

UUCGT Board of Trustees Minutes

01/16/17

Linda Fletcher, President, convened the meeting at 5:39 PM. As is our custom, our chalice was lit and our bell tolled followed by the joint reading of our covenant.

Present were Board members, Linda Fletcher, Phyllis Jessup, Gretchen Kronk, Karl Love, Don Pyne and Kay Sturgeon. Rabbi Chava Bahle and Donna Stein-Harris were absent.

Congregational members present: Barb Bloomer, Hal Gurion, David Halstead, Karl Keinitz, Mike McDonald, Sandra McDonald, Richard Miller, Judy Myers, Mary Van Valin, Rick Walters, Price Watts and Kay Wentzel.

President Linda Fletcher invited public comments. Rick Walters spoke of the successes of the Program Council. Hal Gurion addressed successes and shortcomings of the Christmas Eve program. Mary VanValin spoke of the work of the Healthy Reconciliation Task Force and her desire to have all truths public and the healing that can come from disclosure.

Linda Fletcher as chair of the HRTF rose and asked to be considered as a congregant while she addressed issues of the group since when she assumed that leadership role she was not a board member. Linda seated herself near the guests away from the board and responded with a prepared statement.

Much discussion ensued. The report of the HRTF appeared on the agenda and was addressed later.

Karl Love elected to forgo the usual policy reading because of the extended comment time.

Kay Sturgeon moved to accept and Don Pyne seconded the approval the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved.

Linda Fletcher gave a short presentation on the restructured Social Witness committee. The group had their second meeting yesterday. The meeting, led by chair Paula Jo Kemler was very well attended.

Phyllis Jessup gave a brief update on what lies ahead for the implementation of the newly approved Organization Structure. Phyllis emphasized that the implementation would be a long process to be achieved incrementally.

Karl moved that the Safe Congregation Task Force policy be amended from three voting members to three to seven members. The team has asked to add an additional person with the planned absence of one of its members in the near future. Karl reasoned that by having a range rather than a specified number that the team could expand or contract as needed by the Board without resorting to further policy updates. Kay Sturgeon seconded the motion and the motion was passed.

Linda Fletcher introduced a discussion into how to best manage our external communication policy. After discussion the consensus was that the Board should appoint an officer for the purpose of practically managing the policy as well as teaching and creating awareness of the policies importance.

Linda reported on the hacking of our computer system. Thanks to Marco Cabrera we have fixed most issues. The question asked was how do we access our safeguards, procedures and systems. Phyllis volunteered to be a project officer in the matter and would investigate and report her findings.

Linda asked how we should best support the Christmas Eve program at the State Theatre. The Board agreed that the program was extremely valuable to our congregation but that support was uneven. Earlier it was mentioned in public comments that not enough trustees attended. Karl pointed out that because it was a holiday many people had different ways of celebrating and indeed various family obligations. Karl suggested that since it was a ministry program it would best be served by being coordinated by the Sunday Services Committee through the Program Council starting in midsummer.

The John J. Ort Spirit of Welcome award was discussed. The Board thoroughly supported this manner of remembering an amazing member of our community.

Linda introduced the report from the Healthy Reconciliation Task Force Report. The report was read to the Board (and is included at the end of the minutes). Much discussion followed. Don Pyne asked about the original direction given to the Task Force by the Board. Karl read the original motion founding the committee (April 19, 2016). The motion made by Karl and seconded by John Hoffman created the group and included two board members on the team with others to be added at the teams discretion. The team was directed to be visible to the congregation in its work and to report back to the Board as frequently as needed.

Karl then read the motion (June 20, 2016) that further defined the team. The motion, made by Richard Miller and seconded by John Hoffman, allowed the tem to move forward with the proposed action plan for soliciting confidential responses from members and friends.

The question arose: what has been done to resolve the destructive issues of the summer of 2015? Karl asked to respond and listed the following:

- In the summer of 2015 the Staff Resources (previously Personnel) Committee had only one member and unable to function fully. By the winter of 2015 the committee was staffed fully and remains so.
- A written personnel policy had been worked on by that time but was incomplete and not in place. The Staff Resources Policy Manual was completed and adopted in the spring of 2016.
- No written policy existed to support the resolution of conflict within our staff. In the spring of 2016, the Employee Dispute Resolution process was adopted and included in the Staff Resources manual. The process provides a methodology to allow any staff member to address dispute with another in a professional manner.
- In January of 2016 the Board of Trustees created a policy known as a Declaration of Transparency. The last two boards have committed themselves to conducting business openly. The exception is in the processing of Confidential Staff matters.

