanctuary door has been troublesome, so the sensor has been removed. As a result, when leaving the building, and setting the alarm, there will be no alert as to whether the sanctuary door is closed. Instead, one should check to make sure that door is, in fact, closed. A motion detector is still above that door, so the lack of the sensor should not affect the security of the building. Additionally, the last one to leave the building should also make sure that the sliding glass doors in the social hall are closed and locked, as the alarm system will not detect if they are left open.

Amy reported that she and Robert met with John Crupi in early September, and they believe he is doing a good job with custodial duties and that he was receptive to ideas for improvement. They established that John should report any needed custodial supplies to Robert or Amy, rather than obtaining those himself. John prefers not to shovel snow on the sidewalks, though he would do so in an emergency.

A nontoxic spray was used to try to eliminate a possible problem with carpenter ants, and repairs have been made to the screen door to the sliding door in the social hall. A problem with the men's room toilet repeatedly flushing was fixed.

(Amy left the meeting at 10:17 a.m. due to a prior commitment.)

Robert reported that he mopped the floor with polish; it will be renewed monthly, and stripped once a year.

### **Groundskeeping**

Kelly reported that the riding mower is back in service after being sent for repairs. While it was being repaired, Robert used a "walk-behind" mower, which he purchased himself, to mow the church grounds. **Kelly moved to use groundskeeping funds to purchase the "walk-behind mower" from Robert in the amount of \$400. Eleanor seconded. Motion carried.** Also, Kelly reported that we currently do not have a contract bid to clear the sidewalks of snow. The church does have a snowblower. Robert said he is willing to do the job "fairly reliably," as he is frequently at the church building during a given week. John could do the job, if needed; Kelly will try to help.

### **Contracting Task Forces**

#### **Snow Removal**

Among the bidders, The Cutting Edge has the low bid. Eleanor proposed requesting them to remove the sidewalk shoveling cost from its contract, leaving the separate snow plowing of the parking lot at a cost of \$ 3,500. Kelly voiced a desire to also require The Cutting Edge to remove from their contract the bulleted items regarding salting of the parking lot, and on-site snow removal. Robert prefers using A Cut Above, as they appear to be more reliable, based on their frequent work plowing Hospice's parking lots each winter. Kelly objected to A Cut Above's contract because it is not a fixed price estimate. She would like clarification on contracts from both the Cutting Edge and A Cut Above before voting.

Eleanor voiced a desire to have an estimate sought from a company called One Cut Better. Kelly volunteered to follow up with that company, as well as the Cutting Edge and A Cut Above. However, Robert cautioned that a decision needs to be made now, for fear of waiting until it's too late to obtain the services of the desired contractor. **Kelly moved to make a decision about the snowplow estimate by email vote by Friday of next week, with the understanding that she will pursue the three bids and to get the information so that we have a solid offer. Eleanor seconded. Motion carried.** A separate motion was needed to address sidewalk snow removal. Eleanor assured that ASUUC's insurance company would cover the cost of any liability issues regarding falls due to snow/ice on the sidewalk. **Kelly moved that the job of removing snow from sidewalks will be done by volunteers and the custodian, as directed by the BOT. Eleanor seconded; motion carried.**

#### **BCA/Stone Wall/Siding**

Robert noted that Bernier Carr Associates' estimate of the cost of a study of the building amounts to \$5,500. Eleanor and Kelly both opined that this study is worth the cost. **Kelly moved to accept the contract from BCA to do the investigation for \$ 5,500. Eleanor seconded. Motion carried.**

#### **Outreach Survey**

Alabama indicated that she has not yet created a social action survey, but she questioned whether a general survey is needed, since homelessness in our area

seemed to be the predominant concern among attendees at the Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday service discussion of our social action goal. More research is needed to determine how to support the homeless. Alabama agreed that at tomorrow's congregational meeting, the goal of helping the homeless will be identified, and the method for doing so will be pursued later.

### **Ministerial Search**

Eleanor reported that even with the offer of increased salary, with benefits, there has been no interest from prospective candidates for the part-time position at ASUUC. She foresees our congregation being without a minister for quite a while. It is up to this board and the Membership & Worship Committee, she said, to address the needs of the congregation for the time being.

### **Office**

#### **Building Use**

Robert reported that Little Theater is conducting play rehearsals Monday through Wednesday evenings in the social hall, and Friday evenings in the sanctuary. To offset the church's costs of providing this space, our contract with them stipulates a free ad in their performance program, and free tickets to the performance. Noting that Little Theater does not have a large budget, and the loss of potential ticket sales from ASUUC members would mean a loss of potential income, **Karen moved to remove the stipulation from the contract that requires Little Theater to provide ASUUC with free tickets. Kelly seconded.** During the discussion, Kelly suggested encouraging our members to supporting Little Theater by buying tickets to the performance. **Motion carried.** Robert will contact the director.

Janine left the meeting at 11:04, during the above discussion, due to a previous commitment.

### **New Business**

#### **Policies**

**Robert moved that the Board vote on the policies, indicated below, by email. Kelly seconded. Motion passed.**

- Committee Definition Policies (Robert)
- Immediate Action Policies (Robert)
- Member Signing Policy (Robert)
- Email Voting Policy (Kelly)

There was no other new business.

The next BOT meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 26, 9:30 a.m., via Zoom. Without objection, Robert adjourned the meeting at 11:11 a.m.

**Process Observations:** Comments among trustees were positive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Hall  
Secretary

