

**First Unitarian Church of Toledo Board of Trustees
Monthly Meeting Minutes, November 12, 2020
7:00 pm, via WebEx**

Meeting called to order by President Sandra Kosek-Sills, 7:03 pm

Opening Words - Rev. Tim

Roll Call by Tom Sheehan, Secretary

Other board members present at the start: Teresa Betts-Cobau, Mike Davisson, Arun Nadarajah, Treasurer Hydrie Ralston, Vice President Krista Schneider, and Mary Souther

Quorum: yes

Rev. Tim Barger attended as a non-voting member. Interim Religious Educator Saroya King attended as a guest.

Approval of the Minutes moved by Mary, seconded by Hydrie, approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report -- Hydrie Ralston

Before the board meeting, Hydrie sent out by email:

1. Balance Sheet October 2020 prepared by Teresa Langenderfer
2. Profit and Loss October 2020 prepared by Teresa Langenderfer
3. Balance Sheet Oct 2019 vs Oct 2020 and Trust Accounts October 2020 prepared by Hydrie Ralston
4. Summarized Profit and Loss Oct 2019 vs Oct 2020 and Oct 2020 actual vs Oct 2020 Budget prepared by Hydrie Ralston
5. Treasurer Report October 2020 prepared by Hydrie Ralston

Below is her Treasurer Report for October 2020, which is listed as #5 above:

Total year to date pledge income is \$74,348. Over budget \$8,536.

Total year to date income is \$85,007. Over budget \$9,145.

Total year to date expenses \$74,261. Under budget \$7,528.

Huntington checking account \$74,328. Included in this figure are \$22,415 from PPP loan and \$7,500 transferred from the Operating Reserve.

TEALL balance is \$19,729. This reflects the payment in October of \$3,315 to WGTE Public Media for advertising.

Capital Campaign balance is \$54,605. The payments to Gross Electric of \$1,855.74 and to Great Lakes Electrical Contracting of \$3,975 have not been transferred from the trust

to the Huntington checking account. I am in the process of putting together a report of activity in the Capital Campaign. Our contact, Diane Ohns, has been very helpful.

I have received notice concerning the UUA 2021 Benefit Plan Renewals. The rate normally changes in January of each year, however they have decided because of the uncertainty of the covid pandemic there will be no increase at least until July 1, 2021 met with Huntington Bank to review their services. Starting this month, I downloaded the monthly bank statements directly and emailed them to Teresa Langenderfer. This allowed her to start her month-end work immediately rather than wait for the statements to arrive in the mail and for her to be in the office.

We have the option, at no cost to us, to have the ability to deposit checks electronically. Teresa and I will try out the system. The advantages are we will no longer need to copy checks because we will retain them and checks will no longer need to be taken to the bank. The way I envision the system working is the counters will total the checks and give them to Teresa along with the total. Teresa will run them through the machine and confirm the total. The counters will also send the total to me. I will go on-line to the bank and confirm the deposit.

The other services I will look into are the ability to give various levels of access to the accounts. With the importance of oversight, more people could view the accounts without having the ability to make any changes. Huntington also offers payroll through Paychex and a product similar to Vanco.

In Discussion:

Hydie said that she saw nothing to worry about in the P/L. She said that Sandra had been right about some capital expenses that had been incorrectly categorized as regular expenses in last month's report. That has been corrected.

The UUA has decided that they will not be raising their rates for healthcare, dental, or life/disability insurances during 2020.

For a modest charge, Huntington Bank can set up the accounts so that more people can be authorized to look at the accounts. Different authorizations could be given to different people.

Hydie is now downloading statements electronically, which allows Bookkeeper Teresa to do a lot of her work from home since she no longer needs to wait for the statements to come from the bank by snail mail.

Hydie has not yet transferred out the last two checks that we had for the capital campaign. This amounts to less than \$5000.

Mary said there is \$5000 in the checking account that she put in the account from Capital Campaign trust for the dishwasher, which was never used.

