

**Marquette Unitarian Universalist Congregation**  
**Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda**  
**January 15, 2017**

Call to Order: 12:39 p.m.

BoT Member Attendance: Dharmnini Robertson, Dea Kowalczyk, Katheryn Klos,  
Anne Stark

Other Attendance: Suzy Swanson, Bill Jozwiack, Mike White, Gail Griffith, Lindsay  
Griffith, Nancy Sullivan, gg gordon

Opening words: Dea

Open Forum: Mike White is going to try to reach members for annual pledges at the annual meeting. Lindsay Griffith wishes he could bring another calculator for the congregation where it won't get abused by kids. gg gorden said Laura Lancour hasn't been paid since December, Nancy Sullivan said Laura had been. Nancy Sullivan said she'd be willing to run for the empty seat on the BOT, but asked that we be aware that she will be out of town for several meetings a year. Book group starts Jan 26. 1:30-3 p.m. (Thursdays) studying "How to Be Sick", a Buddhist focused way to handle chronic illness, pain or caregivers.

Reading of Board Covenant

Approval of Minutes: Dea moved the minutes for December be approved. Anne seconded. Kathy affirmed and Dharmini abstained due to absence.

Approval of Agenda – Dharmini moved we approve the agenda, Dea seconded.

Treasury Report – Heidi Gould reports that gg gordon's guidance was very helpful coming up with a report. Please keep in mind that this report is just for the month of December. Heidi finds the credit card processing statement dates are confusing and would like it to be simplified. gg said going back to the debit card would solve the problem of the timing when payments come out of the account after the "float" for credit card. Heidi would like to reduce how complex the payment system is. Debit cards aren't necessarily accepted everywhere and Dea noted that the Finance Committee had originally recommended that we switch to credit card to lower the risk of hacking (increased security of credit cards). Heidi will inquire at the bank how to simplify the bookkeeping.

In the summary of receipts and expenditures, the current balance is \$2,568.52, but that includes a check to JJ Packs that has not been cashed.

The accountant is working on 10-99s and W2s. They are offering a full menu of services, but we probably don't need all the payroll services, but the tax services would be good to have someone else trained to do. gg said she would be willing to do the taxes.

Administrative Assistant Report – Heidi thanked Mike for sponsoring Ian Evison’s Feb 19<sup>th</sup> service on Stewardship. Ian is facilitating a Lay Pastoral Care Workshop in Houghton, the day before for which Dea and Mike plan to attend. Heidi received the slides from a GA workshop to strengthen relationships within the congregation to help us then have the capacity to reach out to the community to build membership. Heidi wants to use all the resources that the UUA has rather than repeatedly inviting guest workshop leaders back again.

Religious Exploration Coordinator Report – Jamie sent a report to the BOO ahead of the meeting. Kathy Klos says she’s doing a great job. The kids are all participating. Jamie has them all focused on the theme of the morning. Her reports are timely and detailed. We really appreciate that.

Board Liaison Reports As Needed:

Buildings & Grounds -- Bill J. is going to contact someone with the door. Also check the lights in the front of the sanctuary are flickering.

Communications – Anne Stark (board liaison)

Faith in Action – Anne Stark (board liaison)

Finance and Stewardship - Dea Kowalczyk (Board Liaison), Sarah Redmond (Chair)

Music – Dharmini Robertson (board liaison), Barb Michael (Music Coordinator)

RE – Kathy Klos (board liaison), Jamie Kuehnl (RE Coordinator)

Sunday Service – Kathy Klos (board liaison), Tom Sullivan (Chair) - It’s nice to have professional ministers since we have openings the first Sunday in February and the last Sunday in February. Maybe the first Sunday in February could be a report on the Women’s Marches in Marquette, Lansing and Washington. Dharmini would be willing to do the service on the last Sunday of February.

Katheryn Klos & Tom Sullivan asked if we want Emmy Lou Belcher 1-3 more Sundays this year. It’s a matter of coordinating her calendar and if we can afford the \$1,000 per diem.

