

ESUC Board of Trustees

Minutes

April 18, 2017

Minutes, Leadership Reports, Consent Agenda:	Com. + Board Liaison Reports Consent Agenda:
March Board Agenda + Upcoming Events	Personnel Com. – Connie Hirnle
Minutes of Last Board Meeting – March 21 and Open Action Items	Congregant to Staff Feedback Process and Form - Final – Personnel Com. Grace Colton
Board President's Report – Jack Slowriver Appendix A–Khasi Hills Ministry Team msg Appendix B-Ministry Team Charter - Draft	Summary of Earth & Social Justice Activities – Marilyn Mayers
Finance - Treasurer Report – Ryam Hill Appendix A - 5 Year Strategic Plan and Financial Forecasting Factors – Draft Appendix B – HH Asset Analysis - Draft	
Interim Minister Report-Rev Elaine Peresluha	
Director, Finance & Operations–Jason Puracal Appendix A - Donor Solicitations at ESUC Appendix B+C Jessie Zhao, Summary Income Statement + Balance Sheet Analysis Appendix D – Financial Charts Appendix E – Market Analytics Appendix F – Finance Team Response: KHMT	Discussion Agenda: See appendices provided by Jack, Ryam, and Jason.
Director of Lifelong Learning - Aisha Hauser	Executive Session: DFO and DLL evaluations

Agenda

East Shore Unitarian Church - Board of Trustees

April 18, 2017

Board Host: Lee (May Host is Reed)

6:45	Social Gathering	
7:00	Opening Words, Chalice Lighting	Lee
7:05	Check In/ Guest introductions	All
7:10	Approval of Consent Agenda	All
7:20	Khasi Hills and standardized accounting	Jason
7:40	Financial Stewardship Update	Claudia
8:00	Going to two services – how is this decided?	All
8:10	Review of Holly House next steps	All

8:20	Review of White Supremacy language	Aisha
8:40	Board retreat date	Elaine
8:45	Executive Session (plan for Jason and Aisha's BoT review)	All
9:00	Closing words	Lee

Upcoming Events for Your Calendar

- May Board Packet items due Wednesday, May 10: email to Ryam Hill
- April Beacon Board Buzz due Wednesday, May 10: Reed
- May Board Meeting May 16; Reed is host.
- Sunday Services Announcements 4/30 Dave, 5/7 Grace Colton, 5/14 John Chmaj, 5/21 Marilyn, 5/28 open

Opening Words – Jack Slowriver, our Board President, called the meeting to order, at 7pm, welcoming the board members, SLT, and our visitors. Lee provided the opening reflection and also hosted the meeting providing delicious snacks.

Check-in – The Board of Trustees includes (absent) David Baumgart (secretary), Reed Cundiff, Tom Doe, Lee Dorigan, Ryam Hill (treasurer), Marilyn Mayers, Connie Hirnle (VP), Marcy Langrock, Catherine Ramsey, and Jack Slowriver (president). The Board also includes our interim minister, Rev. Elaine Peresluha, Jason Puracal – Director of Finance & Operations, and Aisha Hauser – Director of Life Long Learning.

- Visitors – Tom Ball, Bob Weiss, Trish Hinter, Claudia Hershey.
- Khasi Hills Ministry Tream: Court Olson, Barb Clagett, John Chmaj, and Roger Corn

Review of Board Agenda + Consent Agenda - *(see content of Board Packet – all Board members are expected to review the entire Board Packet prior to the Board Meeting)* – Jack asked if anyone requested to move any item from the Consent Agenda to the Discussion Agenda – no items were moved to discussion.

Ryam moved and Marilyn seconded to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed. This included tonight's board agenda, the revised March 21 Board minutes, and the board liaison reports. All board members are reminded that Items for the Discussion Agenda are required by the cutoff date for the board packet. It is better to have such items for the Executive Council (first Tuesday, each month).

Consent agenda topics

- Follow-up to the March Board meeting, the DFO reports that a transfer of \$29k from the general reserve has been completed to cover the new interim minister's contract.
- The DFO in collaboration with the Financial Stewardship team will continue to centralize all ministry accounting thru the use of the Operating account.

Financial Stewardship

Claudia Hershey presented the Draft of a 5 year financial strategic plan. This plan covers various aspects of financial planning including capital reserves, pledge income, staff salaries, and health insurance guidelines. The plan also reviews our major assets including the Holly House. The major assumptions are attached as an appendix titled: "Financial Forecasting Factors." A pro forma worksheet is being developed to better illustrate the 5 year plan. For more information, please see Ryam or Claudia Hirschey.

