FirstU Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday 2024/05/15
Time: 7pm-9pm
Location: Zoom (virtual)
Main Goals: To review the AGM and decide on several board-related items
Attendees: Chuck Shields, Brent Nicolle, Mary Ella Keblusek, Phil Nagy, Rev. Eric Meter, Amy Berube, Carmen Contreras, Guy Belleperche, Carl Sonnen, Jen Brennan
Regrets: Nancy Cloutier, Michelle Jackson
Timekeeper: Guy
Process Monitor: Phil

FirstU Board Covenant (summary)

- Be considerate towards one another
- Be open, honest and respectful
- Serve our role to the best of our ability
- Foster a spirit of patience and courage
- Speak with one voice
- Develop and promote genuine relationships
- Honour our faith

Minutes

Item
1. Call to Order • Check-in • Opening Reading [Chuck] • Opening song [Chuck} • Assignment of Timekeeper: Guy and Process Monitor: Phil
2. Consent Agenda: • Approval of this Agenda • Approval of Board Minutes 2024/04/17 [Att. 2] • Approval of new member Galaxy Wozniak [Note 2]

- Approval of new members Ally Hobson and Marc Brunet [Note 3]
- Letter appointing Terry Kimmel as point person from the negotiating team working with lawyers

Moved by Guy, Seconded by Phil. Passed

3. Discussion of any items from Consent Agenda
   a. N/A

4. Minister's Report [Rev Eric]
   a. New members welcome, June 2nd.
   b. Congregational powerpoint to include not only births and deaths, but also new members going forward
   c. Rev. Eric will start UHouse services on UHouse property starting in June – once every 2 months
   d. Exciting new members and families are attending and becoming members over the last year

5. President's Report [Chuck] N/A

6. Follow-up from the FirstU AGM
   - How things went (feedback)
     - Carl felt it went very well, with little to no contention and keeping on time.
     - Phil got a lot of positive feedback on LTFM
     - Carmen noticed a few UH members voting against some motions, including doctrine of discovery.
     - Chuck wondered whether we should have secret ballots
     - Some members missed the lack of contention that occurred in past AGMs
     - Provision of child care very important at these kind of events - could piggy-back for minimum 3 hour child care after Sunday service. Simply extend their presence to utilize the full 3 hours at no extra cost.
     - Mary Ella reported that Julia likely had enough time to setup online streaming

- Brent: AGM date had to be shifted to avoid a conflict with Mystery MUUffins and Concert. In future, AGM date should be fixed and communicated well in advance, and other congregational events scheduled around it. Consistency of date is important. Should we set the FCM and AGM dates early and repeat them every year on the same date/period? Note: We have held AGMs at different periods in the past.
- Next Board meeting we will set the AGM and FCM dates

- Implementation of the resolution to repudiate the doctrine of discovery
    - Mike Lloyd and Bill V. I. to organize group around the doctrine of discovery. **Action Item: Carl to represent Board and to contact Mike directly**

Commented [LC1]: I'd make all action items in bold to ensure they pop out to all of us.

7. Review gathering with Unitarian House Board
    - How did it go?
        - Interesting fact: 2/3 of UHouse board members don't live at UHouse. First of many UH and UU events in consideration going forward, with proposed dates, coming in the future.
        - 7 UH board members were expected, but only 5 showed up
    - Follow-up steps?
        - UHouse would like a greater and closer connection with FirstU, to hear their concerns and develop a working partnership and not just a landlord/tenant legal arrangement.

8. Board retreat
    - Purpose?
        - To enjoy location and each other's company
        - Team Building and learning how others operate
        - Learn to think strategically – plan up to 5 years in the future
        - To review the strategic plan and identify areas on which we want to focus
        - Many great ideas generated, but we often get stuck in the weeds of day-to-day issues. Make sure we follow through on the best ideas. Should Board retreat be longer than half a day

Commented [LC2]: Brent spoke to this and I think what he said is expressed in my added bullet, but it's over to Brent to confirm or modify that.