Dea said there’s a tension between the challenges of declining participation and burn-out vs. will we become complacent or will we get a good respite from burnout.

Dharmini said Emmy Lou said we as a Board are responsible for asking visiting ministers for the message we want them to address. Going on to the member surveys, a very strong thread was a desire for increased focus.

Mike White asked if we get more attendance when we have a guest minister or if it stays the same. We have data going back for years. Mike said when Nancy was

our celebrant, there was a big challenge with the diversity of what we all want when we come to Sunday mornings.

Heidi said our average attendance was 23, the Sunday after the election was 50, today was 35. When visitors are surrounded by empty chairs, it makes an impression. It's really disheartening for a guest minister to address a small gathering. With Emmy Lou, maybe have her do a workshop for the congregation instead of another Board Retreat. We can use the survey results to help direct us to ask her for specific content. Heidi agrees that we need to grow, and we've decided as a board to strengthen relationships within the congregation, because word-of-mouth is our best way to find out about UU.

Nancy Sullivan isn't a huge Emmy Lou fan, but has been warming up to her. As long as we are specific in our direction of what we request. Some of the UU churches in Portland, OR are also struggling with guest ministers.

Mike White said we have savings that we could tap into if necessary. Not every member will be pleased with every guest minister. The financial trend is that older members are retiring and quitting, younger members don't pledge in the same amounts. Mike said there will be a financial crisis in 3-4 years if we don't address congregation numbers soon.

Nancy Sullivan said she'd never do anything alone in the church, like coming in to take care of the Christmas tree.

Heidi would like to invite a rousing, exciting UU minister to help energize us with a specific ask and a roller coaster of emotions.

Suzy Swanson said the key to ministers is they have good days and bad days. Ministers AND lay people have given great, solid messages of the morning. We need to keep mixing it up. We are all ministering to each other.

gg gordon said our greater community has ministers, lay leaders, social activists already come, we've had some great people from the community. We could tap more resources at lower costs. She went to a New York City UU congregation and the minister wasn't so hot.

Dea is looking at pruning committees to keep up with interests. Sunday service is where it's at, that's what we need to make our focus, to make special.

## New Business

**UPAWS gift in memory of Joan Steindler** – Nancy Sullivan said there was a conversation with Sari about what kind of tree (not a cedar) that Joan wanted to plant. Gg said that her opinion was that there was no chance for a funeral service here due to unusual

circumstances. In gg's opinion there was a distinction in the circumstances of her passing. The BoT was unanimous that since she and Martin weren't here for us to help take care of here. In lieu of buying Martin a puppy, we're taking a collection from the community on Valentine's Day. Dharmini will write something up for the This n' That.

**Create Policy to inform the Board of grievances in writing** – Board members may be approached multiple times by congregants and we as BOT members we are not clear as to whether the complaint is serious enough to be a formal grievance. Dharmini would like an announcement made at the Congregational Meeting asking for formal grievances to come from committees in writing rather than have repeat of the problems we had recently with the Finance committee and our bookkeeping staffing situation. Heidi is checking the mailbox for correspondence. She said the order of operations needs to be included in the policy. *Anne will take a stab at a draft.*

**Nominating Committee** – The Board acknowledged Nancy Sullivan's willingness to run for BoT, so she can't be the nominating committee. Gg volunteered to be a member of the nominating committee.

**Schedule 2017 Board Meetings & board presence at services** – We can stick to the Second Sundays according to Dharmini, Dea, Anne and Kathy

Board Meetings tentatively scheduled for

Feb 12, 2017

March 12

April 9

May 14

Sunday Services

Jan 22 -- Dea

Jan 29 -- Dharmini

Feb 5 – Kathy

Feb 12 -- Anne

Feb 19 – Anne

Feb 26 Dharmini

March 5 --

April 2 -- Anne

**Pet policy** – Dea is asking the BOT to adopt a policy regarding pets with the exception of service animals or emotional support animals at regular indoor services, the blessing of the pets indoor service, Lakenenland/Outdoor services to accommodate congregation members with allergies, fears or phobias. *Anne and Heidi will come up with some language in accordance with the policy.* Dea and Dharmini suggested that we put up a sign on the door that service animals ONLY are welcome.

