

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
Saturday, October 26, 2024

Board Members Present Via Zoom: Robert South, Amy Summerville-Loomis, Karen Hall, Eleanor Allen, Janine LaClair, Kelly Sackheim, Alabama Dane, Erica Gardner (arrived 9:38)

Board Members Absent: None

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 9:31 and everyone in attendance accepted the agenda, with a couple changes.

Minutes: Eleanor moved to approve the September 28th BOT minutes. Amy seconded; the motion carried. Kelly suggested that the minutes of the Sept. 29th special congregational meeting be considered for approval at the next congregational meeting. No one objected.

Officers' Reports

President's Report

Robert heard from Mari at Bernier & Carr; they have not yet used their thermal camera to detect heat leaking from the church's interior to the outside, as the outside temperature has to be cold to accomplish a good analysis. Robert reminded us that B&C's contract is for an estimated cost, as it is based on an hourly rate. Kelly suggested that she and Robert patch the exterior walls, where needed, to close any gaps before winter weather is upon us.

Secretary's Report

Karen summarized the emailed conversation that occurred Oct. 3rd through Oct. 5th between trustees regarding the acceptance of a snow plow bid. Bids from a total of four snow removal services were considered, including from One Cut Better, Fresh Cut Property Services, Cutting Edge and A Cut Above. **Robert moved to accept the bid of \$3,500 from Cutting Edge for removing snow from the parking lot only (not the sidewalk). The motion passed, with affirmative votes from Robert, Eleanor, Karen, Janine and Kelly.**

Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee

With regard to the September Budget Performance report, Eleanor explained that the \$6,472.41 expense listed under Repairs and Maintenance was used to pay for re-sealing and re-striping the parking lot. It was not withdrawn from Capital Expenses, she said, because it was repair work and because we need to avoid taking money out of our savings. Kelly pointed out that with that expense, Building and Maintenance disbursements are now beyond what was budgeted, and with our new \$3,500 contract for snow removal, we are also over budgeted by \$500 for that service.

Eleanor also noted that we had budgeted \$ 2,000 monthly from our UBS funds, but actually only \$1800 had been withdrawn each month. She spoke with Bill Couch and asked him to start taking out \$ 2,000 from UBS; that will begin in November.

In response to a question about this year's NYSCU grant of \$3,200, Eleanor explained that about \$ 200 remains unspent, and that, combined with \$200 budgeted for Membership, means that a total of \$400 is available and should be used by Membership for activities.

Karen wondered whether Kat Hammond could be reimbursed for the money she spends on materials and snacks for the monthly Craft Nights. Kelly suggested that the board acknowledge in-kind donations from Kat and others, and consider reimbursement for expenses, documented by the submission of receipts. Robert said that Kat will be offered a reimbursement form with a thank you note attached.

Eleanor noted that the NYSCU grant report was submitted, and should be attached to the minutes.

Other Standing Committees

Membership and Activities Committee

Robert reported that this year's Thanksgiving dinner at ASUUC will be held on the traditional day of Thanksgiving; it is scheduled for Thursday, November 28th. No objections from the board.

Kelly continues to brainstorm and coordinate activities for members, such as attending local movies and events together. These planned activities are being advertised in the Weekly Post.

Eleanor regretted the fact that this morning's BOT meeting coincided with the NYSCU (NYS Convention of Universalists) online workshops. She suggested that had we thought about it ahead of time, we could have moved the date of the board meeting, and arranged a watch party at church for attendees. Since this convention is held every October, Robert agreed that in the future, the board should discuss ahead of time whether to avoid a conflict in scheduling its October meeting. Kelly added that next year's convention will be held at the Canton UU Church.

Religious Exploration

Robert noted that to date, only two people (Robert and Frances Mercer) have qualified to work with RE children by taking the online course, qualifying them in NYS as a credentialed childcare workers. More people are needed to take the course.

Worship

Eleanor reported that the next committee meeting is Nov. 7. A subscription to a service that provides sermons prepared by UUA committee members is now being utilized for some of our Sunday services. In response to Robert's idea of inviting local ministers to preach at ASUUC, Eleanor agreed that it is an idea worth considering. While Canton's current UU minister has previously declined her invitation, Andrea Abbott and David Blanchard have served as guest ministers in the past. Fees charged and traveling from a distance, especially in winter weather, are considerations. Kelly suggested contracting with guest ministers to provide services via Zoom, and Eleanor added that one or more of the UU ministers in Kingston, Ontario could be contacted. Karen knows of two Presbyterian ministers in Watertown who provide pulpit supply services in the area; she will provide Eleanor with their contact information.

Task Forces:

Housekeeping

Robert will contact Diego to see if he is able to start work soon on the ceiling.

Groundskeeping

The board went into executive session at 10:10 a.m., and ended at 10:22 a.m.

Contracting Task Forces

Snow Removal - completed

Outreach Survey/Social Justice

A survey will be forthcoming.

Robert reminded us that New York UU Justice is offering a Justice Convocation, accessible online, on Saturday, Nov. 16. The agenda includes workshops covering four different topics. Robert proposed holding a watch party at church to view and discuss the issues. Eleanor noted donations are being accepted upon registration for the event; she is willing to donate \$ 25 when she registers. Kelly will bring her laptop to provide an extra viewing screen. A congregational conversation will be held on **Nov. 17** to gather additional input on the direction of social action to be pursued this year. Robert suggested offering reimbursement, if it is desired, for the registration donation.

Ministerial Search

Eleanor opined that the regional UUA office is letting All Souls down; there has been no real assistance other than where and who to look for. Amy wondered whether contacting UUA more frequently would be beneficial. Karen suggested reaching out to divinity schools to advertise our vacancy. **Kelly moved to appoint Karen to the Ministerial Search Committee. Amy seconded; motion passed.**

Office

Building Use

Robert noted that our building is being used frequently by various groups. Karen suggested the use of a sign in the lobby welcoming each group; Kelly proposed also providing information about these group's events, such as Little Theater's performance dates and ticket info. To minimize the time involved in updating the sign, Alabama suggested changing it weekly instead of daily. Robert will create a sample sign, and share it with the board.

New Business

Policies

Due to the length of today's meeting, Robert suggested delaying any action on the proposed policies. There was no objection.

The next BOT meeting is scheduled for Saturday, November 23, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., via Zoom. Without objection, Robert adjourned the meeting at 10:44 a.m.

Collective Process Review: The meeting was deemed respectful and productive.

Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Hall
Secretary

