

Minutes of Eliot Unitarian Chapel Annual Meeting
Sunday, May 17, 2020
via Zoom

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Brian Krippner, called the meeting to order at 12:15pm

The Chair welcomed everyone and noted more than 80 participants have joined the session at start of the meeting.

The Chair made opening remarks, giving particular thanks to certain staff members. He explained why we were having our meeting via Zoom. He also thanked the board members for their help in preparing for and hosting this meeting.

The Chair announced possible technical problems with Zoom today and gave instructions on how to respond if we experience technical difficulties.

The Chair went over various housekeeping items.

Review of the Congregational Covenant

Board Member Nancy Rubin read our congregational covenant aloud for the benefit of all assembled.

Establishing Quorum

Board Member Cathy Converse announced that we have a quorum.

Remarks on Voting

Board Secretary David Cox reviewed how we will vote in this virtual setting.

Adoption of Rules

The Chair reviewed the proposed meeting rules and virtual meeting rules and explained their origin. The Chair then asked if there were any questions about the rules. Board Member Cathy Converse explained how to everyone how to raise one's hand using the software for those that have questions.

There were no raised hands and no questions about the rules.

The Chair called for any objections to the meeting rules. There were none. The Chair noted the rules will be considered adopted by unanimous consent.

Consent Agenda

The Chair reviewed an explanation of the consent agenda.

The Chair listed the items covered by the consent agenda:

- A. **Approval of Agenda**
- B. **Approval of Minutes of 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting**
- C. **Election of Toni Saunders to Board of Trustees - 3 year term beg. July 1, 2020**
- D. **Election of Jordi Prats to Board of Trustees - 1 year term beginning July 1, 2020**
- E. **Election of Cayla Suter to Nominations Committee- 3 year term beg. July 1, 2020**

The Chair then called for any objections to the consent agenda.

Rich Heuerman objected to “new business.” After some discussion, Rich Heuerman then clarified he objected to the entire agenda being approved through consent since he had some new business to discuss and didn’t want that option eliminated through consent.

The Chair then called for consideration of items B through E, and asked those assembled if any of those items should be removed from the consent agenda and moved to the regular agenda.

Rich Heuermann then withdrew his previous objection to item A, stating he had misunderstood how the consent agenda was being used.

Hearing no other objections, the consent agenda The Chair declared the consent agenda adopted by unanimous consent.

Board Chair’s Report

The Chair then delivered a report from the board of trustees. The theme was “Paying Attention.”

Lead Minister’s Report

The Chair then turned floor to Rev. Gadon for her lead minister’s report. Rev. Gadon gave her report. She noted that this year was like a novel, from the lung transplant to the fire in the office tower (staff had to work from home because of the fire), to the virus. Rev. Gadon said we closed building on March 21, but didn’t close the church. She noted we started virtual services immediately the following Sunday. She said that small groups have been continuing online and some new groups have started too.

Rev. Gadon mentioned a letter from the UUA about staying safe. The letter’s recommendation, adopted by Rev. Gadon, is that virtual meetings will continue until May 2021. Rev. Gadon recommend we read the letter from the president. It is found at www.uua.org. Rev. Gadon announced she is forming an advisory group with relevant expertise and will discuss that ongoing effort with the Board of Trustees.

Rev. Gadon mentioned our asylum work and hosting a trans-woman from Mexico. She commented that with this, our novel is also a love story. She noted we are saying good-bye to Rev. Jim Crawford, Pastoral Care Minister, and to our Music Director, Jan Chamberlin. Krista Taves and Sarah Price (new assistant minister and music director) are being welcomed. Rev. Gadon concluded her remarks by saying Eliot Chapel has the heart of a lion and has much more to offer the world.

Old Business

The Chair noted no Old Business on agenda.

Finances

The Chair turned floor over to Treasurer Ken Denson and Rev. Gadon to discuss finances.

The Treasurer shared a fiscal health spreadsheet with those attending (YTD as of March 31, 2020). The Treasurer noted that the spreadsheet provides an overall status point. He said he took out volatile items like costs and income related to the fire). He noted we still have April, May and June for pledge income to be counted.

The Chair logged onto our website to show us how to find more detailed financial information on a monthly basis.

Rev. Gadon said we will be using the 2019-2020 budget through September 30th because of current circumstances. She said we may change that later, but that is her current intention. Rev. Gadon noted there will be an effort to reach out to all members to just make contact, encourage folks to participate in virtual meetings, and just find out how everyone is doing. Later, she said, we will reach out to those who haven't yet pledged this year but who pledged last year, which will allow us to have a better idea for the budget process. Other factors are at play, like rental income and helping cover expenses for those who are struggling. We received a PPP loan (thanks to our Administrator, Camille Novak). The funds are in hand. Rev. Gadon noted we combined and refinanced 222 Argonne and 100 S Taylor, which saved us \$20,000 per year, which will help.

The Chair then opened it up for questions about finances.

