

**Towson Unitarian Universalist Church
Board of Trustees
March 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

Date/Time:	7:30 pm
Meeting:	Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting
Participants:	Patty Barry, Angela Castillo-Epps, Wendell Finner, Andrew Hager, Ellie Hughes, Rev. Clare Petersberger, Susan Riggs, Sue Royer, Samantha Saalfeld
Absent:	
Guests:	Lou Gieszl, Chair of the Right Relations Team
Location:	Join Zoom Meeting Meeting ID: 815 4806 6486 Passcode: 992437
Next meeting:	April 20, 2022

Pre-meeting Action Items:

Activity	Owner	Target Date
These action items are to be completed before the meeting. Often, they are related to consent agenda items, which are items for which there is no discussion unless a member has a question concerning them.		
Sign-ups for chalice lighting, process observation and writing an article for the Threshold (monthly) – to Susan Riggs	All	3/16
Read and provide revisions of minutes from previous Board meeting	All	3/16
Read reports	All	3/16

Scheduled Agenda:

The meeting convened at 7:30 pm

Chalice Lighting	Andrew Hager
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Go-Around Question	All
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Consent Agenda	Owner
Approve minutes from the February Board Meeting	Susan Riggs
Accept Minister's Report (Appendix 1)	Rev. Clare Petersberger
Accept President's Report (Appendix 2)	Sue Royer
Accept President-Elect's Report (Appendix 3)	Andrew Hager

Accept Treasurer's Report (Appendix 4)	Wendell Finner
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Discussion Agenda	Presenter
<p>Sue Royer asked the Board if any items need to be moved from the consent agenda to the discussion agenda.</p> <p>Approval of the February Board minutes was moved to the Discussion Agenda. We had a discussion regarding the detailed reporting of individual Board member's thoughts with attribution. One Board member prefers that we focus on the decisions being made/the outcomes. Another Board member likes to see the details as a reminder of the discussion points made by various members.</p> <p>Another suggested that we can find a middle ground. The Board minutes are official church documents and show the decisions made by the Board. They are posted on the church website. Sue Royer took the action to revise the February minutes.</p>	Sue Royer
<i>Agenda Item #1 - 15 minutes</i>	
<p>Right Relations Team Report</p> <p>See draft Right Relations Policy and draft changes to the Governance Policy re: the Right Relations Team.</p> <p>Lou Geiszl gave an update on the Right Relations team. He gave a brief background on his church involvement and committees he's worked on. He was involved in one dispute in the past. The proposed conflict resolution policy reflects a relational theory of conflict, that is, that people have the inherent belief of wanting to get to a resolution on their own. Conflict makes people uncomfortable, and most manage to shift, as needed, on their own. Leads to positive interactions. The previous policy was revised to include some relational theory language. He believes conflict resolution to be intentional, humanizing, right-relations oriented.</p> <p>The policy language is a bit more nuanced. Lou added some language (UU principles). Best practices say the two involved people should work to resolve the conflict on their own, but this doesn't always work, and then they can reach out to the Right Relations team. The team will conduct a conflict assessment, then bring in a neutral third party to conduct the process. The group is brought together to hear concerns, the neutral person tries to bring about a resolution, if not, they can bring in the mediator (Right Relations team), who has no decision-making authority. Additional considerations must be included if they exist.</p> <p>Board Discussion:</p> <p>Several members expressed gratitude for this work. Questions: Has this team been active in the past? How do people get trained to participate? Are there enough people to perform the tasks?</p>	Lou Gieszl