- In January 2016 the president began holding open office hours to be available to all congregants.
- The Board of Trustees and specifically the President have increased written and spoken communication with the congregation.
- The Board of Trustees has delegated liaisons with most committees to increase communication.
- A Healthy Reconciliation Task Force developed a listening project, which was available to all congregants. The process was widely taken advantage of.

Phyllis moved to accept the report. The motion was seconded by Gretchen and accepted. Gretchen then asked if all value was retained in the completion of the work. Linda answered that no distinction was made to relative value of what was reported. Don stated that he found the report to be bland. Karl said that of the many interviews that were given, virtually none had direct experience with the core events. It is valuable and even critical to have everyone heard but that the content would be a study in rumor, gossip and innuendo.

After discussing the importance of getting this information to the congregation, it was agreed that Linda would write an article to be published and Karl would provide background history on changes implemented.

Karl expressed gratitude for Joan Sheard, Linda Fletcher and Jane Watts for the weary work of listening in depth to so much pain, confusion and sorrow.

At 7:20 the board went into executive session.

Linda adjourned the meeting at 7:31 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karl D. Love, Secretary

Addenda Attached below:

A: Safe Congregation Response Team Policy Change.....page 4

B: Healthy Reconciliations Sub-Committee Report.....page 5

Safe Congregation Response Team:

In order to ensure continuity, the Safe Congregation Response Team will be established and in place at all times, with the names and phone numbers of team members available to all members and friends of UUCGT. This Team will be composed of the Minister, Director of ~~Religious Education~~ Lifespan Experience, and three to seven members of UUCGT, all of whom shall be appointed by the Board. **The Board as advised by SCRT shall determine the number serving after periodic review.** It is preferable that two of the members of the team be familiar with issues likely to arise, to include but not be limited to sexual assault, sexual harassment, human resources and legal issues.

TO: Healthy Reconciliations Committee and the UUCGT Board of Trustees

BACKGROUND

The Healthy Reconciliations Committee was appointed and charged with providing a way to help reconcile the unresolved points that arose as a result of the personnel issues which began in August of 2015 and have lingered in some measure to date. In concert with reconciliation theory as practiced by Mandela and the often repeated request from congregants to “be heard”, a subcommittee of three (undersigned) was appointed to listen to whatever current, past and prospective congregants, staff and friends wished to express about the original issue and subsequent spinoff events.

The objectives of the listening project were to provide an opportunity for everyone who felt the need to be heard regarding their experience, feelings and suggestions for future actions

The listeners were obligated to engage in active listening only. All comments and perspectives were received without rendering judgment, correction or interpretation.

The listening began in July and concluded in late October. There were a total of 56 requests for listening sessions. All requests to be heard were accommodated.

Participants were guaranteed that their comments would be anonymous and confidential. It was agreed that the results would be available for review by any interested congregant.

FINDINGS

The three listeners have met and reviewed our individual and collective findings the most prevalent of which are summarized below:

1. Those who chose to be heard were grateful for the opportunity to express themselves to an individual assigned to hear their concerns.
2. The need for improvement in administrative policies and procedures was clearly identified in a large portion of the listening sessions.
3. The need for improved communications within and throughout the congregation was a frequently identified issue.
4. There were several specific issues/incidents that were addressed by many participants. However there were numerous incorrect and widely divergent versions of commonly rooted stories.

Great care was taken to protect anonymity and confidentiality of all concerned, yet the indirect correlation of information frequently revealed individual identity. We therefore have found our promise of confidentiality for all individuals' conflicts with and overshadows the promise to allow general congregational access to these documents. As a result, this subcommittee has destroyed the records of our individual listening sessions.

Irrespective of this unexpected outcome we found this exercise to be of benefit in many ways. The first of these is that so many people were willing, able and even eager to come and discuss their painful experiences. There were many tears and much gratitude for the opportunity to express such difficult feelings and thoughts. Many related it was the first time their pain had

been recognized, heard and/or honored by the governing and/or administrative elements of our congregation.

Lastly, we, the three who conducted the listening sessions, are even more convinced than ever that our covenant is not only our foundation but our greatest tool to avert conflict by requiring covenantal communications in others as well as modeling it ourselves.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Fletcher

Joan Sheard

Jane Watts