Member Tim Gardner had two questions. Rev. Gadon answered his questions (about demolition costs still being budgeted and whether the 222 mortgage was extended by rolling it into the other loan (yes to both, said Rev. Gadon).

Member David Cox asked for an update on the staff, asking if they are all still employed and insured. Rev. Gadon said "yes." She said she can't guarantee anything beyond our fiscal year per board policy, but would like to offer them current terms through September (using our current budget). We should be able to do that, but she wants to check first.

Member Janet Solecki asked about consulting Kay about finances and expressed how pleased she was with the improvements to our financial situation.

Member Barbara Harris asked if we have decided how to use the property next door. Rev. Gadon said “no.”

Member Rebecca Taylor asked about the pledge cycle. Rev. Gadon stated we were interrupted at the wrap-up stage and were about to go into follow-up when the virus hit. We then put things on hold until August, explained Rev. Gadon.

Member Peter Wilson asked about strategic planning. Rev. Gadon said there is not yet a committee in place. The Chair added that as part of our normal mission statement and ends review cycle, we will pull in that kind of discussion, perhaps next fiscal year if the virus allows.

New Business

Member Rich Heuermann raised questions about the fire and insurance. He asked to have a report on the expenses to date and how much has been paid to date and projections about what is likely to be paid and how much is not yet covered. He wants to know how much we are still on the hook for.

The Chair noted this question is related to finances and asked the Treasurer or Rev. Gadon to address it. The Treasurer said we received about 73K from initial insurance company reimbursement from their first review. He said we have expended about 43k for cleanup and other related costs. Actual reconstruction still has to happen (with the offices in the tower). There is ongoing work toward that and it is being put out for bids. The Treasurer noted that these numbers are changing day-by-day. They are a moving target. Rev. Gadon noted initial cleanup was done by Woodards and we got a bill, but then they supplemented it after that with more costs which had to be submitted to the insurance company. Rev. Gadon noted the Bergfried Room, the Triplett Room and the Lead Minister’s office merely suffered smoke damage. Rev. Jim’s/Krista’s office have drywall and ceilings that need to be repaired. Camille’s office has to be torn down to the studs to be repaired. Rev. Gadon said we are using a local company for that. We have looked at the Administrator’s office location in the building (being in the corner), so the recommendation expands that office into the Garden Room to make ingress and egress safer in an emergency. When asked, Rev. Gadon noted we don’t expect further focused contributions for this incident.

No more new business was presented

Questions and Answers

Member Nancy Hutchins wanted to thank Tim Gardner and Linda Cummings. She said Gene was in hospital for a long time and thanked them for all their help with the situation.

Member Gail Rock asked about music and the possibility of pre-recording music for services. Rev. Gadon said we plan to have more music in the services. For example, we had a virtual choir during our last service. Solos will also continue to be a part of the services. Music Director Jan Chamberlin noted she will be meeting with our new Music Director, Sara Price, in June. They are taking it step-by-step. She noted we will be inviting musicians to make recordings at home. She suggested individuals step forward to contribute music that you have recorded.

Member Bob Meihaus asked about the \$100,000 from the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) and how it plays into the budget. He said he didn't see it in the numbers presented. Rev. Gadon said the loan helps going forward, whereas the March 31st report we shared, was looking backward to a time when we hadn't yet had the PPP proceeds. She noted we haven't seen it show up in finances yet, but it will make a big difference.

Member Dave Storer noted they are trying to find ways to spend their stimulus check and will include the Eliot Chapel and suggested others do the same thing.

Member Suzanne LeLaurin also asked about music. She said singers are one of the most significant spreaders of the virus. She said some experts she has heard recommend choirs not get together to sing/rehearse until a vaccine is available.

Member Faith Williams mentioned the possibility of spending stimulus money on political candidates.

Member Paula Fulks also wanted to mention giving gifts to the church earmarked to our asylum project. She said we don't know how long will take for our guest to be able to work. She also noted some immigrants may lose their DACA status and could be deported. She also noted that most immigrants are not entitled to get any of the benefits approved by congress recently.

Member Bob Meihaus asked about local guidelines for starting services again. Rev. Gadon noted the county has not given us great guidance. She said her opinion is that opening tomorrow is too soon. Worship services are a perfect petri dish for the virus. Singing is a high-risk behavior and our members are often in high-risk groups. We will be opening much later than when people are told they may do so. Also, she noted, how to enforce 25% capacity rule for a church service. We may encourage up to 10 people to gather together and watch the service from member homes. I will not be thinking about re-opening for worship for quite some time, said Rev. Gadon. She said we could think about outdoor services. We will need to explore that, she said.

Member Trish Williams asked about the consent agenda. She wanted to acknowledge new board members Toni, Jordi and Kayla and recognize anyone leaving the Board. The Chair noted David Cox is the only one retiring from the Board and offered thanks.

The Chair thanked everyone for participating.

The Chair assumed a motion to adjourn is on floor. There was no objection. The motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45pm