

Minutes

East Shore Unitarian Church

Board of Trustees Meeting

September 28, 2023

Board Members Present: Taya Montgomery, Geri Kennedy, Amanda Alice Uluhan, Signe Lalish, David Langrock, Rebecca Chatfield, Nicole Duff, Keely Cofrin Allen, Evelyn Smith, Martin Cox.

Board Members absent: Rev. Maria Cristina Vlassidis Burgoa.

Visitors present: Marcia Sill, Ryam Hill, Craig Nelson, Ann Fletcher, Patricia Hunter, Grace Colton.

Facilitator: Signe Lalish, President
Timekeeper: Keely Cofrin Allen
Process Observer: Geri Kennedy
Tech Helper: Nicole Duff

Meeting commenced at 3:30 PDT.

Chalice Lighting and Reading

Keely Cofrin Allen read from a Langston Hughes poem.

Check-in

Members shared one word about how they are entering into this meeting and one word about how they hope to come out.

Consent Agenda

1. Approve the August 2023 BOT meeting minutes.
2. Acknowledge the 9/13/2023 approval of the withdraw of \$50K from endowment for Sanctuary beam repairs and return of any unneeded funds to the endowment.
3. Approval of the Budget Committee Charter.
4. Approve revised version of ByLaws Article XI Section G "Officers and Board of Trustees – Budget and Finances."

Evelyn noted an omission in the August 2023 BOT meeting minutes. We amended the consent agenda to include the corrected August meeting minutes.

With that correction, Geri moved to approve the consent agenda. Evelyn seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion Item #1: Approve of P&G working on on-going ByLaw Revisions

Grace asked that the Bylaw Task Force have the Board's approval to proceed with the project of revising the bylaws. The project commenced two years ago, and the task force needs confirmation that the board still has the desire and energy to receive another round of changes in the coming year.

Since the project started, the task force has simplified areas of the bylaws, modernized language, and in a few cases made substantive changes, for example to the membership requirements (passed last year.)

Grace displayed a high-level timeline of the anticipated ByLaw Revision project for the coming year.

The board clarified our intent to assign a board liaison to the ByLaw Task Force and that will be David.

Martin asked when the board will need to attend to proposed and drafted changes to bylaws. The effort will have a period of iterative rounds in the Jan-March time frame.

There was no motion or vote, but the board consented that the Board supports the work of the Bylaw Task Force, appreciates the work the Bylaw Task Force has done over the past 2 years, and requests that the task force continue with the project and aim to complete by December 2024.

Discussion Item #2: Board Committee Discussion/Presentation

David delivered a presentation that is an abbreviated version of a presentation originally planned for the August 2023 board retreat.

David said the purpose of the presentation is to start a conversation about *Improving accountability for ESUC governance*.

The overall objective is to build a process to ensure that the church has the right people on the right committees and task forces doing the right governance work transparently, accountably, efficiently and lovingly. A core assumption is that ESUC does not have a process in place today to ensure the church has these things.

David presented two approaches to achieve this objective: Approach 1 (Top Down) and Approach 2 (Bottom Up.)

The “bottom up” approach is preferred. The “bottom up” approach requires the board to gather all the projects the committees are working on, review and “green light” the projects we want, defer/deprioritize projects that the board feels are not a priority, and potentially create, merge, or dissolve committees and task forces to improve alignment with Church Goals and long-term plans.

There was no motion or vote.

Discussion Item #3: ESUC Staff Equity Study

The board is asking for the Personnel Committee to study the UUA guidelines for staff compensation and bring more fullness, richness, and time to the report that the Board has worked on since Rebecca brought this issue to the board at the August 2023 meeting.

The goal of the board is to integrate the UUA guidelines – adapted to our ESUC specific situation -- into a consistent process to set staff compensation every year and budget cycle. Adapting the UUA guidelines for our situation at ESUC is complex and warrants getting help from the Personnel Committee. We want

the PC to reassess the various factors in the UUA guidelines especially the job levels of staff and the “ruler” method for computing compensation.

The board discussed these goals and heard concerns about this effort.

We developed the following draft motion and decided not to finalize the wording or take a vote so that the board has time to refine the wording and get it right.

DRAFT MOTION [NOT MOVED – NOT VOTED]

The Board requests for the Personnel Committee to conduct a ESUC Staff Equity Study. This would include a study of the UUA Equitable Staff guidelines, to interpret those guidelines in the context of ESUC, and to develop a process to incorporate those guidelines into on-going compensation plans. To clarify this study will not include any plans to change staffing levels; it is strictly to plan the compensation of the current staff.

Discussion Item #4: Board approve temp bypass of Policy re: Financial Stewardship approving budget if necessary.

Geri Kennedy asked the board to approve bypassing the budget process step where the Financial Stewardship committee approves the draft budget before it goes to the board for approval. This bypass would only occur under the contingency that the Financial Stewardship committee is unable to achieve quorum.

The board discussed guidance from policy-based governance and some history of the process.

The board acknowledged this bypass may occur and approved it if necessary. No motion was moved, and no vote was taken.

Announcements

- Sanctuary Repairs [Rebecca]: We have an engineering team in place to repair the beam in the sanctuary. We've paid the 50% deposit. The work will occur on workdays but is not yet scheduled.
- Budget town halls [Rebecca]: the budget committee has agreed to have 2 sets of Budget Town Halls, one on Sunday (Oct 22) multi-platform after service and Oct 23rd zoom only. Also repeated on November 5 (multi-platform) and November 6 (zoom only) for a more finalized version.
- Liaison to 8th Principle Team [Nicole]: Keely will serve as board liaison to the 8th Principle Ministry Team.
- Banner defacement [Nicole]: the welcome banner was defaced. The SLT is putting a statement out. Nicole will have it replaced. The event will be reported as a hate crime.

Closing

Keely read an excerpt from [The Hill We Climb](#) By Amanda Gorman.

The Board Meeting closed at 5:45 PM.

Minutes compiled by Martin Cox
Secretary, Board of Trustees
East Shore Unitarian Church

Bellevue, WA
September 28, 2023