

Minutes

East Shore Unitarian Church

Board of Trustees Meeting

October 26, 2023

Board Members Present: Geri Kennedy, Amanda Alice Uluhan, Signe Lalish, David Langrock, Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa Rebecca Chatfield, Nicole Duff, Keely Cofrin Allen, Evelyn Smith, Martin Cox.

Board Members absent: Taya Montgomery.

Visitors present: Bill Austin, Amanda Strombom, Ann Fletcher, Marcia Sill, Stu Davis.

<i>Facilitator:</i>	Signe Lalish, President
<i>Timekeeper:</i>	Martin Cox
<i>Process Observer:</i>	Keely Cofrin Allen
<i>Tech Helper:</i>	Nicole Duff

The meeting commenced at 3:30 PDT.

Chalice Lighting and Reading

Rev. Maria Cristina offered opening words about community.

Land Acknowledgement

Signe Lalish read the Land Acknowledgement.

Check-in

Meeting attendees shared something about one passion they have outside of church.

Consent Agenda

1. Approve the September 2023 BOT meeting minutes.
2. Approve the direction to Board liaisons to work with their committees to align on 2024 goals.
3. Approve the wording of the Board request to the Personnel Committee to study the UUA guidelines and develop an equity model.

4. Approve changes to the SLT Evaluation Process and forms.

Geri moved to approve the consent agenda. David seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Item #1: Report from the budget committee

Rebecca presented that the budget committee has achieved a draft balanced budget and held two budget town halls so far this fall. Rebecca sent an email to the Board with feedback, questions and comments from the Budget town halls that have happened so far. The budget committee will be meeting on Monday 10/30/2023 and will review the questions and comments.

The next budget town hall is 11/5/2023 (Sunday) and 11/6/2025 (Monday).

The budget will also need to go through the Financial Stewardship committee and to the Board at the Nov. 16 BOT meeting. The Board will need to approve the draft budget at that meeting for presentation to the congregation for a vote.

Discussion Item #1b: Source of funding for large non-operating expense

Geri explained that the church needs the board approval to draw on the endowment -- rather than on the operating fund -- to pay for large, non-discretionary expenses including repairs to the fire suppression system and Holly House legal fees. The operating fund is not designed to cover these large one-off expenses and cannot continue to do so.

Geri made a motion that was seconded, discussed, and amended as shown in italics below.

Discussion prior to vote included clarification that the board continues to review and approve the Holly House legal fees. The motion on the floor only specifies the source of the funds; it is not an approval for the expenditures. Geri clarified this motion is not about approval for funds; it is about the source for the funds.

A question was raised about whether the funds drawn from the endowment will be repaid to the endowment when possible. The answer was yes in the case of the Holly House legal expenses: these are being taken from endowment, tracked, and are planned to be repaid to the endowment fund when possible.

Geri moved that:

Any non-operating fund expenses (including building repair expenses exceeding \$5K such as the fire suppression system repairs, the elevator work, and any future Holly House legal fees) are to be taken from the endowment fund. This direction applies until Dec 31, 2023. This direction does not imply board approval for expenditure of these funds, it just directs the source of the funds.

Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Item #2: Recommendation from the Personnel Committee on the confidentiality of interactions between SLT and BOT members

Martin presented the recommendation from the Personnel Committee (PC) in response to the Board's request regarding the confidentiality of interactions between SLT and BOT members.

The recommendation was circulated to the board ahead of the meeting and was included as Appendix B in the packet.

The recommendation addresses situations in which an SLT member has confided information to an individual BOT member but asked that it not be disclosed to other BOT members.

The PC recommends that no board member agrees to receive confidential information about professional issues unless the individual sharing that information is aware that the board member may share that information with the entire board.

The purpose of this discussion item is to give feedback to the PC as to whether the board accepts the recommendation or wants the PC to modify the recommendation.

Meeting attendees discussed this recommendation and generally accepted and agreed with it. However, we agreed that the practice described in the recommendation is more of a covenant and a practice to clarify when onboarding SLT or board members and not really a procedure or a policy. No motion or vote was taken.

Martin agreed to respond to the PC that the board accepts the recommendation and will consider where to place the written recommendation as it may not be appropriate to be included in the Personnel Handbook or board policies.

Discussion Item #3: The future of the Beloved Conversations Among (BC Among) Task force

Nicole presented the Proposal for Beloved Conversations Among Task Force & 8th Principle Ministry Team to Combine. The written proposal was circulated to the board in advance of the meeting and included as Appendix C in the packet. The purpose of this discussion item was for the board to direct the combined Among + 8th Principle group as to whether the combined group should be a task force of the board, a board committee, or a ministry team.

Members of the Among + 8th Principle group had expressed a preference to become a task force because they want to be accountable to the board (whereas a ministry team is generally accountable to the staff.)

We discussed the board's commitment to on-going work in anti-racism and dismantling systems of oppression. We agreed that the group should be accountable to the board. We decided the on-going nature of this work makes it more appropriate that the group be a committee rather than a task force because task force implies a defined, time-limited goal or objective and anti-oppression work is "perpetual."

We made, discussed, and amended a motion that appears in final form in italics below.

Keely moved that:

The board directs the members of the 8th Principle Ministry Team and the Beloved Conversations Among Task force to combine and form a committee that reports to the board and come back with a proposed charter by Dec 7.

David seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Item #4: Nominating Committee checkpoint

Amanda Strombom represented the Nominating Committee (Nom Comm) and expressed that the Nom Comm is happy to identify specific individuals both for board and committee seats.

The board clarified that the areas of greatest needs are:

- The Financial Stewardship Committee needs a chairperson.
- The Personnel Committee needs 2 more people.

There was some discussion as to whether a member of the Nom Comm, the board, or the committee in question should make the first request to the potential candidate and it was generally agreed that the Nom Comm is the default, but the Nom Comm is welcome to approach a member of the board or the committee if that person has a better relationship with the potential candidate.

Announcements

- Pledges [Nicole]: early results in pledges are going well.
- Sanctuary Repairs [Rebecca]: work is proceeding on repair to the beam in the sanctuary.
- Mission Fund Drive [Nicole]: expressed thanks to Amanda, Lassie, and Doug for testimonials.

Process reflection

Keely shared observations on the process of the board meeting.

Closing

Rev. Maria Cristina offered words of gratitude for all of you and all the work you do.

The Board Meeting went into executive session at 5:30 PM.

Minutes compiled by Martin Cox
Secretary, Board of Trustees
East Shore Unitarian Church
Bellevue, WA
October 28, 2023