**Holiday Bonuses** – Anne moved that we pay each of our three employees average two weeks pay or one pay period. We'll round up to a nice, even number. Suzy mentioned that Heidi is very much appreciated. Dea said that without her, MqtUU wouldn't be around.

**Finance Committee's treasurer search** – Mike asked to be caught up. We have hired an accountant that's going to do the W2s, Dea said we need someone who will pay bills. It's too much for her to do. Mike says the UUA has some great recommendations. One bookkeeper, one person who has ability to disburse funds and a third person with the physical custody of the bank account.

gg said the trouble with having a bookkeeper from outside the congregation is they don't know what categories that we use and our reports don't look anything like what we are used to.

Dea asked the finance committee to come up with a person to be the disbursement person and bookkeeper. Mike said he'd start looking. His preference would be to have the bookkeeping done by an outside person, you can work with an accountant over time to train them how to classify the expenditures. Brendan may be flexible enough now to accommodate our needs.

Anne said we owe Heidi some training in bookkeeping.

Dharmini summarized this:

Asking finance committee to come up with a nomination of someone to disburse and sign. Ask finance committee for recommendations on how to divide the bookkeeping and finance roles for security. As a board, we want to make sure that Heidi needs to be supported and have an increase in pay to reflect increased responsibilities.

**Survey Results** – Dharmini noted that some of the information was not released by the participants, so the notebook will need to be redacted before being archived. She tabulated the data in a notebook, noting that duplicate answers don't add up to the total 38 respondents. Also respondents didn't necessarily answer all questions. Dharmini's interpretation is eight is a significant majority.

Dharmini went through the tallied questionnaire. Suzy said that the listing in the Mining Journal is helpful, especially with the service themes. It's the newspaper of record. gg said that we might want to add content to the Mining Journal ad about meaning making and seekers.

Question 15 was what we're looking for, Dharmini suggested we could summarize this answer and provide that to guest ministers along with the 7 principles.

Barb needs to know that the majority of respondents said to NOT change the music program. Dharmini will confer with Barb to let her know how well her program is received by the community. gg and Nancy Sullivan both expressed their appreciation to Dharmini for doing the summary.

**Joan's Life Gift** (which is different than the UPAWS gift) – Joan Steindler Dea and Dharmini will prepare the packet and will have it ready by the next board meeting so we can pass a Board resolution at the February meeting. It's a substantial gift, equivalent to a year's budget. The Finance Committee will be tasked with a recommendation for what to do with this generous gift.

### **Old Business**

New Year ~ New to UU info – Dharmini and Heidi working on a curriculum Start in February? This is on hold for now.

Mediation Council – Dharmini contacted MARS – Dharmini had a nice conversation with the mediator. Because we're a non-profit, she'll set it up as needed, they do a lot of background work before a meeting, the fee would be \$250 upfront, including 3-4 hours of background work. If needed, there is an hourly rate, but MARS would be willing to work with us as needed. Passed unanimously, will be presented at the Congregational Meeting to dissolve the mediation council

Review/Revise Bylaws – Barb & Heidi – on hold until further notice. Anne will assist.

January Congregational Meeting – scheduled for January 29, 2017.

See attachment We made some clarifications and additions to the draft agenda, specifically about the reason behind the dissolution of the Real Property Fund Trust.

Dea read out her draft of her remarks, noting that she'll make a few changes due to how her impression of the congregation has improved in the last few days. She plans on "ripping the bandaid off" with some tough-love words for the congregation. She's going to ask for more commitment from the congregation for shaking up and rebuilding the congregation.

Congregational Meeting: January 29, 2016

Next Meeting Date: February 19, 2016

Adjourn: 3:27 p.m.