<p>The confidential aspect of the process is important. The mediator would maintain the confidentiality, participants will talk to who they need to. As a member of the church, you are part of a community. Board members made some minor suggestions to the policy. The team will make updates and send it back for Board approval. It sounds like the Team will be a positive force, and nothing has come to the committee's attention so far. Lou stated that they could use one or more additional team members. On behalf of the Board, Sue Royer thanked Lou and the team for their work.</p>	
<p><i>Agenda Item #2 - 10 minutes</i></p>	
<p>Nominating Committee Report (see Appendix 5) Andrew presented the slate. Sadly, Neil Porter was too busy to lead up this effort, so Andrew took it. Spots to fill are President, Pres-Elect, and Secretary. Andrew spoke about the process used. Ellie has agreed to be Pres-Elect, and Patty to be Secretary. Wendell will be leaving, due to his move to Western MD.</p> <p>There was a discussion about whether we advertised for nominees. A notice went into the Threshold, asking the congregation to make us aware of anyone who is interested in taking on a leadership role in the future. Sue Royer said that the element of transparency is important. There will be several Board-appointed positions that will need to be filled in July. Interest in serving is important and it is not necessary to have prior Board experience. Bios will be needed soon.</p>	<p>Andrew Hager</p>
<p><i>Agenda Item #3 - 30 minutes</i></p>	
<p>Discussion of Open Question: How can we cultivate a thriving Young Adult community at TUUC (Young Adults defined as ages 18 – 35). It was decided to defer this to a future meeting due to time constraints.</p>	<p>Sue Royer</p>
<p><i>Agenda Item #4 - 10 minutes</i></p>	
<p>A-Team Report (see Appendix 6) Ensuring that our books are up-to-date after the change of bookkeepers is ongoing. The work of reconciling the books has been difficult, and the process is not finished. The problem started in December, and it appears that some 200+ transactions which were previously reconciled in QuickBooks became unlinked. The consultant hopes to get this resolved quickly. Sue Royer recommends extending the time and spending limit beyond what the A-Team had authorized, so that the consultant may continue her work. The issue needs to be solved. The time that the consultant has spent understanding our issues would have to be repeated by someone else if we don't finish this now. Sue recommends authorizing an additional \$3,000, and to authorizing the consultant to make changes in our books. Previously she was showing a TUUC staff member how to make the needed changes.</p>	<p>Rev. Clare Petersberger</p>

<p>Board Discussion: Do we think going forward, that we are capable of managing our books? The issues go back to 2019. Wendell reported that we may need an accountant to do a non-audit type of review, periodically. We need a mechanism to catch mistakes. Sue noted that, in our governance policy, we have this as required every three years. The analysis that previous Finance Head Joe Tumbler performed in FY18-19 checked the box in terms of a financial review, and brought forward issues for Board action. Yes, we believe for day-to-day operations, that we can manage our books.</p> <p>Decision: The Board unanimously agreed to authorize the A-Team to spend an additional \$3000 for Susan Hullinger to continue the work to helping TUUC clean up issues with our books, and for Susan to be granted access to make changes in QuickBooks.</p> <p>Re-opening is happening, and it changes weekly. You still need to register to attend church, and it is a problem for visitors, as they are not in Breeze. Discussion points included inviting those attending in-person to give via text and putting the offering plate by the entrance door. Ushers could bring the offering plate to congregants (accessibility). The issue of under 5 age children coming to church (they are not yet eligible to be vaccinated) was discussed.</p>	
<p><i>Agenda Item #5 - 15 minutes</i></p>	
<p>Personnel Topic (see Appendix 7) Rev. Clare reported that the personnel manual has been updated and will be sent to the Board for approval.</p> <p>Our DRE Joyce Duncan has announced her plans to retire at the end of June. A farewell event needs to be planned. A search committee for a DRE needs to be formed. We wish Joyce the best in her retirement!</p> <p>Board Discussion: We don't want the DRE position to be vacant (for long); need a qualified person to run the program for the Fall. Acknowledged that Rev. Clare will be on vacation in July. Discussion about pros and cons of hiring an interim DRE. Several Board members with long ties to our RE program expressed interest in serving on the search committee. Bringing in a new person is also a time to be flexible about program design.</p> <p>Rev. Clare suggested that we schedule the party for Joyce on Sunday, May 15, after church (noon). It was also suggested that we recognize her husband Tom Zeller, as he has been such a help to Joyce and the program.</p>	<p>Rev. Clare Petersberger</p>
<p><i>Agenda Item #6 – 10 minutes</i></p>	
<p>Planning for General Assembly 2022</p>	<p>Sue Royer</p>