Sandra said 7500 from the operating reserve should have been on the books for last year, so there is no need to keep reporting it this year.

⇒ ⇒ **Task:** At the request of Sandra, Hydie will take half of the annual draw from the 5% from the Trust Company operating reserve (a regular annual transfer) by January. The total will be about \$8000 this year.

We are now ahead on our pledges, so Sandra is extremely encouraged by this.

⇒ ⇒ **Task:** Hydie will ask Huntington Bank for update on the PPP (Paycheck Protection Plan). Sandra is expecting to hear from them, but she would like to get confirmation from Huntington. We are in the forgiveness window for the PPP loan that we took, and we don't want to pay it back if we can avoid it. Action by Congress may make repayment of PPP unnecessary.

The PPP covered the gap in the budget last year, and Sandra is pretty sure we spent it all.

Rev. Tim wondered if \$120 a year for extra eyes on accounts may not be practical; he does not feel that he needs to have access to that level of detail. When he has a question about the account, he just asks Teresa or Hydie.

Hydie mentioned, however, two other services that might be included in the \$10/month service charge: credit card processing, which is now done by Venco and payroll processing. Teresa says that she finds that the current payroll system is cumbersome. Rev. Tim said that he appreciated that research.

Minister's Report ([Click here](#) for full Minister's Report, attached below)

Rev. Tim's written report covered these points:

- His preaching all five Sundays in October
- The upcoming preaching schedule which will include preaching by Student Minister Melissa Jeter and Commissioned Lay Minister David Strickler, a possible guest, and Rev. Tim
- The work of new Religious Educator Saroya King
- The planned all-music service for December 13
- The updated church directory and holiday card
- Meetings he has had with different committees and individuals
- His thoughts on re-energizing church committees
- His understanding that we may have two new members soon, and the resignation of a member.

Additional information in Rev. Tim's spoken comments: The planned cycle of his taking the first Sunday off and preaching the others has not held, and that preaching duties have been moved around.

Hydie mentioned that Teresa will soon be sending out the pledge reports for the congregation. She asked if the pledge reports should be included with the directory mailing. Rev. Tim said no.

Sandra asked how much it cost the church to do a mass mailing. Rev. Tim said that he had not determined that yet.

Rev. Tim thought that congregants might use the new directory as their holiday card list.

Sandra pointed out that congregants would not be paying to cover the cost of the printing of the directory. However, the cost seems small, so it is not necessary to go over the budget line by line to see where the printing and mailing costs would go.

The cost of mailing out the directory with an enclosed card would be about \$2 to \$2.50. Sandra said that considering other savings, there would be no reason not to go ahead and mail out the directory & the card. Rev. Tim mentioned that we would also be printing a holiday card in-house.

Hydie said that pledge reminders would also be going out. Tom asked why we mail all those materials out by snailmail and wondered if we couldn't mail them out electronically and save some money. Hydie said it might be complicated to send out individual emails with that information. Tom thought that perhaps there would be a way to include the information in the members-only section of the website, where members have accounts. Rev. Tim said he thought that that might not have the necessary degree of privacy. Sandra said that the idea of sending out pledge information electronically was worth looking into. Hydie also mentioned that emailing the private pledge information might require more time from Teresa, but Sandra said that Teresa is not working all the hours that she could. Arun said that this could be done using mail merge. Hydie said that emailing such information out seems impersonal. Rev. Tim asked if any tracking had been done on how effective pledge reminders are vs. the formal pledge reports.

⇒ ⇒ **Motion:** Hydie moved that we send out the updated directory with a holiday card to everyone in the directory. Seconded by Arun, passed unanimously.

In informal discussion it was agreed that if the cost of this mailing, including all printing and postage, came to over \$300, Rev. Tim would inform the Board.

