

Minutes from the April 15, 2018 Town Hall Towson Unitarian Universalist Church

Jasmine Faelyn called the Town Hall meeting to order at 12:47 pm with a chalice lighting by Rev. Clare Petersberger. Approximately 37 people attended.

I. Financial Report (12:49 pm)

Finance Council head Monica Sweidel presented a report (attached) on the financial status of the church. She reported that the expenditures of church are about where they should be at this time of year. The only significant overage is for House and Grounds because of storm damage to numerous trees on the property. The cash flow is good. The endowment is also in good shape at almost \$1 million.

II. Personnel Committee Report (12:59 pm)

The chair of the Personnel Committee, Paul Konka, presented the Committee's recommendations for staff compensation. He began by explaining the process the Committee followed, which included review of UUA salary guidelines and comparison of staff experience and qualifications against them. The Committee also met with TUUC President Jasmine Faelyn.

He acknowledged that some in the congregation believe that the staff are overpaid. However, after review of the UUA guidelines (available at <https://www.uua.org/finance/compensation/program/salary-recommendations>), the Committee concluded that TUUC's staff are in fact underpaid.

The UUA guidelines break down each job category, i.e., director of religious education, church administrator, etc., by geographic area and by size of the congregation and offer ranges for compensation.

The Committee compared the TUUC staffs' current compensation against these ranges. Although all the staff have decades of experience including other positions before TUUC and should be compensated at the maximum for the relevant range, the Committee focused on the midrange value. They found that the current salaries of all the staff except for the Director of Religious Education (DRE) fall below the midrange and the DRE's salary is only slightly above the midrange.

The Committee is making a recommendation to the Board at its April 16 meeting to bring all the staff who are below midrange to 103% of midrange. This will mean a 15% increase for the Office Administrator. The Committee believes this is particularly important because our Office Administrator is the only staff person of color. Given our new mission statement and the BLM banner outside, we should practice what we preach.

Questions:

Does part-time make a difference in the calculation? The UUA takes that into account in the analysis.

When “compensation” is discussed does that include benefits? Yes.

Do UUA guidelines take into account cost of living? It’s more complicated than one would think. The ranges do not include cost of living per se. It only shows “cost of wages”, but the geographic division of the ranges inherently includes cost of living because wages will be set to attract workers.

III. Rolling Three Year Plan (1:21 pm)

Jasmine presented an update on the Rolling Three Year Plan that the Board developed last August. (See attached.) She explained the purpose of the plan, the meaning of the terms, and went through each item.

There were questions on the goal to incorporate more theistic language in services. What was the intention behind this goal? The Pew Forum for Religion and Public Life has been publishing reports on the trends in religious composition of U.S. adults for several decades. See <http://www.pewforum.org>. The most recent study in 2015 suggests that the group of the unchurched or “nones” is growing (now at 23%). These people consider themselves spiritual, but not religious. Nevertheless, many are interested in exploring faith traditions as part of developing their own spirituality and providing a foundation for their children. Therefore, they are seeking and expecting more theistic language in services as well as opportunities for education.

One congregant suggested doing a survey of the congregation.

Another congregant noted that there is a difference between exploring and espousing beliefs, and that merely mentioning God or other faith traditions in a service does not mean we are pushing a certain dogma.

The Town Hall adjourned at 1:41 pm.