Is in Portland, Oregon this year. We have 5 delegates, not including Rev. Clare. Sue encouraged everyone on the Board to consider attending. In person and virtual this year. Next year will be in Pittsburgh.	
<i>Agenda Item #7 – 10 minutes</i>	
Miscellaneous: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ordination Planning Committee update: Sam said they met two weeks ago, and will meet again soon. It is not clear who the guest minister will be; she will speak with Karyn about it. The dinner will be at Bluestone. 40-60 seats. Trying to fundraise without interfering with our pledge drive. Calls will be starting soon. 	
<i>Agenda Item #8 – 5 minutes</i>	
Agenda items for the next Board meeting: Budget for next fiscal year, Recommendations from Personnel Committee re: staff salary & benefits for FY22-23, Treasurer's Report, Annual Report input	Susan Riggs
Process Observation Report	Patty Barry

Having no further business before it, the meeting adjourned at 10:10pm

Key Dates: (please mark your calendar)

Listening Sessions with the Board: 10/24, 11/28, 1/23/22, 2/27/22, 3/27/22, and 4/24/22, 30 minutes after the service (e.g. 12 noon)

Service of Ordination for Karyn Marsh: May 7, 2022

Annual Congregational Meeting: Sun 6/12/22 12 noon

Appendix 1: Minister's Report

March 10, 2022

Since my last report....

WORSHIP

Feb. 13 Addressed widening the circle in terms of "love your enemies" and why it is still an important teaching today.

Feb. 20 Rev. Christin Green, the UU Assistant Minister of Congregational Life at the UU Congregation of Fairfax, VA, preached on widening the various circles in which we live our lives. She also provided one of the musical pieces!

Feb. 27 We focused on Octavia Butler's theology of Earthseed which centers change. It was the first time I had conducted worship from the building in almost two years and a test run of our new streaming equipment. Grateful to Patty, Judi, Spice, and Tracy for their music.

March 6 We renewed our faith by offering our first multi-platform worship service participating in a ritual of renewal sharing what we wanted to leave behind from the pandemic and what we want to bring forward. Grateful to Tracy, Patty, Ellie, and Judi for

their music. And it was exciting to welcome families back! Joyce delivered the chalice lighting.

March 13 In person and/or on-line (depending on weather!) We will be thinking about how Olympia Brown renewed her faith even when she was met with resistance as a woman minister in 1863-80.

I wrote worship descriptions and a newsletter column for March.

I attended the Minister Brainstorming Virtual meeting to discuss the April Soul Matters theme of “Awakening.”

I met with Lay Worship Associates on March 7th. We brainstormed the March 27th service since there will not be a collaboration with youth. First UU Church of Baltimore is preparing to return to their building and did not have time to talk about collaborating on services this summer.

I met with Wendell Finner and his brother to begin to envision a service of committal for his mother on March 25th.

I offered a prayer in a virtual worship service on February 27 for Compassion And Choices in partnership with UULM-MD and our focus on Medical Aid in Dying to honor all the losses/grief of the past year.

The Team to Plan Karyn Marsh’s Ordination met on February 28. We plan to renew fundraising efforts after the Stewardship Campaign ends.

PASTORAL CARE

I’ve made 3 pastoral visits and had 7 phone calls with members.

Karyn Marsh and I met with Lay Pastoral Associates on February 13th. Karyn Marsh offered a training on the subject of what it means to be a Lay Pastoral Associate/offer pastoral care.

Virtual Lunch with the Minister met on February 15 and 22nd. I did not schedule further ones in order to have time to focus on multi-platform ministry.

PROGRAMMING

Writing As A Spiritual Practice met on February 11th to write about fun with a Frank O’Hara poem as a prompt; and on February 25th to write about life experiences of injury and what heals us based on Dewey the Cat. We will meet on March 11th with a prompt from Henri Nouwen.

Soul Matters Sharing Circles met on February 22nd to conclude our exploration of Widening The Circle and on March 8 to begin to explore “Renewing Faith.”

I facilitated the fourth and fifth sessions of the adult RE program “A Date With Death Club” on the subjects of Afterlives which had 16 participants and “Good Life/Good

Death” which had 13 participants. There will be one more class on Eco Grief on March 20th.

