

Eliot Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2022
Held in person at Eliot Chapel

Board members present: Claire Wyneken (2023), Toni Saunders (2023), Chuck Schuder (2024), Sara Fleming (2024), Kalen Ponche (2024) Steve Swift (2024)
Carole Glauser (2025)

Not Present:

Ministers, Volunteers & Guests: Susan Bell; Rev. Doug Wadkins, Gene Hutchins, Carl Serbell

Gather (5 min)

- Chalice lighting & Opening Reading **Chuck**
- Welcome Board and Visitors and Introductory comments Claire

Board members and visitors shared highs and lows.

Visitor Comments (2 minutes per visitor) (5 min)

Meeting Preparation (5 min)

- Finalize agenda
- Transparency Ombudsperson's Report
- Confirm meeting assignments:
 - Timekeeper - **Sara**
 - [Process & Transparency](#) Observer - **Carole**

Consent Agenda (5 min)

- Approve October 2022 Meeting Minutes
- Affirmation of New Eliot members (Bylaws, Article III, Part A): Richard Parsons and Patrice Crotty
- Accept Policy Monitoring Reports: [\(See Policy Compliance Record\)](#)
 - [3.5 Policy Non-Compliance:](#) **Toni and Kalen**
 - 4.1 https://drive.google.com/file/d/oBwTrzAfK_YPuXo44ODBoYlFTZoU/view Rev Doug
 - 4.2 https://drive.google.com/open?id=oBwTrzAfK_YPuN1lCSExfUnlzdjQ Rev Doug
 - Steve Swift moved and Chuck seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion was passed unanimously.

Learning dialogue: Chapters 3 & 4 Governance and Ministry (15 min)

Steve said he looked at the three roles of the board: oversight, management and planning. They also mentioned having a strategic plan and setting annual goals. The board deals with nuts and bolts and with setting the ends or bigger vision but the board really doesn't have the shorter term annual goals or a strategic plan.

Calling something a team makes it become more fun than if you call something a committee. He said he's interested in seeing what we can come up with as a board that involves less rigidity and more availability.

Claire Wyneken said structure is only as good as the processes that surround it. One of the biggest processes we have to be vigilant about is communication. Communication, making sure we are doing everything we can. It's very challenging with a small staff and a board of busy people. I think of the planning and visioning as a collective experience. That is funneled to the board and ministry to work out the nuts and bolts of it. We did the last group of end statements but we haven't lifted those up. There was a great process and then we missed an opportunity.

Rev. Doug cautioned us that in comparing what is happening right now to what we want to be compared to what we want to be we have to remember that we are in the interim period. He said he never will have the same rapport, knowledge and natural in-roads to the congregants that board members will have. Your new minister will care about the health of the congregation in a different way. There's so much that lasts well beyond the conversations we have. The actual style – more congregations experience between congregation and the board and the staff and lay-leaders has become more of collaboration.

Nomination of Susan Bell to the BOT and to be Treasurer.

Term to conclude June 30, 2025

The board may elect a member to fill a role during a vacancy on the board. Sue Bell, who has been serving as a volunteer finance helper, has said she would be open to being nominated.

Sara moved and Toni seconded to nominate Susan Bell to the BOT and to be treasurer. The board approved this unanimously.

Treasurer's Report [Sara and Sue]

The church expenses are less than were budgeted for the year, however the church is still running a deficit. Some of the expense reduction is coming from less payroll, church programming being less than expected as well as some of the expenses turn out lower than expected. Camille is working hard to keep costs low.

In October income was \$44,515, expenses were \$67,097.

Trends related to financials and management [Rev. Doug]

Rev. Doug said in a typical time, the markers are genuinely encouraging, but the budget is tight in deficit for this year which places us in an ongoing complicated situation. There is a complicated set of circumstances. What we are going to do about it, isn't the typical solution. We do need to do better in our pledges, we also have the big question of what we will do in the future and how do we talk to people about the future.

