

Marquette Unitarian Universalist Congregation
Board of Trustees Minutes, Wednesday, 09-20-23, 6:00 pm EST
Via Zoom

1. Call to Order: 6: 22 p.m.
 - a. Attending: Jill Malin, Andrea Stader, Martin Steindler, Susan Urban
 - b. Absent: None
 - c. Others Attending: Christie Wagner, Mary Maki signed on at about an hour into the meeting.
2. Opening words and chalice lighting
3. Open Forum - None
4. Approval of Agenda: Jill moved to approve, Martin seconded, approved unanimously.
5. Approval of 8-15-23 BOT minutes: Martin moved to approve, Jill seconded, approved unanimously.
6. Treasurer's Report - Jill
 - a. Review report from Jill
Credits, Debits and Balances for this month
Incoming: \$1665.35, Outgoing: \$1204.04.
Balances – nothing new, checking account has just had a new deposit.
Status of janitorial services? Jill talked with Laura, she has been sick, but will return to do a deep clean.
Pledge Campaign progress for 2023-2024
Pledges still coming in. No new ones.
 - b. Review and possible upgrade of Internet connection – Christie had committed to look into this. Christie reported on 8/22: “For the internet connection/spectrum piece I will need a copy of the bill and especially the account number so I can work with spectrum over the phone.” Anything new to report? Nothing new. Jill will send Christie a copy of the bill so that she can follow up.
 - c. With Rev. Denise Tracy presenting for us once a month on first Sundays starting October 1, we need to restore no-ad YouTube. Jill will restore this.
 - d. Approval of Treasurer's report: Martin moved to approve, Andrea seconded, approved unanimously.
7. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Website review and updates – Susan added minutes approved on 7-18-23. She has not yet added the newest Treasurer's Reports. Susan will get this done.
Christie had said she would work on the website with the goal of increasing membership participation and membership, and community involvement. Christie reported on 8-22: “I will start to look at the website organization, propose changes to the board and try to implement those changes once approved.” Any updates? No progress.
 - b. Use and organization of the Google Drive – Christie reported on 8-22: “I will review the google drive organization, propose changes to the board and try to implement those changes once approved.” Any updates? No progress.
 - c. Monthly board meeting schedule: Next meeting: Tuesday, October 17, 2023, 6:00 p.m. Eastern via Zoom.
 - d. Jill is monitoring email and phone messages.

- e. Services Schedule: Service Leader, Topic, zoom host - other comments on services.
- i. 9/17/23 (comments on a past Sunday) – At the last BOT meeting, Susan asked if we should use the building to have a homecoming service on this Sunday, have one online only, or have one at a different location TBD. Martin suggested that with so few members to “come home,” maybe we should skip a homecoming service this year. He suggested that Susan put a notice in the TNT asking about homecoming, and if there were no responses, we could have a link to the service at Keweenaw UU instead. Susan put the notice about a possible homecoming service in the TNT. There were no responses, so we provided a link to the service at Keweenaw UU.
 - ii. 9/24/23 – 11:30am Eastern (10:30am Central - NOTE LATER TIME) - Recommended link to service at Universalist Unitarian Church of Joliet, "Beginning Again: Starting a New Year," with Rev. Denise Tracy. Since we have engaged Rev. Denise to preach for us by Zoom on the first Sunday of October, November, and December, this will provide an opportunity to hear her preach.
 - iii. 10/1/23– Our first service with our once a month minister through at least the end of the year. Sermon title: “The Taming of Lucy” - In St Exupery's book The Little Prince the fox says to the little prince, "One only understands the things that one tames." What does it mean to be tamed? How do we love and change one another? This service is a meditation and reflection about love and relationship. Christie will be Zoom host and Worship Assistant. Rev. Tracy has already submitted her order of service.
 - iv. 10/8/23 - Triangle service with UU Petoskey, Topic and presenter TBA.
 - v. 10/15/23 – Link to service at Keweenaw UU.
 - vi. 10/22/23 - Bay de Noc UU will not be Zooming their 4th Sunday services for the foreseeable future. Link to a service at another congregation - Jill will find one.
 - vii. 10/29/23 - Fifth Sunday Fellowship with Petoskey UU and UU Gettysburg, PA.
 - viii. On 8/15/23, the BOT agreed that we should not use the building for services through fall, but instead continue to provide links to services at other churches, mostly our sister UP UU churches, but that once a month we should hire a professional or semi-professional minister or service presenter to provide a Zoom service. Susan contacted the Rev. Denise Tracy, she has agreed to present for MUUC on the first Sunday through the rest of the year for a fee of \$150 per service. The Board also expressed enthusiasm for gatherings at the homes of members or at other places in Marquette that can accommodate a small group. Any ideas on this? The Crib on Third Street might be a possibility. Contrast Coffee might be another possibility. Superior Stay hotel on the corner of Third and Fair. Jill will look into all of these.
 - ix. Susan agreed last month to contact Petoskey leadership for advice on being a Zoom only congregation. She did so, they did not have much advice to provide, but they did say having a professional minister present services regularly helped some. See Appendix A for Susan’s inquiry and their answer. Susan will send the contact info for the webmaster of Petoskey UU to Christie to see if he has any ideas for her.

