

Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Indiana

Seeking the Spirit, Building Community, Changing the World

Approved Board Minutes

June 18, 2020



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Board members attending: Stuart Yoak, Abby Gitlitz, Steven Gilbert, Rich Slabach, Julie Lawson, Jane McLeod

Board members absent: Drew Schrader

Ministers attending: Revs. Mary Ann Macklin and Emily Leite

Present by invitation: None

Submitted by: Steven Gilbert, Secretary

Attached Documents:

 A. Senior Ministers Report

I. Call to Order

President Stuart Yoak called the meeting to order online at 7:04 p.m.

II. Chalice Lighting and Reading

Julie Lawson lit the chalice. Steven Gilbert provided the reading.

III. Check-in (All)

IV. Approval of the Minutes

- President Stuart Yoak moved approval of the May 20 Board meeting minutes. After a second, the motion carried.
- President Yoak moved approval of the June 7 Congregational meeting minutes with minor corrections. After a second, the motion carried.

V. Senior Minister's Report

Reverend Mary Ann Macklin provided the Senior Minister's Report (Attachment A). She additionally noted that the June 28 Sunday service would not originate locally but would originate from the online UUA General Assembly.

VI. New Business

A. Training for New Board Members

Since we have only one new board member (Drew Schrader) and he has served before on the Board, orientation and training will be provided as needed by President Yoak and Vice President Abby Gitlitz.

B. UUA General Assembly

President Yoak reminded Board members that the UUA General Assembly will be held online June 24-28. He would like to increase participation and urged any Board member interested in attending to let him know. Rev. Macklin seconded this call and said the church could cover the cost of registration.

C. Motion for a Special Plate

Rev. Emily Leite reported that the UUCB Dismantle White Supremacy working group would like to schedule a presentation during an upcoming worship service of *Babies and Bailout*, a program sponsored by Black Lives UU. She also requested that the Board support the passing of a special plate

at an upcoming service (suggesting July 5) to help fund bails for black mothers in keeping with this initiative. After discussion, Julie Lawson moved that the Board approve the special plate request. The motion was seconded and carried.

VII. Old Business

A. Review of the June 7 Congregational Meeting

President Yoak called for Board members' comments on the June 7 Online Congregational Meeting. Board members generally agreed that the meeting went well—better than expected—and several said they had received supportive feedback from Congregants. Seven suggestions were made for improvement of the December meeting (if held online) based on the June 7 experience, which included:

1. Ensuring beforehand that the ZOOM cap on numbers of participants is adequate
2. Figuring out how to get people to sign in with usable identifiers
3. Having more of those people running the meeting work in the same location
4. Sending ministers as well as congregants and board members an invitation (so they can get in)
5. Seeking ways to allow more discussion
6. Finding ways to keep people from giving up when their entry is delayed
7. Including places for announcing the results of votes in the agenda so this is not overlooked

Vice President Gitlitz suggested that a debriefing of those who worked the meeting other than Board members would be productive.

VIII. Housekeeping

- Vice President Gitlitz said she would extend the Signup Genius signup sheet for announcements, as it currently ends June 28.
- President Yoak volunteered to conduct the chalice lighting and reading at the July Board meeting.

IX. Executive Session

The Board entered executive session at 8:21 p.m.

X. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

ATTACHMENT A

June 17, 2020 (Deb Phelps's Birthday) Senior Minister Board Report Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington

First, thanks to members of this board, who for this past fiscal year (or part of it), have served generously with your time, integrity and spirit. Moreover, thanks to you, board members, for continuing into our next fiscal year which will, needless to say, be full of unique challenges and opportunities; deep gratitude for the continuity created by your willingness to serve.

Also, I, along with many others, appreciate all the work that went into this congregation's first ever virtual congregational meeting. You all put a lot of extra effort into this one and it worked pretty well. I offer a shout out to staff member Ann LeDuc who pulled off a Unitarian miracle by changing the Zoom capacity for the meeting (to exceed 100) in a moment's notice. The reports, slides, responses, and capacity to entertain questions went remarkably well for a first time experience. Kudos.

As for this meeting, much of what I would offer in this June Board Report is in my Annual Report provided last Sunday at the congregational meeting. So I will not offer redundancies. However, I do want to note that my annual report contained a link to detailed guidelines from the UUA for congregations as they consider readiness plans and risk assessment in determining when to gather again in person, once Covid19 subsides. Y'know, Lord willing and the Covid don't rise. Below, I have included a boatload of questions (UUA) for our good ship Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington. Please review when time allows as these questions will be a source of exploration as we go forward this fiscal year. The link for the full guidance report is: <https://www.uua.org/safe/pandemics/gathering-guidance>

Be Well. Stay Safe. Seek Spirit. Build Community. Change World. Peace, MAM

Questions to Guide Congregational Thinking About Online or In-Person Gathering

As you start to imagine a return to in-person programming at the core of your congregation's offerings, you may wish to consider the following questions. Though we do not anticipate a return to full in-person programming until the pandemic has subsided, we anticipate that there will, in the next year, be a time when planning for some in-person programming may make sense.