In the new calendar year we need to put together a task force of people who are fiscally prudent and also people who can think visionary and take risks. We will not continue to

bring people in if we don't have programming. Why are we spending the money but the why? What sort of vision is propelling that? We need to put together a plan. It's hard to explain all the moving parts. It's not an easy set of expenses and an easy set of revenue kind of thing. Complicated set of accounts, and if we are going to plan to rethink those given the current circumstances. Every congregation is going through some version of this. But you've had a host of things that were unexpected even before covid.

We need to open conversation about how to be sustainable and increase the sense of ownership we are try to reestablish.

Update from Doug on church management.

The church is working to get the staff in the building and more often working together in person. Doug said that working from home has allowed people to be productive, however interfacing with people is an important part of the work people do. The church staff needs to be a team, he said.

New Business (10 min)

The board is tasked with finding opportunities to interface with the congregation regularly beyond just written communication and regular videos. The nominating committee is planning to an event.

January 21 the Fun Team will host a game night. Board could plan to be there in support of this night. (*Note on Jan. 16: This event was rescheduled for later in February*)

Staff and board could do something.

The board is planning

Trivia Night-

Claire will reach out *Steve Menerick or Steve Harvey - make plans by Jan. 1.*

How to get the ends back up in front of people.

bowling night?

Facilities Team- Doug and Claire will clarify teams to table by the 9th

Staff is planning a push in January. People would like to volunteer.

10 people say no. Coordinate around it. Have the same message.

Unfinished Business

- Report on Search Committee survey (5 min)
 - Only 28 people have responded to the survey. There are 43 people named. There will be another message around it
 - Ask Debbie to put this above the fold. Send out a message about the 9th.
 - Kalen will draft something by tomorrow. Theme of the month of January is finding your center (and your new minister).
- Confirm subgroup responsible for narrowing the list: Steve, Carole, Sara will make decisions.
- Push the deadline to Jan. 9 for names.
- Kalen will draft a letter to the congregation about the new year
- Sue will send a bio and headshot to Claire by Jan. 26

Board Development

Leadership as a Spiritual Practice dialogues:

- o **What's Your How? How do you want to show up? How do you show up or want to show up as a leader?**

The board discussed how we show up and how we want to show up as a leader. In January the board will answer the question for themselves, what's your what's next?

Minister Incidental Report: Doug said he feels like he has been able to work with the board to think intentionally about how we interact with the minister during board meetings. Do the reports tell us what we need to know? If not, what would make it more meaningful and helpful? He wants to have us set precedent so we feel like we are on the same team. Next thing I do– engage congregation about our missional identity and how to answer who are we, who do we serve and what does the world ask of us? Are we going in the right direction in terms of our understanding of how things exist? These are an opportunity to rethink linkage. Have big, open-ended question events several times a year? Are there unhelpful patterns?

8:30 Meeting Summary:

Process & Transparency Report : No notes

Decisions/Actions Taken/Follow Up

- Adopted Consent Agenda
 - o Determine Key points for board briefing
 - o Susan Bell was approved as the newest board member by a unanimous vote.
 - o We welcomed two new members Richard Parsons and Patrice Crotty.
 - o The board is 1/3 of the way to the fundraising goal for the year. They can go to realm and contribute to the chalice keepers fund. Or drop a check on Sunday.
 - o We talked about chapters 3 and 4 of governance and ministry (link to the UU book website).
 - o Please send us your nominations for people to be on the search committee.
 - o Join the board for board games on January 21 and look for more to come.

Assignments for January 17, 2023 Meeting

Read Chapters 5-6 in Governance and Ministry

Think about “What's my What's Next?” for Leadership as a Spiritual Practice

Policy Monitoring Scheduled for December Meeting
(See [Policy Compliance Rec](#))

3.1 Unity of Voice: Steve and Carole

https://docs.google.com/document/d/15_82Ge_cGwbsSYd7Afmhzqy3qnj-yZqB7Wfx7LSSzuI/edit

4.9 Board Communication and Support: Rev.Doug

[Policy 4.9 Board Communication and Support.pdf - Google Drive](#)

8:35 Adjourn and Social at Bar Louie for those who can join us

Reminder Dates

Next Board Meeting: January 17, 2023 at Adams Hall