The staff met on February 9 and reviewed a form for time off for vacation/holidays/and sick days.

Personnel (Please see separate report)

I enjoyed participating in the Membership Committee’s program, “Our Journey Together” on Feb. 13th at 3. I attended the February 14 Membership Committee meeting.

I am glad the Board held the February 27th Listening Session on the 8th Principle.

I wrote a letter to the congregation about our re-opening plans.

I met with the Program Council on March 9th.

A-TEAM
(Please see separate report)

WIDER COMMUNITY

I appreciated the February 10th BRIDGE discussion of Critical Race Theory which focused on political strategies to address CRT. The March 10th BRIDGE meeting focused on what questions we, as leaders of faith communities, might ask Maryland Gubernatorial candidates with regard to social issues of particular concern to our communities.

I participated in the monthly Anam Cara gathering of local colleagues committed to spiritual deepening.

DENOMINATION

I participated in CUUMA on February 23. The Reverend Sunshine Jeremiah Wolf offered a program on Trauma and Play.

I participated in the CUUMA Chapter Leader call on March 3.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Clare

**Appendix 2:
President’s Report**

Programs & Ministry

Organized technical ushers and assisted with ushering for several Sunday services. Organized and attended training with Armbruster AV on the new streaming equipment on 2/15. Created a show flow template for Rev. Clare and Tracy to use to give guidance to the AV team for multi-platform worship. Happily served on the AV team for our in-person re-opening service on 3/6! Things went well!

For the network and phone upgrade, obtained an updated quote from Quality Business Solutions, and sent a proposal to the A-Team, which was approved. The Board also approved the proposal. Authorized a different piece of equipment in place of an out-of-stock item; negotiated the price for this. Served as the TUUC focal point and project manager. Quality started the onsite work on 3/7; it is progressing well. Spoke with the owner of our fire alarm service company and learned that our fire alarm is using our existing Comcast analog phone lines. Since these lines are being ported to Ubiquity digital lines, we'll need another solution for the fire alarm. Sent recommendation to the A-Team. Ordered Verizon FIOS 1 Gig service (the final step) for the church. It was installed on 3/9.

Volunteered in person at Mentoring Male Teens in the Hood on 3/5. Patty Barry led the lesson and activities. Also volunteering from TUUC were Nina Della Vecchia, Dave Haupt, Debbie Rodriguez, and Elizabeth Zurek.

Attended Writing As a Spiritual Practice, the February work party, and one of the movie group discussions.

Submitted content for the Threshold, including on UUA Side with Love Skill-Ups, and on Jubilee Anti-Racism training.

Using Sociocracy, facilitated a discussion at the Social Action Committee meeting to define the role of the committee chair, along with qualifications needed for the role. Once the role definition has been agreed upon, we intend to use the nominating people for roles process from Sociocracy to nominate a new committee chair.

Board & Governance

Met with Andrew Hager to discuss church business including the Program Council. Met with Andrew and Ellie Hughes on Zoom regarding the President's role.

Reviewed the January financial reports in detail and provided input to Wendell Finner on areas of concern.

Our former contract bookkeeper contacted Kai, requesting a postage-paid way to return the church's property. Kai sent a box and we have received all of the keys and fobs. Authored a letter to accompany the check for final payment. After review by Wendell Rev. Clare, the letter and check were sent on 3/9 via priority mail.

With Rev. Clare, co-authored and signed a thank you letter to Scott Basik for the gift of \$3000 from the National Philanthropic Trust in memory of Brian Alan Basik.

Kicked off the Stewardship campaign. Organized the postal mailing; distributed labels, materials, and stamped envelopes to the volunteers who agreed to help fold and stuff. Wrote weekly articles for the Threshold. Coordinated testimonials and getting them posted to the website. Sent an email through Breeze to sustaining pledgers, reminding them of the amount of their sustaining pledge and asking them to inform the office by 3/15 if they want to make any changes. Sent a reminder email through Breeze to those who had not yet pledged at the end of February.

Attended the meeting of the Membership Committee where we discussed a list of inactive members who have not made a donation of record in quite some time.