Notable points:

Under discussion – is establishing a **capital reserve** for East Shore for upcoming capital improvements that will be required in the next 20-30 years to avoid having to have a special fund drive for each one, especially in the case of emergency. A recent study recommended that we maintain \$1,362,000 in reserve as of January 2017, and add to this amount annually based upon the projected expenses forthcoming, to be 100% funded. This would be a big change. The current and past leads of the endowment committee have expressed generally

positive reactions to the possibility that with appropriate safeguards, the endowment committee might be willing to consider the possibility of underwriting the capital reserve in some fashion.

Pledge income: Jack asked about the UUA guidelines for OFD, specifically for how the amounts of donations are spread out across the congregation, especially with regard to number of donors at specific \$ points. In general, our giving levels are low compared to optimal practice, notably we should have a few donors in the 30-40K range (we have none), and we are very low in the \$3000-9000 range. Elaine plans to address the midrange issue by speaking to folks in the 2000-2500 range to up their pledges. Board members were recruited to make calls to some donors who have not yet pledged.

Bob Weiss requested that the draft of the 5 year strategic plan be made available to the congregation, even now when it is a working draft.

Khasi Hills Ministry Team

Court presented a PowerPoint on the history of the Khasi Hills partnership to explain how it has been operating and why. Their primary mission is to bring new ideas and perspectives to ESUC members and developing distant friendships. Secondary to that is provision of financial support for their collective needs.

They emphasized the difficulty of communicating with the KH because of lack of infrastructure. There are no phone lines, although some people now have cell phones, but it is prohibitively expensive for them to call us, so we need to call them. The difference in time zones allow only a short window of possible call time. They have one person who has access to email sporadically every week or two. Culturally they don't like to ask for help, so needs must be assessed in person before knowing how much \$\$ is required each year. In general, they spend \$3500-6500 per year. An ongoing project we support is an English language school for which we are the primary donors. KHMT gets their money mostly from fund raising specific to their project.. There has been an annual fund raising offertory during service. Trinkets and Treasures garage sale has been an important fundraising event the last two years. Getting funds to India requires complex machinations—ESUC has to write a check to the UU Partner Church Council (UUPCC) who will transfer it to a cognate group in India who will then transfer it to the people it is intended for. Because of the above difficulties, The KH partnership is much more difficult to manage than the Romanian one where they have much better infrastructure. The needs of the two places are very different.

Group is worried about the new funds management policies. For example, how will the new requirement to say that donations are for “ESUC operating funds including Khasi Hills partnership”? will people still be willing to give if they think their money won't go to where they intend it? Since they need different amounts every year, and don't know until they visit how much is needed, it is difficult to write a budget.

What do they want? They have been in repeated meetings with Ryam, Jason and Laura Rivendell but have not been satisfied with the answers they have received. Court had not yet read the responses to their specific written questions that was included in the Board Packet, so we don't know if their concerns were satisfactorily addressed in that information. Court requested a Task Force of the Board be formed to write specific policies for the Partner Churches/Khasi Hills Ministry Team. It was deemed appropriate not to form a new Task Force, rather to have board members join the ongoing conversations as the meetings have been contentious at times, and generally unsatisfactory. Catherine and Marcy agreed to attend the next meeting to review how the Team's finances can operate under current financial policies. Ryam agreed to bring Catherine and Marcy up to speed prior to the next meeting with the Team. We plan to look into their charter to address some of these concerns.

Transition to 2 services?

Elaine and Aisha discussed the idea of switching to two services. This has been requested by some Sunday school teachers so that they may attend service. Another advantage is that it would be possible to offer two types of service—one regular structure with sermon, etc., and the other a more contemplative “spiritual”

service, perhaps incorporating meditation practices from assorted other cultures. The worship committee is soliciting input on this idea. Connie expressed concern over stretching our resources too thin, especially in staffing (paid and unpaid). Another question is would we start it this fall or the following year?

Holly House—Next Steps

Bob Weiss (and Lee) presented. They will be meeting with Habitat for Humanity and Abby Birmingham to look at the option of them purchasing the land. They got an initial estimate of the commercial value of the land from Craig Nelson, and have asked for a bid from a commercial developer. The ground lease option was rejected by the committee, but there is still an outstanding request to a commercial developer to give a bid based on such a model. Lee will be providing the board with updates for how this is going.