- f. Events –Shine Dance continuing through October 26. Was check received for the extension? Yes.
Jill would like to do a scary movie party at the building on Saturday, October 28, at about 7 p.m. Still on? Jill has not heard back from the ALANO group, so this may not happen.
- g. Email discussion list – Christie – IO group, agreed to send notices to the membership list. Christie reported on 8/22: “The IO group is kind of an interesting thing. The membership is moderated but once a member is approved by the moderator they should be able to post announcements. This means announcements and any discussions can be initiated by anyone and all following that particular topic should get notified as they have their notifications settings configured. In that sense no one person is managing discussions. A moderator or several moderators could manage and approve postings but it's not set up that way right now. Basically anyone should be able to post an announcement right now. The real challenge is getting everyone to use it as a discussion group and notification system.” The consensus was that we should put a link to the discussion group on the MUUC website with an explanation of how it works. Christie will do this.
- h. Implementing changes in fee structure for renting the sanctuary – Christie reported on 8/22: “I will draft changes for the website content related to the building rental from what I recall of the discussion and from the minutes and get them to the board before posting the updates to the website.” Any updates? Not yet, on Christie’s list. Jill should have the contract back from the Northwoods Learning Hub. Jill gave an explanation about who they are and what they do.
- i. Plan to sell the property: The second meeting of the Building Sale Committee was on August 24, 2023, 6:30 p.m. at Martin’s home. The contract was discussed, tried to determine price. Jill talked to the real estate agent on price recently, she said to start at around \$399,000. Gina, Jill and Susan will meet September 21 to fill in the details of the contract. Dave’s lawyer brother offered to look at the contract. Christie wondered what the cost of this would be. The Building Sale committee is waiting for input on this. No future meetings scheduled until they have more information. Jill proposed we find out how much it would cost to have the lawyer review the contract and get back to the Building Sale committee. Christie suggested that we approve a specific amount for this at this meeting. Jill motioned that the BOT approve the spending of up to \$525 for a lawyer to review the listing agreement (Exclusive Sales Agency Contract). Susan moved to approve, Jill seconded, approved unanimously.

8. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Congregational Blueberry breakfast, Saturday, October 7 proposed by Sarah Johnson at the building. The Board suggested a time of 10 am. Jill motioned to approve, and advertise to the public through word of mouth, TNT, website. Martin seconded, approved unanimously.
- b. Discussion: Our goals, future, and strategic plan
 - i. Ideas to promote MUUC during the period while waiting to sell the building and we will be mostly a Zoom only congregation.

Mary suggested that we make Rev. Tracy's services joint services. We can send notices to Bay de Noc UU to come to her services since they have no first Sunday service.

Should we put up a new MUUC Facebook page that isn't private? Christie will look into this by a week from today.

Adjournment: 7:56p.m.

APPENDIX A

Hi, Audrey, Marquette UU is in the process of selling our building, which is not only too large for the small number of people who currently attend services, but is too far outside of Marquette to be conveniently located. A number of our most active members moved away or died just before the pandemic, and most of the rest discontinued attending during the pandemic and never came back. We have gone from 19 to approximately 12 members this fiscal year, since people who had not set foot in the building for years stopped pledging. There are only about half a dozen of us now to do the actual work of running the congregation.

We are not sure what the future will hold as far as where we may end up meeting once the building sells, but since hardly anyone is coming to the building, we have decided to try being a Zoom only congregation at least through the end of the year, with occasional gatherings at the homes of members in Marquette.

I am now the President of the Marquette UU Board of Trustees and agreed to ask you for advice on how you publicize your congregation. I noticed that your website is very well done and kept up to date, does a volunteer from Petoskey UU do that, or do you pay for a professional webmaster? Are there other ways that you publicize your services? Any other advice would be very welcome.

Thanks so much.Susan

ANSWER FROM AUDREY McMULLEN:

So sorry to hear that your people are sliding away; seems to be the pattern post-pandemic. Our website is some pre-packaged thing that I think we get through the UUA -- so that all local UUA websites look alike (sort of)

Our IT guru has done the initial setup and I post the weekly services. He adds photos and other postings. We also spread the word through an email program called "Vertical Response." We use the original version (cheaper) and they don't offer tutorials or much help, either, but after three years, I'm getting the hang of it!! We are both volunteers.

I'll forward your message to Joe; he is the guts of the internet operation. He is presently on vacation (In the UP!!!!), so it might be a little while before you hear from him

Wishing you and your congregation enduring bonds of love and community. Maybe we can help -- please stay in touch!Be well -Audrey

ANSWER FROM KIM NOWACK:

So sad to hear this Susan!!! I always enjoyed passing by your building and thinking how nice it must be to have such a place to meet. I would look at it as something we in Petoskey can dream about for our future. I can see how it would be a big drain on your little group. We are a wandering congregation and have met in homes, libraries, schools, dentist office basements, book store basements, township halls, hotels, concert venues, old chapels and probably some I'm forgetting. We've had some fairly long-term rental places that worked well for us, but alas things change, and we move on. We ended up putting our energy into a minister instead of a building in hopes that it would build and improve our congregation, which it has.

Audrey also maintains our facebook page in hopes that it will entice some to our group. I would have thought that Marquette would be teeming with progressive UU's!!

Are you planning an ending ritual or service of some kind? perhaps we can help with that and support your group as you leave the building behind. Or maybe you want to circle your wagons and do that on your own. I copied in Rev Alice in case she has ideas. I, for one, would like to help you through this and make sure your congregation knows that we are out there rooting for you in our greater UU community. Kim