Religious Educator's Report -- Saroya King

Saroya expressed gratitude for the opportunity to talk at this board meeting. She said that she is now seeking to go back to basics in terms of the RE curriculum. She hopes to re-enliven and reignite our Seven Principles, and she is now constructing a curriculum unique to First Unitarian. She is concerned that it be a product worthy for our young people, and she is hopeful that it might extend to the older children in the congregation. She feels that the RE curriculum is foundational to the ministry of the church. She wants to be sure that we are well prepared when we do have the opportunity to hire a permanent professional religious educator.

Sandra appreciated that Saroya is willing to put in the time to do this work and to assess the amount of time that is needed to do the job of Religious Educator.

President's Report -- Sandra Kosek-Sills

Sandra's full report is attached below. [Click here.](#) In her written report she covered:

- Antiracism action
- Her involvement in virtual activities at the church
- The COVID-10 Subcommittee
- Progress on the Capital Campaign projects
- Approval by the UUA's Youth and Young Adult Ministries (YaYA) for our youth to participate in online activity
- The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)
- Misc. Actions: Snow contract, stewardship, Twitter, writing in congregational publications

In discussion:

Sandra signed both the contract for snow removal and the contract with WGTE for our publicity spots. TEALL is paying for the WGTE contract.

Mostly on Twitter, Sandra is following other UU churches, trying to amplify the voice of our movement. She connects with other churches in the Toledo community. She tweets about upcoming church services when she feels that the services may be of special general interest. She has been surprised that some people in Britain are following us.

Regarding the Capital Campaign, Sandra reports that we are doing fine for the virtual services, but she feels that the sound system upgrade is not critical until people start coming back to services in person. She and Eric Sills will be working on pulling that project back together again soon.

Arun mentioned that the lighting in the sanctuary is now much better, and Sandra pointed out that that is good also for the online services.

The Covid Sub-Committee did not meet in October, but because of the spike in COVID cases, the congregation is unlikely to meet in-person for the holidays. There will be a COVID subcommittee meeting before the next board meeting. Sandra thinks it won't be too difficult to make plans, but still there is the big unknown of COVID. She feels we are well prepared for an interim situation during which we can open up the building for small groups.

There has been a drop-off of attendance at coffee hour. Usually it's the same two or three people. Sandra asked that any Board members who are available could pop in now and then for a short time, that would be good.

The UUA national youth program, Young UU Project (YUUP) is coming back in a virtual format -- a virtual room where UU youth 14 to 18 can come together to "be UUs" together. Sandra will continue to update and advertise on that as it develops.

Hydie said that she has connected with coffee hour a number of times and said it was fun, a good discussion with "some rambling". People were happy to connect.

At the request of coffee hour attendees, Rev. Tim has also joined coffee hour and says that he appreciated being prompted to do so.

Stewardship Report -- Mike Davison

Mike said that pledges were coming in, but not as robustly as they would like. So far, there have been 64 pledges, totally just over \$132,000. By comparison, last year there were 98 pledges received for just under \$194,000. Follow up calls are planned to those who said they were going to pledge but have not done that.

⇒ ⇒ **Task:** Rev. Tim said he would include announcements in the Sunday services.

Sandra suggested that we might inform the congregation about how we are doing, something like: "We have 65 pledges so far, and we're hoping for 120, so get those pledges in, please."

Tom said that as a COVID caller, he had been making calls to congregants on his page in the directory prior to the election, but that he had gotten relaxed about that. He suggested that just calling members, without even mentioning Stewardship, might nudge some people to get their pledges in. Hydrie agreed, and suggested that an email could be sent out to the COVID callers to ask them to make calls.

Sandra said that reminding people about pledges was going to be necessary. She reminded the board that the original plan for this Stewardship Campaign was that every member would get a personal visit, and that the visitor would leave the visit with the pledge form in hand.

Mike said that we probably had not done enough to recognize Ann Stricker for her effort last year and suggested we might send some recognition to her.

Mike reported that proportionally, by size of pledge, the percentages are right in line with last year.

All agreed that the pandemic is certainly having an effect on the pledge drive.

