



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

# UU Catskills Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting Minutes

Date: 9/20/23

**Present:**

Kristen Schara, Co-President; Erin Hilgart, Co-President; Kathy Atwell, Treasurer; Lydia McCaw, Secretary  
Trustees: Don Critchell; Christie Billeci  
Carma Haas, Assistant Treasurer  
Guests: Vic Melville, Lisa Garay

The meeting began at 9:33 with Donn Critchell lighting the chalice as he read centering words. Kristen then read from the covenant and board members shared in a check-in.

The board discussed restructuring meetings to reserve the first half hour for board check-in and put an optional executive session on the agenda at the end of the session from 12-12:30.

## **Review of minutes**

Christie moved to accept minutes, seconded by Kathy A, motion passed.

## **Treasurer's Report**

One correction to the report as sent out: For offsetting cost of parking lot, we are hoping to cover \$9000 of the cost from checking account

We have \$9500 left of our Chalice Lighter fund, but still haven't gotten a bill for the lights.

An error was made by the bookkeeper - Soul Matters was charged to the wrong fund. It should have come out of minister's fund. This has been corrected

Donn moved to accept, seconded by Kristen. Motion passed.

We've received thanks for donations from Clearwater and other charities.

### **President's report**

Carma, Jenny, Kathy A., Kathy E., and Kristen attended a building decarbonization grant meeting.

- We should get new quote from Bill Mcknight if we want to pursue this grant, as costs may have changed.
- The actual process of applying seems quick and easy.
- We would have the money by March.
- There is no required matching but they would prefer to see us putting some of our own money into decarbonization efforts.

Rev. Diane has agreed to offer renaming ceremonies for us. She will reach out to local LGBTQ groups to let them know about the service as well. Erin suggests advertising renaming ceremonies on social media.

Rev. Diane has also enrolled herself in Soul Matters training (not charged to us.)

### **Committee Reports**

We don't want board being too heavily involved in any one committee.

Donn will send request for point people for committees leading up to council meeting. These people should be on the website so that interested parties can reach out to them directly.

We should have emails for each committee (like the board emails) so that there can be continuation through changes in leadership.

Lisa Garay speaking on the Climate Action Team plan to to get young people involved

- This group would meet once a month (when Jane is not there) during RE time.
- Climate action team members will lead the meetings
- This will be a 7 month program focused on the "Seven Rs"
- Karen has discussed this with a local person who has some experience in teaching youngsters about climate action.
- Kids will be able to interact with more people and establish new relationships.
- The program could spark interest that brings in new families
- This could count towards green sanctuary certification
- Climate anxiety and grief is a big problem for children today and empowering them to take action could help them
- One of the goals is to learn about food. Perhaps they could create a garden?
- The Climate Action Team member would need to be the second adult in the room for RE and stay for the full time
- In general, we need to make sure we always have 2 adults in the farmhouse for RE.

- The goal is to start this program in October
- Lisa plans to discuss this at the upcoming RE discussion.

[break]

## **New Business**

### Proposal of Quarterly Congregational Meetings

- Is this necessary?
- Any sufficiently large group of members (10+ people) can call meeting any time with 10 day notice if there are decisions that need to be made quickly.
- The board is hesitant to use our power to call three additional meetings per year with no clear idea of the necessity.
- Four meetings a year is a lot of extra organizational work
- Pressure for every member to weigh in on every decision undermines committees - the purpose of which is to make decisions in their area of expertise.
- We could have informational meetings rather than decision making meetings.
- We should reconsider our reliance on Robert's Rules. Strict adherence to the structure potentially shuts down discussions we should be having.
- The board would more reasonably consider a single additional meeting.
- Notably, it's become clear to us that GA candidate decisions need to be made before our annual meeting.
- We need to notify congregation a month in advance of any new meetings.
- Perhaps a January/February meeting?
- Sidebar: we want to support leadership development, but we don't have the resources currently. We should have a nominating committee for now.
  - We plan to discuss the above at Oct 4 council meeting
  - Perhaps leadership development and membership should be part of the same committee?
- We could introduce an election via ballot to vote on GA candidates.
- Once organized, we will task the Nominating Committee with making sure we have candidates to vote on
- We still would like to have an informational meeting in January
- It would not require quorum if we're not voting on anything at this meeting.
- We can also use Zoom to make this meeting more accessible
- The goal is to keep it more conversational though so in person will be preferred.
- We will hold this informational meeting only if smaller lay-led meetings don't seem to be solving the problems, but make sure people are aware it is a possibility.
- One of our monthly lay leader sessions we should discuss the cost of our buildings, getting people informed about the farmhouse before we make a decision
- We need to figure out the timing with coffee time - We have less participation the later it is.
- Lydia will draft and send around a response to Barbara for approval.

## Denominational Affairs Committee Proposal with Vic Melville

- We have been advised not to delegate this role. It is a board responsibility.
- We don't want to discourage people from acting on their own.
- Vic discussed related concerns over Article 2 and changes in UUA leadership.
- We suggest one of these lay led sessions be devoted to this topic
- Vic has requested board engagement with this issue beyond just the Article 2 decision.
- Motion made by Erin: The board is committed to leading engagement and education on article 2 decision to be voted on at GA 2024. Seconded by Donn. Motion passed.

## **Unfinished Business**

### Article 2 Education

- Should we use the UU wellspring course or design our own?
- Erin and Christie both support buying the class.
- We should consider the added facilitator cost
- We would like to hold a shorter info session for those who don't sign up for the classes at some point - perhaps organized by those who do participate in the classes.
- We would like to engage Jane Podell to lead first group - us and committee heads. We will judge interest and then plan how to offer the course to the rest of the congregation.
- Motion was made by Erin: Use ministry professional expenses to purchase Wellspring's Article 2 package and hire a facilitator (offer will be made to Jane Podell) at a rate based on UUA pricing suggestions. Motion seconded by Donn. Motion passed.
- Classes will start in October if possible.

### Animal policy

- Stickers for door have been bought.
- We need to reach out to Karen Miller to confirm wording.
- This needs to be a building policy, not just a Sunday policy.
- Donn suggested to post the full policy inside opposite the greeter station for easy access and print some copies to hand out if there's any confusion.
- We should clarify that an emotional support animal is not a service animal.
- Let's post a modified short description on the door which will point to the full policy on the website or from a greeter.
- We need to update the policy to clarify seating.
- Kathy a will finish updating the policy and pass along to greeters.

## **Thank-you notes**

Kathy Kassner

**Next meeting(s): Oct 18 On Zoom. 9:30 AM**

Centering: Donn

On a motion by Donn, seconded by Kathy A, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 12:37.