Hosted the Listening Session with the Board on 2/27 and led the information session on the 8th Principle. Thank you to Patty, Ellie, Angela and Rev. Clare for updating the material that we shared.

Attended a zoom meeting of UU church presidents who have Rev. Sana Saeed as our primary UUA Central East Region contact. It was a good opportunity for collaboration.

Respectfully submitted, Sue Royer, President, 3/10/2022

Appendix 3: President-Elect's Report

March 10, 2022

This month, I have had multiple meetings with the 8th Principle Team. We are working together to create a variety of opportunities for our congregants to learn more about the need for the Principle. We will be hosting movie events, common read book discussions, and more in the coming months.

I continued my work with the nominating committee to help fill vacancies for TUUC's elected positions. As you will see in the nominating committee report (submitted separately) we have found a very good slate of candidates and have filled most of our needs for the coming church year.

Since our last board meeting, I have met with Sue Royer and Ellie Hughes both via Zoom and in person to discuss issues of importance to the church.

I assisted with the February 20 service led by Rev. Christin Green. I also gave a stewardship testimonial during the March 6 service. (It feels so good to be back in person after two years!)

Cabin Fever keeps rolling along. We have recently discussed Nightmare Alley, Time, Hell or High Water, and Peggy Sue Got Married.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Hager

Appendix 4: Treasurer's Report

February 2022

Bookkeeping still cannot be thought of as accurate, with no recent reconciliations of our major accounts. Kai and Arkady with the help of consultant Susan Hullinger have refined their procedures, and the stated current expense numbers are probably valid.

There has been some talk of reconciling deposits against donations reported in Breeze each month, but that has not been implemented.

Including the \$118,600 of PPP forgiveness, unreconciled revenues through 1/31 are 371,246.37 against the budgeted 337,269. This exceeds our total unreconciled expenses of 315,033 (budgeted for 301,704).

The stated endowment value at month end was \$1,242,850.83. Unrestricted bank balances shown at PNC and Schwab \$161,201.74.

- Wendell Finner, Treasurer, March 12, 2021

Appendix 5: Nominating Committee Report

March 8, 2022

Committee Members: Nina Della Vecchia, Jane D'Ambrogi, Marilyn Carlisle, Andrew Hager (Board Liaison)

Needs:

President

President-Elect

Secretary

Trustee-at-large (2)

Treasurer (to fill the remaining year in Wendell Finner's term)

Nominating Committee Member (2)

Candidates:

The Nominating Committee has found qualified candidates who have agreed to serve for each of the positions except Treasurer. At the time of this report, the Nominating Committee has reached out to a prospective candidate for Treasurer, and is awaiting a decision.

Appendix 6: A-Team Report

The majority of the A-Team's focus since last month's Board meeting has been on re-opening the building for multi-platform worship. We have been meeting weekly. We approved \$120 for the church to get a Zoom account for the new church computer. Kai set up the weekly worship rehearsal for the church computer. Phil is setting up weekly worship Zoom link for the newsletter and calendar.

At the end of February, we established guidelines for re-opening: requiring vaccination; masking; seating physically distanced (but families could cluster); no eating, drinking, singing inside building yet, humming into mask is permitted. The offertory is being done differently, rather than pass a plate, we are inviting people to come forward to make a donation. We put stones of joy and sorrow on hold for first week back because of ritual of renewal but will be trying it this week.

Clare Flynn Avallone determined that for the religious education ministry we could have
room 7---10 people total (including teachers)
room 6---15 total
room 5---smaller number (6 or 7) smaller bodies
lower lounge could be utilized----(partition)

Through Breeze, Rev. Clare sent an e-mail to members and friends about the plans, requirements, and expectations for re-opening. Kai set up a registration form for in-person worship.

Dynamo electricity, Innovative Security system, and Quality business have all spent many hours preparing the building to re-open and for our new network. Kai, Clare F-A, and Sue have spent many hours with them!

One issue that needs to be addressed is our alarm system. We have one door that appears to blow open when the system is off and then doesn't send a warning when the system is turned on. Clare Flynn Avallone is working with Innovative on this challenge.

