

Draft Minutes of Eliot Chapel Unitarian Annual Meeting
Sunday, May 15, 2022
In-person and via zoom

*These minutes will be considered for approval during the May 2023 annual meeting

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Steve Harvey, called the meeting to order at 12:37 pm.

The Chair went over the agenda and covered several housekeeping items.

The Chair announced that David Cox would serve as Parliamentarian for this meeting.

Review of the Congregational Covenant

Board member Toni Saunders read our congregational covenant.

Statement of Quorum

Board treasurer Sara Fleming reminded the membership of the quorum requirement in the bylaws. As 489 people are officially members of Eliot Chapel, a minimum of 49 or 10 percent of the membership must be present. She reported an attendance of 77 participants in today's meeting, sufficient to establish a quorum.

Adoption of the Meeting Rules

The Chair asked if there were any objections to the adoption of the meeting rules. As there were Corinne Esault asked about adding in discussion of the interim minister, summer services and Krista Taves plans moving forward. Steve Harvey agreed to add in time for questions and answers to the agenda. The agenda and rules were adopted unanimously.

Board Chair's statement

Board Chair Steve Harvey noted that this year has been eventful at Eliot with the transitions back and forth from virtual church to in-person church, with Rev. Barbara announcing her retirement, the resulting quick process of hiring an interim minister and lots of financial and programming discussions.

The Chair remarked that our church is smaller, about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the size we were not too long ago. At the same time, the church has had several visitors and some new members as well. The Chair said we should soon know who the interim minister will be and noted that there is a shortage of interim ministers and a surplus of openings for ministers. He noted that we have three great choices for interim minister ahead of us. The Chair also noted that Rev. Krista will remain with Eliot Chapel next year at half-time capacity and the interim will be a full-time minister so Eliot will continue to be served by 1.5 ministers next year, as it has this year. As to the budget, the Chair said the board made some hard decisions and chose a middle path that includes some reductions in staffing to reduce expenditures and a plan to dip into long-term savings.

Lead Minister's Statement

The chair gave the floor to Rev. Barbara Gadon, Lead Minister.

Rev. Gadon offered many thank-yous. She referred to Steve as Dr. Fun and said he has been so good. She appreciates how closely he worked with Chair Elect, Claire Wyneken. She said she cannot stress how hard the board has worked this year and said she is working to bring people to speak through late July and will coordinate with the interim minister for the weeks to follow. She praised the staff for having to plan in small, six-week chunks and thanked Ken Denson and Christie Lee for their hard work. She thanked Sara Price for her time at Eliot and for introducing us to Adam Hausman, who is now the music director.

Old Business

The chair noted that the agenda contained no old business.

Finances

The chair turned the floor over to Sara Fleming, Treasurer, for discussion on Eliot's finances. Camille Novak held a detailed budget presentation a few days earlier and Sara mentioned this would be a higher-level overview of the budget for this group.

Income is expected from pledges, modest rental fees at a total of \$647,650.

Expenditures include: Salaries and benefits: \$650,000 that keeps staff at current rates with changes mentioned, programming costs \$22,000, operating expenses.

The budget makes assumptions about the percentage of pledge commitments which will materialize. It also assumes revenue from Eliot Eats fundraisers \$15,000, Trivia Night and Madrigal \$17,000.

The church plans to ask the congregation for additional money in the fall. The budget includes a plan to raise \$60,000 at that time and also use endowment dividends, use \$50,000 in endowment funds and use \$55,000 from the Bergfried fund.

Questions-

Madelyn Harris asked: Is there data to suggest we can raise \$60,000? Have we done second asks before? *Rev. Barbara answered that the church did do a second ask in the past and got more than we needed.*

Kate Macgrathe said: I'm concerned because of the history of what's been done before? How will we pay back whatever you borrow from Bergfried? *Realistically it will take us 2-3-5 years to get back the deficit. The plan is to pay it back. We are borrowing from ourselves, essentially.*

Corinne Esnault: The Bergfried corpus is at \$200,000, supposed to be kept at \$100,000 minimum.

The corpus will be the last to be tapped into if we need more cash.

Trish Williams: I'm hearing two different sets of words - using vs borrowing from endowments. The pledge document said using endowment dividends, not borrowing. The lot next door is still an expense? *The \$40,000 mortgage for the lot and this building is an annual cost.*

Rev. Barbara said the bylaws tell us we may not borrow. We can use funds from the endowment. For purposed that it was created for– things that threaten the health of the church. We treated it as borrowing. Will the money be returned to the endowment fund? No this does not obligate them to.

Jennifer Stauber asked why \$205,000 in cash equity? Can we spend up to \$205,000 to remove the need for endowments? *Ken D - We got a government bail out through a PPE loan*

Tim Gardner asked about potential income from hosting outside meetings throughout the week. He also expressed concern about using money from the endowment corpus and mentioned that this is a violation of the expectations people have when they give money to an endowment. He said that our current state should not count as an emergency and suggested that we might need to feel the financial constraints we are in.

Ann Ruger asked whether the board has had a question of whether we should sell the land? How do we bring that to you for consideration?

Steve Harvey said that selling the 222 property and selling the Bergfried are possible but those are things we are going to try to avoid.

Sara Fleming said we have had this discussion. We didn't come to this budget lightly, the staff put a lot of time and work into this. Like Steve said you can only sell the property once, when it's gone it's gone.

Gary Gray- We are out of order on the rules. There's no use in approving rules if you don't stick to them.

Jennifer Stauber- are there financials on the church website? *YES*

Tim Gardner asked David Cox if it is it appropriate for the members of the congregational meeting give a consensus request to the board regarding the budget and if so would a motion to prohibit the use of endowment corpus be appropriate for us to consider at this meeting.

David Cox– I would rule that out of order. If you want to change the agenda and add a vote for it. But it's not possible.

Presentation of Candidates for Board of Trustees–

Approved unanimously

New Business

Chair Steve Harvey offered thoughts on chapel governance as a spiritual practice and asked incoming Board Chair Claire Wyneken to pledge to the congregation that she will steward well the office of Board Chair and ensure that the Board validates its trusteeship of the Chapel.

Claire made that chair and made a statement to that effect. She said we would do the work to get us to our goals together.

Comments and Questions from Attendees

Jim Lyons: For the board next year, if a little bit of money should come in, I propose that giving the staff some kind of raise should be high on the list. Cost of Living raises.

Adjourn

The board adjourned at 1:40pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kalen Ponche,
Board Secretary 2021-2022