**All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church of Watertown NY**

**Minutes of the Board of Trustees**

**Tuesday, January 30, 2024**

**Board Members Present**: Heather Winn, Eleanor Allen, Francis Ashland, Amy Summerville-Loomis, Catherine Burns, Kelly Sackheim (slightly late), Janine LaClair, Alabama Dane

**Board Members Excused:** NA

**Others Present**: Robert South, Warren Allen

**Preliminaries**: - Heather read the Board Covenant to us. Amy agreed to be the Process Observer again. A quorum was confirmed.

**Call to Order**

Heather called the meeting to order promptly at 7:00 p.m. and confirmed that everyone in attendance accepted the agenda.

**Minutes** –

The previously revised minutes of the December Board meeting were presented. **Eleanor moved and Amy seconded that we approve the December minutes as corrected. Motion carried.**

**President’s Report –** There was a meeting with the ladies at the Degel Israel Synagogue. Heather explained that Tim Stoner had sent out an email to Emmanuel Congregational Church (UCC) with some political statements comparing the actions of Israel with those of Hamas, for which he apologized. He was unsure at the time, whether the email had been received by Emmanuel, but it ultimately resulted in the misunderstanding regarding the final apolitical theme and content of our vigil.

**Vice President’s Repor**t – No report.

**Treasurer’s Report –** Angelo was not able to attend or complete the report this month due to a death in his family. Eleanor hoped that the report would be available by the next meeting. She has also been working on the UUA recertification that includes information on the church’s finances, which is a basis for determining our UUA Annual Program Fund contribution. John Crupi’s salary has been increased to the current state minimum wage of $15/hour.

**Committee Reports**

**Finance** – No report, but the committee will meet in the upcoming month.

**Building and Grounds** – Heather indicated that the RE wing furnace is broken. Rebecca had someone look at it and determined that the control board needed replacement. He estimated about $4000 to replace the entire furnace. Some members had suggested replacing it with a “greener option” heat pump, and Kelly shared some detailed background information on this topic, including heat pump options and solar as an alternative. Eleanor recommended that we establish a timeline to address this. Kelly could obtain additional information within a week to assist in making a decision. The short-term issue is heating in the Wondering Center and Kathy Ashland indicated that she has some flexibility on where she could hold activities depending on the room temperature. Portable heaters were also brought in by Robert and Kelly. Both Janine and Eleanor had some experience with heat pumps at their homes. Some scenarios depending on which heating option was selected were discussed. Heather also indicated that Diego will provide an estimate for ceiling tiles and skylights, since he will be at the church for a meeting on Friday.

**Membership/Activities** – Warren summarized the North Country Public Radio underwriting effort, and the New York State Convention of Universalists grant application. We are working with the UU Fellowship of Plattsburgh. Warren continues to try to broaden the effort with other North Country congregations, but Canton may be putting in their own application. Warren provided some additional details. Francis had shared the application with the board and indicated that it needs to be submitted by tomorrow. Eleanor did the initial review and Robert provided additional material. Robert added that the committee made Kelly the Caring Committee primary contact. Heather asked about the congregational conversation related to the membership process. Francis summarized that there was a pretty good discussion with contributions from Harriet, Eleanor, and Robert. We talked about introducing a new member ceremony in a few of our worship services and an educational component to the membership process. Two concepts introduced were developing a formal or well-defined membership process and also changing the bylaws to solidify the process. Francis suggested coordinating new membership services with visits of our guest ministers. Kelly and Eleanor contributed to the discussion. Eleanor had heard advice to change things like the membership process prior to making the effort in changing the bylaws, allowing for seeing how things work out first.

**Worship** –Eleanor is the point person for the February services. The first week’s guest speaker backed out, so she plans to substitute a Max Coot’s sermon on the nature of god. The remainder of the services are all planned. Frances Mercer is willing to take the lead in March and plans to use members who are musicians in one or more of the services. She is also planning an intergenerational service and has put a lot of work into it. Sarah O’Connell may be taking the lead for April.

**Religious Exploration** – Francis indicated that Kathy Ashland plans a RE Committee meeting before the next board meeting.

**Ad Hoc Committees**

**Search** – Eleanor indicated that no one has yet responded to our ministerial search.

**New Business:**

Juneteenth meeting on June 15, 2024: Robert indicated that the Board needs to approve use of our grounds for their celebration. Kelly endorsed this effort and **made a motion that the Board approve the use of the building for this purpose without cost. It was seconded by Eleanor and approved.** Eleanor added that they are applying for status as a nonprofit, but don’t yet have it. They are also applying to a grant from the St. Lawrence Art Council, but it can’t be given to anyone who is not a nonprofit. Bianca (Juneteenth) asked that we be a sponsor so that awarded funds from the council can be passed through ASUUC for paying musical artists at the event. Amy asked if Angelo is ok with this proposal and Eleanor thought that he would be from past experiences. Kelly made additional comments. Francis asked about whether the timeline would accommodate this arrangement and Eleanor thought it was feasible. Kelly stated that there was a new timeline this year with applications due on March 1 and awards made in April. **Eleanor made a motion to be a sponsor to allow us to pass through funds for the artists which Catherine seconded, and the motion passed following the discussion summarized above.**

Aids, Love, and Staying Alive presentation: There has been a request to use our building. Robert stated that the Board needs to approve building use without cost. **Eleanor made a motion to donate the building space for the presentation, Kelly seconded, and the motion carried.**

Possible(?) request for financial support of minister’s (Rev. David Weissbard) cost for Till’s funeral: Robert recommended a motion to support an online decision. Amy, Kelly, Catherine, and Francis also contributed to the discussion. Heather suggested we table this issue pending a request from the family.

Stewardship campaign: Robert stated that the plan is to start in March on this effort. Harriet and Robert are the lead on this effort.

Non-member request from a group that is incompatible with our shared values: Francis had reached out to Rev. David Weissbard on this topic and shared a document with the Board on David’s views on this. Kelly, Heather, Catherine and Francis contributed to the discussion. A focus on how to deal with this issue was part of the discussion.

**Next Board Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 27 at 7:00 pm.**

**Process Observer Report** – Amy stated that everyone stayed on task and got it done!

Heather adjourned the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis Ashland, Secretary