



**First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio  
Board of Trustees Meeting  
January 19, 2022**

**MINUTES**

Gale Morrow called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. The Board met via Zoom teleconferencing.

PRESENT: Danielle Bess, Deb Loya, Gale Morrow, Terry Palin, Ron Pena, Troy Peters, Rev. Mark Skrabacz, Vicki Tullius

One Board member, Oscar Solis, was absent.

Rev. Mark shared opening words. Troy read our covenant, and Danielle read the ends statements. Troy was named Process Observer. Deb was named Timekeeper for the meeting.

The Consent Agenda was approved as presented. Included in the Consent Agenda:

- December 15 Board Minutes
- Minister's Report
- President's Report
- Vice President's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Coordinating Council Report

**OLD BUSINESS**

The Board began with old business, awaiting the availability of one Board member who would be required for new business.

Ron updated the Board on Capital Campaign Committee activity. He mentioned that the letter from the Board had yet been widely shared, but the Board understood that it would be more widely shared in coming months. Ron pointed out that the Board's charge to the Capital Campaign Committee needs editing to reflect the anticipated scope of work.

**Troy moved and Terry seconded that Item 7 in the Charge to Capital Campaign Committee be updated to read, "It may include new construction to existing buildings, if feasible and within reasonable cost parameters." The motion carried. Troy will convey the**

amended charge to the Capital Campaign Committee. (Complete amended charge text is included below.)

The Board agreed that the Capital Campaign Committee's expenditures should not exceed the balance of cash on hand in received capital campaign funds.

Staff feels our current Church Management Software (ChMS) is not sufficient for the upcoming capital campaign. In response, the Capital Campaign Committee has offered to cover the FY22 expense required to transition to Breeze, a new ChMS, out of its committee budget. The Board consensus was to accept this generous offer.

The Capital Campaign Committee requested a joint meeting with the Board to discuss Board giving to the campaign. The Board agreed to meet with the Capital Campaign Committee on Thursday, January 27.

Because the Board Listening Session scheduled for January 16 was not announced or publicized, no church members attended. Troy apologized for failing to handle that responsibility. Gale also pointed out that Board minutes need to be available on the church website in a timelier manner. Troy apologized for not handling that responsibility more reliably. Troy announced that he would complete his term as Board Secretary though May 2022, but would then resign from the Board. In the meantime, he will do his best to fulfill the obligations of the position more successfully.

Terry suggested the Board president or vice-president publish a monthly email update on Board activity.

The next Board Listening Session, focused on finances, will take place on March 20 (in person) and March 27 (Zoom). Gale offered to provide a door prize.

Gale reviewed progress on Board goals for 2021/22. We have made good progress on financial transparency and physical plant goals. Ministerial searches have moved more slowly so far, but are in progress. The organizational chart still needs final Board approval; Troy will complete the revision of the document and bring it back to the Board this spring.

Terry asked whether the bylaws would need to be revised to allow for engagement of a contract minister rather than conducting a traditional search for a settled minister. The Board agreed to revisit this topic in the future.

## NEW BUSINESS

Deb has received budget requests from all major committees except worship. She invited the Board to suggest any additional budget priorities for the Finance Committee to consider:

- Gale requested funding for Board professional development or training, for consultant or facilitator to assist with Board retreat, and for recognition or expressions of gratitude to Board members (total of \$2,000)
- Terry proposed a staff position of Creative and Digital Communications Manager and shared a draft job description (circa \$20,000)
- When asked about funding for the eggnog social, Deb suggested existing social event funds should cover that expense

**Deb moved and Troy seconded that the following motion to align the budget with the minister’s contract and UUA guidance be adopted by the Board.** After clarification that the maximum funds available would be limited by the annual budget, **the motion carried.**

**Whereas**, April 2, 2020 the First UU Church of San Antonio and Reverend Mark Skrabacz entered into a contract for ministerial services which provided in Section 3.2.4 for “Professional and out-of-pocket expenses,” which included but were not limited to, “ministry-related travel, automobile mileage, lodging, meals incidentals, conference registration, UUMA and other professional dues, continuing education, clergy robes, books, periodicals, dues and office equipment, such as phones, computers and printers. It will be the practice of the Congregation to reimburse such expenses at the maximum rate allowed by law.”

**Whereas**, in an article dated July 25, 2019 the UUA provided guidance related to “Professional Expense Allowances” which stated, “U.S. tax law provides that congregations and other organizations employing ministers and other religious professionals may consider certain items as usual business expenses. Such expenses are not included in the compensation paid to individuals: they are part of the necessary expenses of the organization are not reported for income tax purposes” and gave a listing of items which belonged in this category including:

1. Automobile expenses while on official business
2. Travel expenses
3. Entertainment expenses directly related to the mission or programs
4. Books and journals acquired and used for professional purposes
5. Computers and related equipment costs
6. Educational expenses such as tuition, books and supplies are professional expenses if related to one’s professional status or responsibilities, or to maintain skills needed in one’s work.

These educational expenses are often referred to as “Professional Development.”

**Whereas**, the approved Congregational Budgets for both 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, inconsistent with both the April 2, 2020, ministerial contract and UUA guidance, identified Budget Line Item #547 as being for “Professional Development” when the more inclusive term, “Professional Expenses” should have been used.

**Therefore**, I move that Budget Line Item #547 be amended to read “Professional Expenses” and that the Accountant be asked to change the Line Item title in the Profit and Loss statement as well as in Quick Books, and that Meminfo (or any other internal

data system) be corrected as well, consistent with the existing ministerial contract and current UUA guidance.

While many church members have been excited about the availability of video streaming for worship and other church events, two members have expressed concern that they prefer not to be seen on camera during events that are streamed from the sanctuary. There is one camera behind the chancel which captures an image in which the congregation is visible. Rev. Mark agreed to talk with Ron Meneses about whether there might be an adjustment of camera angle or zoom to limit certain places in the sanctuary from view on this camera, creating a “safe zone,” where those who prefer to be off-camera could sit. If such a zone is possible, its availability should be announced to the congregation.

#### OLD BUSINESS (continued)

The Board discussed the ongoing public health challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that the omicron wave is expected to peak in the next few weeks, leading to improving conditions. The Board agreed there is no need to pull back on church activity, given the likelihood of improving conditions in the near future.

Rev. Mark updated the Board on two candidates for the Assistant Minister position at FUUCSA.

Ron Pena shared that he has made progress on plans to replace the church locks with digital locks.

The Board’s next regular meeting will take place on February 16 at 6:30 p.m., via Zoom teleconferencing.

After a process observation from Troy, Rev. Mark shared closing words and the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by Troy Peters, Board Secretary]