

**All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
Saturday, November 23, 2024**

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

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 9:34 a.m. and everyone in attendance accepted the agenda, with a couple additions.

Minutes: Eleanor moved to approve the October 26th BOT minutes as previously revised. Amy seconded; the motion carried.

Officers' Reports

President's Report

Robert reported that Bernier Carr & Associates staff members Mari Cecil and Bob Ingerson have conducted their evaluation of the church building's external structure. Robert is now awaiting Mari's written report.

Secretary's Report

In response to Karen's inquiry, Robert said that it is not necessary for the board secretary to report the results of a straw poll conducted (via email) among board members. On the other hand, a written record of the congregational conversations, such as the one held on Nov. 17, is not required, but helpful. Karen will write a report for that meeting.

Treasurer's Report/Finance Committee

Eleanor noted that our current income and disbursement numbers are as expected, and there are already enough funds in our checking account to pay for the ceiling project that is soon to begin. Robert asked about investing in a CD; Eleanor said that was considered and rejected in the past. However, with about \$73,000 in money market savings, at only 1% interest, Eleanor recommended putting at least part of that money in a CD to collect the 4.5% interest. **Kelly moved to authorize Eleanor to move up to \$60,000 into a CD for six months at AmeriCU Credit Union. Amy seconded the motion; the motion carried.**

Other Standing Committees

Membership and Activities (MAA) Committee

Kelly moved that "all social media accounts belonging to All Souls will have a minimum of two authorized administrators or editors. These will be added or removed only by authority of MAA or the board. Two of these authorized parties will be active content managers; a third may be retained exclusively to facilitate maintenance of account registration and access by the active content managers." Eleanor seconded. Kelly explained that All Souls has four social media accounts,

under various administrators: 1) our website, allsoulsuu.org, 2) a YouTube account, 3) a Facebook account and 4) an Instagram account. Kelly proposed that as a member of the MAA, she will act as the third administrator for all four accounts. Our FB page has some administrators who are no longer active at ASUUC; Eleanor will work with Kelly and Harriet to make changes in the naming of administrators for the FB page. **Motion carried.**

Eleanor reported that the MAA Committee plans to recognize former and current members who have made significant contributions to Watertown and the surrounding area. A display honoring these members will be set up at church: Sylvia Heap, one of the founders of Jefferson Community College, and the late Jan Summerville, a founder of the local Planned Parenthood agency. It was noted that the late Winnie Dushkind, an animal rights activist who influenced significant positive changes at the Watertown Zoo, should be added to that list.

Kelly reported that the MAA has discussed ways to retain and grow membership. During our discussion, BOT members expressed some reservations regarding the MAA's proposal to collect feedback via postcards given to visitors. Alabama suggested asking for feedback directly following the service as a more informal approach. Robert noted that pamphlets about ASUUC are already available.

Harriet plans to collect congregants' signatures on Christmas cards, which will then be mailed to distant members.

Karen moved to remove the ban on board members witnessing the signing of new members to the registration book. Alabama seconded the motion, and suggested that we offer a class for both new and current members on the basics of Unitarian Universalism, but not have it be a requirement for membership. Support for having a welcoming ceremony once a year was expressed. **Motion carried.**

Religious Exploration

Robert reported that four people have now qualified for working with RE children by taking the online course: Robert, Kelly, Janine and Frances. More would be helpful.

Worship

Eleanor announced that a special UU guest minister, Liz James, will conduct our All Souls service in January (the 19th), thanks to Kelly's efforts. Ms. James is well-known as an administrator of the Unitarian Universalist Hysterical Society, a popular comedic Facebook page.

Eleanor reported that pianist Toni Zygadlo is asking for only a small raise and some detailed feedback via a more formal evaluation. Kelly and Alabama volunteered to meet with Toni to conduct the evaluation. Kelly suggested collecting congregants' appreciative comments on a greeting card and giving it to Toni. **Eleanor moved to increase Toni's pay by \$5 per week. Alabama seconded. Motion carried. Eleanor then moved to give Toni a \$100 bonus at Christmas time, and to make the \$5 weekly pay raise be effective with the start of the next fiscal year. Amy seconded the motion; motion carried.**

Kelly spoke about Liz James' appearance at Canton's UU church on Jan. 12th, and at ASUUC on January 19th. As a result of an inquiry from a Canton UU member, Kelly asked the board for input regarding a possible joint event in Gouverneur that would feature Ms. James. Eleanor opined that All Souls is not in a financial position to cover the cost of such an event. Kelly will convey our declination to the UU Canton member.

Task Forces:

Housekeeping

Robert noted that our custodian, John, is doing a fine job.

On 11/20/24 and 11/22/24, Robert shared, via email to BOT members, modifications to the "ceiling contract" with Diego Aguilar, and no objections were expressed by the board at the time. The modifications include stripping off the acoustic tiles and painting the social hall's ceiling, and adding light fixtures in the RE wing. With the changes, the total cost amounts to about the same as the original contract: approximately \$ 17,000. To ratify the contract, **Robert moved to accept the changed contract with Diego Aguilar's company, as indicated in the email. Eleanor seconded. Motion carried.**

Ministerial Search

Eleanor reported that the team will meet this Sunday after the service. More info to come.

Office

Building Use

With an informal approval by board members via email on 11/20/24, **Robert moved to authorize Dustin Gonyou to use the church on Dec. 1, 3-6 p.m. for a celebration of life event for his mother, for free. Eleanor seconded. Motion carried.**

Old Business

Homelessness Project

Eleanor suggested that a social justice task force needs to be organized to address our social action goal of addressing homelessness in Watertown. Task force members will be recruited via announcements at Sunday services and the Weekly Post. Kelly requested assigning a Social Justice *committee* to also address the needs of the Worker's Center in Syracuse and of migrant farm workers. However, it was decided to focus at this time on a task force devoted only to the homelessness problem. **Kelly moved to authorize the establishment of a homeless task force and that the board approve by email the leadership thereof. Eleanor seconded. Motion carried.**

New Business

The Social Media policy was addressed earlier during this meeting.

The next BOT meeting is scheduled for Saturday, December 28, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., via Zoom. Without objection, Robert adjourned the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Collective Process Review: The meeting was lengthy, but productive.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Hall
Secretary

Drafted 12/1/2