We are aware that the CDC created new guidelines based on rates of hospitalization vs. individual risk. We are continuing to follow the Act Now metrics in our TUUC matrix which have had TUUC in the medium risk zone (not the green zone.) Happily, these numbers are coming down. But we are waiting to unmask in the building until we are in the green zone according to Act Now.

In just the past week, we have increased seating capacity from 75 to 95 for worship. Thanks to Clare Flynn Avallone and Nina Della Vecchia for moving chairs away from the walls to make this possible.

To prepare for rentals, we voted to raise the monitor fee from \$10 to \$15 an hour. We voted not to change rental rates, but we will add the monitor fee to rental rate. (In the past, we took the monitor fee out of the rental fee.) For now, we will require every special event to have a monitor. We will revisit this as needed.

Clare Flynn Avallone will speak to Sue about whether we need to hire someone outside of our AV crew if rentals ask to use the equipment. We are also intentionally working to build our trained AV team. Our current AV team has done a phenomenal job transitioning us to multi-platform worship!!!!

This week, we agreed that the Choir can rehearse in the Meeting Room with masks; that we will try having hospitality outside under the balcony (weather permitting) on March 20th; and that we will open to groups downstairs on March 20 provided they are vaccinated, masked, and following capacity guidelines and preferable with a window open (we were waiting for networking work to be completed.) Until the work is completed, staff will mask. We will revisit unmasking for staff next week. We approved a rental for a memorial service April 2.

We approved the proposal we received from Sue for Verizon. We need to keep two regular lines for our fire alarm. This will increase the monthly bill by around \$50. But it is still cheaper than the bid we had received from Comcast and the 5G network is faster.

Dan Alper successfully appealed our having to pay property taxes on land that was donated to TUUC in the late 1980's. Thank you, Dan!

Wendell Finner, Dan Alper, and I met with Susan Hullinger, our Quickbooks contractor for an update on her work. She completed her 25 hours and there are still some reconciliation issues to resolve. Wendell will speak to a specific proposal Susan is making that the Board will need to vote on.

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Clare

Appendix 7: Personnel Report

The Personnel Committee met on March 2nd to continue work on the new Personnel Manual after last month's Board meeting. We also discussed compensation recommendations for the Board based on UUA guidelines. Kai, Tracey Meyers Preston, and I completed the Benefits Tune-Up Workbook for the UUA on February 22nd.

As I shared with the TUUC Board in my Feb. 23 e-mail, Joyce Duncan has decided to retire at the end of this fiscal year after serving as TUUC's DRE for 18 years.

We need to:

- 1) Decide on a date for a party for Joyce and a gift.
- 2) Sue Royer asked about the possibility of an interim DRE. When a minister retires after such a long tenure, there is a recommendation for an interim position. More information is here: <https://www.uua.org/careers/re/interim>
- 3) It is not clear to me what the availability for such a DRE interim will be. But I strongly recommend that we will schedule a congregational conversation with someone from the Central East Region to "illuminate (our) congregation's unique RE program identity: its strengths, its needs, its challenges." Covid impacted our YRE ministry. But even before Covid, we were talking about new models of family ministry because of the challenge of recruiting volunteers. I think we need a conversation about our congregational vision for our YRE ministry before we can appoint a Search Committee with a clear job description for paid leadership.
- 4) Here is what our Governance Policy says about Personnel Decisions:

5.1 Personnel Decisions

The Board expects the Minister, who is Head of Staff, to take the lead in the selection, hiring, supervision, and discharge of paid staff. The Minister is accountable to the Board with respect to personnel decisions.

5.1.1 Hiring Senior Staff

Before filling the positions of Church Administrator, Religious Exploration Director, Music Director, or a non-called Minister, the Head of Staff will nominate a Search Committee for appointment by the Board. After receiving the Search Committee's recommendation, the Head of Staff selects and presents a final candidate to the Board for approval.

- 5) Since Joyce has offered to help train the next DRE, it would be great if we could accomplish all of this in the next 8-10 weeks!

Respectfully submitted, Rev. Clare