New Business

Life or Long-Term Member Voting Rights --- Sandra pointed out that there are some long-term members of the church who thought that they had pledged and were therefore qualified to be voting members, but in fact, they had not pledged. She wondered if a change in the bi-laws might be made to allow very long-term members to vote even if they had not made a recent pledge. This would have to be approved by the congregation at the annual meeting.

Hydrie asked if someone could make a pledge in the name of a long-term member. Sandra said that it could be set up as we wanted.

Rev. Tim said sometimes family members have complained that elderly members who live in nursing homes are still getting pledge requests. Rev. Tim said that is why he felt that we might have a "Sage member" or "life member" program so that the congregation could say "We appreciate the membership, but we don't expect the person to pay in anymore. Sandra said this could be for, say, 30-year members, or for members over a certain age. Sandra said elder members might need to make a request. The status should not be determined on a case-by-case basis, which would involve a judgement call. The language would be something like: "If you are a 30-year member, and you are over a certain age, and you make a request..."

➤ ➤ **Task:** Krista offered to research elder sage member category at the UUA.

Sandra said that this would need to be done by April or so so that the proposed bi-law could be written in time to be presented at the annual meeting. In answer to a question by Hydrie, Sandra said that we have one member in their 90s who has been a member for over 30 years and has made a request for this.

Tom suggested the possibility of honoring our long-term members in some way, perhaps a certificate. This would be good especially for members who cannot come to church, to know that they are remembered and cherished. Sandra said that the membership committee might take care of. Rev. Tim pointed out that the membership committee now consists of only one person.

Sandra's connection broke down. Arun said that while waiting for her to return, he would like to mention how much he was going to miss our Friendsgiving at Thanksgiving, just one of the many things that we are losing thanks to the pandemic.

Rev. Tim said that he had received a text from Sandra asking that we might deputize someone to take over. Normally, Rev. Tim said, we might deputize the vice president, but she had no microphone tonight.

Grant possibilities -- Rev. Tim said he had seen some grant opportunities -- one might have been from the United Way, and that we might want to think about whether we already have anything going that the grant might fit. This would be better than coming up with a new program.

⇒ ⇒ **Task:** All should keep an eye out for grants that we might be able to apply for, especially if it is a program or project that we already have going.

Liaison Reports

Rev. Tim asked if there were any liaison reports. There were none. Mary mentioned that the committees are not meeting.

Sandra's connection was reestablished by phone at 8:13 pm.

Sandra is hopeful that we might well qualify for some grants offered by other endowed UUA congregations, but we would need people to write the grants. Rev. Tim pointed out that we would have to be on our toes. Rev. Tim explained that some UU congregations do award grants, for example, the UU Congregation in Shelter Rock, Long Island. Another is Live Oak Unitarian. Other organizations include PEW and Ely Lilly. He said that some grant-awarding organizations might be willing to fund just a small part of an ongoing program, a specific piece of equipment for streaming services, for example.

Sandra said that we need grant writers to be ready, and also need a pool of projects ready to be funded. We need a spec sheet with details ready. She emphasized that we need to be ready to act quickly when an opportunity becomes available.

Next Tasks

- Hydrie will ask Huntington Bank for an update on PPP.
- All should encourage committee chairs to meet.
- All should keep an eye out for grants that we might be able to apply for, especially if it is something that we already have going.
- Rev. Tim said he would include announcements in the Sunday services.
- Hydrie will take half of the annual draw from the 5% from the Trust Company operating reserve (a regular annual transfer) by January.

Possible Future Actions

- Look into the possibility of sending out pledge reports electronically.
- Consider touch-free faucets for the three public bathrooms.

Closing words -- Rev. Tim

The next board meeting will be Dec 10.

----- Attachments -----

MINISTER'S REPORT

NOVEMBER 2020

Rev. Rev. Tim Barger

Over the past month, I preached all five Sundays, moving my monthly Sunday out of the pulpit to the end of November so I could lead the service the Sunday before the election, and instead take the Thanksgiving holiday off. Melissa Jeter will preach on Nov. 29, and this will be her first time officially as Student Minister rather than Commissioned Lay Minister—which means she'll be paid \$315. David Strickler will still give four sermons a year unpaid as part of his CLM duties.