1. Questions about authority:

- Who will be involved in the decision-making process about resuming limited or total in-person operations? And who will make that final decision?
- If in-person programs resume, but then guidance or circumstances change, who will be involved in the decision to cease, or put new limitations on, in-person gatherings?

2. Questions related to identity:

- Who are we as a congregation called to be right now?
- Acknowledging that every person in our congregation might have contact with many people outside of our congregation, who is part of the “we” we are considering in our decision-making?
- If we are legally permitted to gather in person before the pandemic subsides, what would be the social/emotional/spiritual costs of gathering? Who would we exclude? How would this fit with our mission and identity?

3. Questions related to health and vulnerability of:

- The local population—what are the trends in infection, treatment, recovery and death in our immediate community? How might our resumption of in-person services contribute to, or detract from, a safer world for everyone?
- The members and friends of the congregation—what proportion of our population may have underlying conditions that exacerbate the effects of COVID-19, if they are to contract it?
- The staff and minister(s), their household members—what are their vulnerabilities, and what risks are we asking them to take?
- Renters, unhoused guests being housed in the congregation’s building, guests in immigration sanctuary, and others who share the building—would they be put at risk by the congregation’s in-person operations?

4. Questions related to the staff/volunteer and technological capacity of the congregation:

- What kind of special training will staff need for safe in-person gatherings? Are staff responsible for ensuring that participants are following health and safety protocol? If not staff, who holds this responsibility?
- If we start to phase in in-person worship and programs, do we have the staff and volunteer capacity to offer two tracks of robust participation (in-person and digital) for a year or more? What might our staff and volunteers need to continue both?
- If we judge that we are one of the rare congregations that has capacity for two robust tracks of programming: when community health criteria are met, how will we ensure maximum safety for those who gather in person? And how will we carry forward the inclusiveness we fostered while we were virtual-only? How will we ensure that virtual-only participants don’t unintentionally become marginalized?

5. Questions related to the building and grounds:

- Were it permitted by local authorities, is it possible to navigate the building and participate in worship/events/meetings while practicing at least 6’ of social distancing?

Does this change if someone is navigating the building with a walker, a wheelchair, or a stroller?

- What kind of space do we have for religious education programs, and how will we maintain appropriate distance? How might we need to change how we do these programs?
- What kind of ventilation does the building have in the hotter season and in the colder season, as well as in between? How often is the air exchanged in each of the frequently-used spaces?
- Do we have the capacity for 20 seconds of handwashing and/or hand-sanitizing by every person in the building at least twice per visit to the building? Dividing our usual attendance by our number of sinks (and accounting for gender and ability-restricted sinks), then multiplying by 20 seconds, how long will this take? (Some congregations have a very high member to sink ratio.)
- How are we cleaning our building, both before we return, and while we are back in the building? To what extent and level?
- Would we consider screening people for symptoms before they are admitted to the building, or might we ask people to check their own symptoms prior to attending any event at the congregation?

6. Questions related to music, children's programs, worship, and social hour:

- Will it feel strange to gather in person while communal singing (even with masks) is still not considered a safe thing to do? What could take the place of hymns and choir in our in-person services?
- What will be required to keep children off of playground equipment? To sanitize all the toys and surfaces they touch? What are local schools, preschools, and daycare centers doing?
- While worship and programs are taking place, who will enforce protocols around cleaning, face-masks, social distancing, food, and such? What kinds of consequences will there be for failure to engage in safe practices? How will this be different with children?
- Can we project the order of service and song lyrics so that we don't touch hymnals and orders of service? Do we have the necessary technological hardware and software?
- How do we take the collection/offering in a way that minimizes physical contact?
- What means do we have in place for hard-of-hearing people to hear others' speaking, especially when they can't see lips moving (because of facemasks and/or distance)?
- If our building does not have space for its usual number of people to attend worship and maintain physical distance, how will we decide who comes when? Alphabetically? Neighborhoods? Other methods?
- What will be necessary in order to host receptions and coffee hours with food and drink safely?

7. Questions related to liability:

- What does the congregation's insurer advise about gathering in person? What do they consider to be a reasonable provision of safety on the congregation's part?

- What does the congregation's attorney say about any legal liability the congregation might take on in allowing in-person gatherings?
- If it turns out that known COVID-19 transmission occurs in our building, how will we respond to that? Will we be able to say that we did everything we could to prevent transmission and protect the most vulnerable?

8. Questions about renters and other users of the building space:

- Could rental groups' operations put the congregation or its guests at risk?
- Is it possible to ensure a safe environment for groups that use our space?
- Are some of the groups that use our space true lifesavers for people in distress (such as groups for people in recovery or people who are survivors of violence)? Do we have the capacity to make additional efforts to ensure that they can use the space safely as soon as local regulations allow?
- Might any of the operations of the groups that use our building pose additional risk to the congregation and other users? How might those risks be minimized?
- What restrictions ought we put in place on short- and long-term renters' use of the building and their operations?
- How will we ensure that users of the space are following appropriate guidelines, and cleaning/disinfecting the spaces for which they are responsible?