



**Unitarian Universalist Congregation
of the Catskills**
Sunday Services at 10:30 am

UU Catskills Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: 7/12/23

Present:

Kristen Schara, Co-President; Dr. Erin Hilgart, Co-President; Kathy Atwell, Treasurer; Lydia McCaw, Secretary

Trustees: Don Critchell; Kathy Eberlein; Christie Billeci

Carma Haas, Assistant Treasurer

Lois Slade

The meeting began at 10:07 with Kristen Schara lighting the chalice as she read a centering poem. Board members then took turns reading from the covenant and shared in a check-in.

Review of minutes

Motion to approve made by Kristen and seconded by Christie Billeci. Motion passed.

Treasurer's Report

Kathy Atwell sent out budget vs actuals before the meeting.

She is waiting on one tweak to the balance sheet - it will be sent out when the quarterly report is available.

Takeaways from last year:

- Gift cards - the current negative balance is due to buying new stock so we can't tell exactly how much we made but Lois assures us we are still making money.
 - Can we promote the program more?
 - Carma will write up something to put by refreshments table.
- We made substantial contributions to charity last year! We should put this in the newsletter to celebrate.

There is an issue with people paying pledges via paypal and selecting the wrong option (Donation instead of pledge). Perhaps we could redo the form to make this easier?

Play Haven have signed a contract with us through December - their contract will be on a monthly basis afterwards.

Kristen made a motion to accept the report - Kathy Eberlein seconded. Motion approved.

President's report

Do we need an official president's report? Kristen never did one before. Consensus is no.

President is meeting with Rita re: weekly update/newsletter:

- The goal should be to streamline blurbs with links to more info
- Committees need to look at the website to confirm that their information is up to date.
- Committees can pass updates on to Carma who will get the site updated
- Newsletter/Update links need to be checked for accuracy when the drafts are sent out.
- Remove the treasurer email and replace it with Carma's personal email for Weekly update drafts.

The Mailchimp list needs to be pruned as we just hit over 500 emails, which costs us more money that we haven't budgeted for.

- Can we get membership committee to check over the list?
- Erin will request that Rita look at the situation
- Could we have a "Do you want to continue to be on this list?" email sent to people who haven't been opening the email regularly and remove them if they don't indicate a desire to remain on the list?

There will likely be a disaster relief fund due to current flooding. We could have a special collection for congregations affected. Maybe July 30th?

There are grumblings about the current electric chalice.

- Perhaps a soy candle would burn cleaner?
- Would better quality oil be an easy improvement?
- The worship committee can discuss the situation and make a decision.
- Donn will look into replacing the electronic candle with a wax candle similar to those used in christian churches.

Committee Reports

An update to the report:

- The chimney service came by and suggested the removal of the left chimney, capping it with bluestone.
- The right chimney needs a sleeve.
- Carma will check in with Bill re: costs.
- These renovations may mean that rooms in the farmhouse are unusable for an amount of time.

Atwood Gravel inspected our parking lot and will give us a quote for improving grading, drainage, etc.

The secondary lot area needs to be maintained, if not graveled.

Cars aren't parking very consistently, could we indicate spaces in some way?

Let's add a sign for additional parking directing people to secondary lot. B&G will handle.

Donn is willing to continue to do committee reports and work on a full committee list.

Public committee information needs to be updated and should have a chair listed so people can reach out to committee leaders if they want to join.

[Break]

New Business

Several committees are lacking members and/or leaders, including Leadership Development Committee, Pledge Committees, Finance Committee, Reproductive Justice Leadership, Social Justice Action Committee, and Caring Committee.

Our board should have a presence at the Interfaith Council

- Kathy Eberlein volunteered and will try to find out when their next meeting is. Lois and Lydia will be kept in the loop as additional volunteers.

The Fundraising committee is strong, but we could really use Finance and Pledge committees.

Lots of congregants have moved to Woodland Pond Retirement Community and stopped attending - Let's look into organizing a bus or weekly event there for them to stream the service to make it easier for them to remain part of the community.

Leadership Development:

- Looking to the future, we're interested in building a strategic pipeline to bring people from new membership to community leadership status. However, it would be a lot of work and won't have results for a few years.
- Leadership Development could be a subgroup of Membership committee.
- Previous Leadership Development committee was more of a Nominating committee.
- We could revive nominating committee strategy for the time being, acknowledging that we can't create the Leadership Development committee we want right now.
- The Membership committee could be more involved with long term members to keep track of who might be interested in leadership positions.
- This is something to discuss at our council meeting.

Board Retreat

- Those who can will go to training and we'll send the pre-work around to people who can't go.
- For reimbursements, email Kathy Atwell re: reimbursement.
- We'll schedule a followup retreat (possibly on zoom?) with everyone (suggested Sept 23rd)

Scheduling the next few months:

- Council Meeting: Oct 4 (Daytime or Evening) or Oct 14th

- Board Meetings: 3rd Wednesday of the month (Aug 16, Sept 20, Oct 18, Nov 15, Dec 20) - everyone is good with trying Zoom for our next meeting, Let's plan for 9:30-12 pm.
- Lydia will make and send out zoom meetings with google calendar events.

Alternative to All Ears initiative

- We could workshop ideas at the next council meeting.
- Erin suggested a monthly session with some board members in collaboration with various committee members. Each session would have a themed focus to help congregants learn about non-board leadership they can talk to for various issues.
- We could also have tabling sessions for committees three or four times a year to help them gather members.
- Donn and Lydia suggested some sort of comment box or form.
- Both sessions and comment box are good ideas, the goal is to implement both and see what works.
- Erin is going to work on planning a September session with the RE committee.
- Christie will make a form for the comment box.
- Some members have been using committee meetings as platforms for their grievances. Our hope is that by having a more clear structure for feedback we'll be able to both address grievances more effectively and avoid committee meetings being derailed.

Continuing Business

Ministerial Search Update:

- We need a blank and updated ministerial contract to show potential ministers.
- The Ministerial search committee will contact Rev. Evin for ideas and send options to the Worship committee.

[Motion to extend by 30 minutes made by Christie, Kathy A seconded. Motion approved.]

Setting the cadence for UUA engagement

- The UUA chose to move forward with 70% approval, so the next step is for the Congregation to understand what is potentially changing.
- Can we look into if the UUA is hosting educational sessions?
- Let's hold some sort of debrief with the GA attendees and the congregation. Ideally after a service so it's easily accessible but we're not taking over a service.
- We need to figure out who should organize this, but we have plenty of time in the year and not much time left in the meeting so the issue has been tabled for future discussion.

Next meeting(s): Aug 16th

Centering for next meeting: Donn

On a motion by Kristen, seconded by Christie, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 1:07.