  - Intensively pre-plan agenda might make Board retreat more productive.
  - Carmen: Ad-hoc discussion and spontaneous brainstorming can also be useful
  - Jen: Staff appreciate being involved in Board discussions
- When? Having it at end of church calendar year, when activities and attendance are low, possibly not the best point, in terms of momentum to hold the retreat.
  - Hold the retreat towards end of summer, instead of start of summer, to get better follow-through. Have evening team building involving staff towards late August or early September, followed by Board retreat the following day. Combination of socializing, but also brainstorming involving both staff and board. All Board members agree to moving the retreat to August or September.
- Where?
  - Brent and Jen offered their homes as location for retreat

9. Board self-evaluation
   - How to conduct? Chuck feels past board reviews seemed a bit heavy. Try to add more narrative and be more condensed (i.e. approx. 5 questions each in two areas – regarding the board as a group and each board member about their involvement) instead of a large survey
   - Guy: Evaluation process currently provides an anonymous way to express concerns. Best to engage someone outside the Board as objective observer to have an interview with each Board member individually.
   - Brent: Individual self-evaluation KISS. In depth accumulation of data not useful if we're not going to be able to use it
   - Mary Ella – Ongoing transparency prevents the need for anonymous discussions later on
   - Chuck mentioned the practice of the CUC, where the VP is responsible for gathering, collating and leading discussion of board members' input.
   - Do board evaluation before retreat to add important points for discussion during the retreat?
   - **Action Item: Subcommittee to look at how to do Board evaluation. Volunteers: Chuck, Brent, Guy (Guy to check with Eva for her involvement).**

10. Board covenant [Att.1]
    - Review
    - Modifications? Mary Ella, suggests addressing issues and conflict as they arise. Ability to say ‘ouch’ when something hurts.
    - Use tact and compassion when dealing with conflict
    - Nether president nor any Board member has all the answers
    - ‘See something, say something’. We all take responsibility for the whole group.
    - Encourage full participation of all members. For example, can make chair aware of needing to be more inclusive, if it escapes their attention.
    - We all have responsibility to make sure everyone is heard and their concerns and views are listened to and validated
    - Different board members have different vocal styles from assertive to introverted
    - Mary Ella: suggests we review the covenant before each meeting—at least initially.
    - Chuck suggested one way to make the covenant present would be to place the highest level 7 covenant points to prefix each meeting ‘s agenda.
    - **Action item: Brent and Carmen to look at and review the wording of the covenant. Final covenant must be approved by the Board, hopefully at the June meeting.**

11. Ajashki Update
    - Update [Guy, Eric]
        - Guy and Eric will be meeting regularly with Ajashki program coordinators and participants.
    - Indigenous Advisory Council.
        - Indigenous leadership/elder consultation (4 leaders) with Ajashki will be important going forward—To be held on May 30th. Honorarium’s to be provided to consultants.
        - Indigenous Advisory Council can provide mentorship and feedback to both future food warriors and UU board and members
        - Brent: suggests that Board receive guidance and feedback on how to deal with Ajashki and Indigenous participants. Integrating Ajashki into our community, while respecting and honoring their traditions and viewpoints.

- Successful and unsuccessful grants
  - List of successful and unsuccessful grant applications were provided to FirstU.

12. Campus Planning update [Brent, Chuck]
    - Status of negotiations
      - The negotiating team met with our 3 lawyers yesterday.
      - 3 legal documents need feedback and review of these documents that makes FirstU legal owner and shareholder/head of the incorporation—with majority share status.
      - Brent: These are very important documents that will setup our governance in perpetuity. This will have very long term consequences and will retroactively reflect how we were as a Board going forward
      - Board of LandCo will include 3 FirstU members (appointed by FirstU Board) and 2 Theia representatives.
      - LandCo AGM of shareholders, of which FirstU will be the majority, will be held annually to decide high-level issues..
      - Renters of Theia property are NOT shareholders and have no vote

13. Closing
    - Feedback from Process monitor – went very well and well behaved
    - Closing reading
    - Adjournment

Next meeting: June 19, 2024