How will we do the vote on what to do with Holly House? We need to have a quorum of 25% of the membership (about 125) and then a simple majority will suffice, according to our bylaws. Abby has said that buy in to the idea should come from 75% of the congregation. There is a question of proxy votes. Jack says that he believes that proxies may not be allowed by our bylaws, and they will check. How will we set up the ballot or structure the voting? Should we each rank the order in which we prefer each of the options and sum up the results? Bob Weiss is not a fan of that model, and proposes instead to do successive votes to narrow the choices. Narrow from 4 to 3 on one vote, from 3 to 2 on the next and finally have a run off between the final 2.

Because our yearly budget depends on what we get from Holly House, and we won't know which option (and financial consequences) will be chosen until after the same meeting, that we set a provisionary budget, not including any funds to fix up Holly House or assumed income from it, then in the fall after the financial outcome will be to revisit the budget, and have another town hall, if necessary to vote on a revised budget.

White Supremacy vs. White Supremacists

A long discussion ensued about the use of the term White Supremacy to refer to the national UUA organization or the local congregation. Because of recent issues in the national UUA, this topic has become divisive. Some 15 UU educators proposed a Teach In on White Supremacy and its current usage among academics and activists as meaning a system in which there is de facto, if unintentional, white privilege reflected. There has been some congregational opposition to the idea of our congregation and our movement using the term in this limited fashion, especially publicly and in social media, where it will be understood by its traditional meaning of extreme racism. While Elaine and others promoted the idea that using this provocative term is necessary to bring attention to the long simmering problem of racial injustice in our country which hasn't been solved by well-meaning liberals' acceptance of the equality of all. By using this evocative term, they hope to inspire greater attention to the issues and drive the complacent white community to action. Some members, including board members felt that use of a pejorative was the wrong way to start a thoughtful and meaningful conversation. Other board members felt supportive of this initiative. Nonetheless, it was agreed to participate in "the teach-in" by showing the film by Robin DiAngelo called "Whiteness in Daily Life—Seeing the Water" as part of the service on May 7.

Church Board Retreat

July 7-8. Friday eve. 7-9:30, Saturday 9-3, at Elaines's

Nominating Committee

Need to fill Mike Dressel's position on the nominating committee since he has moved. Jack nominated Manny Brown to fill Mike's place and Marcy seconded. Passed unanimously.

Abbreviated Executive Session

We need to set new goals.

We entered into executive session at about 8:40pm to discuss the timing of the performance reviews for our DFO, Jason, and our DLL, Aisha. We would be following the process as documented by the UUA.

The meeting ended about 9pm. Our next board meeting is May 16, 2017

Recording Secretary – Catherine Ramsey (thank you! 😊)

Respectfully submitted by David Baumgart

Secretary, ESUC Board of Trustees

OPEN ACTION ITEMS: (REVISED APRIL 18)

What	Who	When / Notes
Catherine and Marcy will attend the next Khasi Hills Ministry Team meeting.	Jack or Marcy	tbd
Publish the March 5 congregational meeting minutes	Dave	Ann Fletcher was the recording secretary

CLOSED ACTION ITEMS:	Who	When / Notes
Budget Effort for FY 2017 / 18 Budget Town Halls are now scheduled April 2 at 11:30 am and April 3 at 7pm.	Ryam, Jason	Ryam reported the budget team is formed and they are managing a budget goal and considering a stretch goal.
Organize the interim Music Search Committee	Elaine, Catherine, Marilyn	By April 15 – at least 5 members, using an “Application” process as outlined by Jack.
Create by a Vision Team Task Force of the Board	Jack	By June 4 when a draft vision statement could be presented at the congregational meeting.
Invite Manny Brown to join the Nominating Com.	Jack	Complete!

Appendix 1

The Board adopted or supported the following decisions, below, as part of the Consent Agenda Approval:

Director of Finance and Operations:

- Per my March Board report request, and approved by the Board, was the transfer of \$29k from the General Reserves Designated Fund to the Operating Fund to cover the additional burden to the current fiscal year operating budget resulting from the contract extension of the Interim Minister.
- The Finance Team has been meeting with each individual Ministry and Core Team to discuss the transitioning to all activities being run through the Operating Fund and their budget projections for the next fiscal year. Most Teams understand the legal and tax reasons for the change, understand how it impacts their Team, and have or will submit budget input.

END OF MINUTES