Saroya King worked 37 hours in October as Interim Religious Educator—our structure was to expect a Religious Educator to do all the work in 20 hours for a month. She is tracking her time to give us a more realistic view of the demands to present religious education. Roya and I will present a shared service on December 6, which has been slated as an RE service. While Roya had been paid for her preaching, for the two annual RE services, those won't be paid times.

We are also planning an all-music service for December 13 led by Mickey Emch, which like the one in the spring will be pre-recorded, and we'll also pre-record a Christmas Eve service that will probably be in lessons and carols format, but the lessons not just from the Christian tradition.

If I recall, David Strickler will preach on December 27, and we might have a guest on January 3. All of those fit normal scheduling for the holiday months. But that means I have two more services in November, and only one in December (the Sunday before Christmas).

Now that Leitha Sackman and Marsha Gamble have done most of the work on updating our directory, Carol Slomka is preparing to assemble it after I give it a read and some editing. My thought was that, with our separation because of the pandemic, we might mail it to all who are in the directory along with a holiday card from the church. On the card, we could put the names of all staff, all board members, and all involved with presenting Sunday services.

Over the past month, I have attended meetings of the Committee on Shared Ministry, the Covid-19 Task Force, and the RE Council. I have also met with Roya as our Interim Religious Educator, as we're moving toward relaunching RE, and Sandra Kosek-Sills for our traditional pre-board meeting meeting. And I've had some pastoral care meetings with individuals, and involvement in the larger community.

One thought that has been on my mind, and I included mention of it in my sermon last Sunday, is that we need to re-energize committees and the work of the congregation when we can get back together. I think it's through group involvement/committee work that we can attract and retain new members, so getting an active membership committee, a social justice committee that does a lot of the groundwork in groups such as letter-writing campaigns and community activity, and other church-oriented activities can show we're not just people who think alike but make it hard for new people to be involved.

I expect Cindy Gilmore and Sue Childers to sign the membership book soon. I have also received a letter of resignation from Mary Deaver and I'm working on a response.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Rev. Tim Barger

President's Report November 2020

Not much to report for this last month: I was mostly busy helping out UU the Vote.

Antiracism Action:

The Widening the Circle Activity Guide has been published by the UUA. I will do a first presentation on this at Spiritual Adventures in January.

Virtual Services:

I have continued to host virtual coffee hours after the services. Attendance has dropped, so I am open to suggestions for what to do to freshen it up: it would help if more board members could drop in even if just for a bit to talk about the parts of church activity that you are involved in. Don't feel that you need to stay on for the entire hour.

COVID-19 Subcommittee:

Since cases have risen to new highs in Ohio, there is not very much business for this committee at this time. We will schedule a meeting later in November to check in.

Capital Campaign Projects:

No further action on the sound system to report at this time (again). No rush here as we have the sound where it needs to be for the online services. Hope to get this moving soon. We have a suggestion outstanding to consider touch-free faucets for the three public bathrooms.

YAYA

First Unitarian Church of Toledo is now approved by the UUA for our youth to participate in online activity. There is a first meeting (on Zoom) of the new national youth group Young UU Project "YUUP" on November 14 at 7:30 pm.

PPP

There is a process developing to request forgiveness for our PPP loan, but I have not heard from Huntington yet about what they want us to do. I am keeping an eye on this for now. Our loan was a very small amount (relatively speaking) and Congress has been wanting to make universal forgiveness for these low value loans if they can get a relief bill passed.

Misc. Actions:

I signed and returned the snow contract. I made one Stewardship call to help wrap things up. I continue to maintain the church Twitter account, which is now at 209 followers. I wrote three UUFYI/OOS president's notes and the newsletter blurb.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Kosek-Sills