

FirstU Board Meeting Minutes

Our mission is to “Kindle the light within and inspire courage to nurture the web of life and to create a just and compassionate world.”

Date: Wednesday 2025/04/16

Time: 7pm-9pm

Main Goals: To accept and discuss the 2024 audit, propose auditors for FY 2025, prepare for the AGM and consider whether to propose to the congregation issuing community bonds.

Present: Guy Belleperche, Chuck Shields, Mary Ella Keblusek, Carmen

Contreras, Phil Nagy, Amy Berube, Rev Eric Meter, Michelle Jackson, Jen Brennan

Regrets: Carl Sonnen

Attachments:

1. Board Minutes-2025-03-19.final.docx
2. Ajashki Report
3. Odayanhaway Update
4. Report regarding Rev. Lara's move to serve as our contract minister
5. Minister's Report
6. Draft audit
7. Plans for the AGM
8. Community Bonds information – proposed motion for the AGM and FAQs
9. Community Bonds – additional information

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

FirstU Strategic Plan (2022-26) Key Goals:

- An energized spirituality
- A renewed, growing and diverse congregation
- A firm commitment to social and climate justice
- A responsible, mission-oriented campus development
- Reliable structures and resources to support congregational priorities and growth

Agenda

Item
1. Call to Order ○ Check-in ○ Opening Reading [Chuck] ○ Assignment of Timekeeper [Brent] and Process Monitor [Phil]
2. Consent Agenda: ○ Approval of this Agenda ○ Approval of Board Minutes 2025/03/19 [Att. 1] ○ Confirmation of approval of memberships of Briana Faubert and David Gick and Andrew Poirier ○ Ajashki Report [Att. 2] ○ Odayanhaway Report [Att. 3] ○ Report regarding next steps of Rev. Lara's ministry [Att. 4] ○ Confirmation of extending an offer to the Rev. Lara Cowtan to serve at our contract minster Moved by Carmen, Seconded by Guy to approve the consent agenda.
3. Minister's Report [Rev Eric] (att. 5)
4. President's Report Some highlights that Minister ● Assisting with the conclusion of the search that led to engaging Rev. Lara and with beginning plans for her arrival. ● Arranging and participating in an interview with Linda Thomson of the CUC regarding Rev. Eric's ministry with FirstU. Campus planning ● Preparing proposals for Unitarian House regarding their plans to reconfigure their parking area. ● Follow-up on various Odayanhaway issues. ● Participating with the development of plans for community bonds. ● Working with the FirstU team, Theia and Unitarian House to move forward plans for a parkette. ● Concluding the agreement with Dentech for their rental of the CPR strip. Program planning ● Planning for the AGM. ● Helping to welcome new members into the congregation and participating in the 'Introducing Ourselves' session with new comers.
5. <i>(Goal: Reliable, Structures and Resources)</i> Financial ● Review and accept the 2024 audit [Att. 6]

- Motion to recommend the audit with revised note #5 to the congregation at the AGM.

revised note #5: In 2024, a total of \$34,337 was transferred, as described in the designated transfers within the audit, from the Congregational Fund to the Special Purpose Fund.

In addition, the annual drawdown from the Externally Restricted Legacy Fund (endowment) of \$42,000 was transferred to the Congregational Fund (Operations) as per the financial policies.

In addition, \$70,000 was transferred from the Internally Restricted Legacy Fund to partially cover the operating deficit of the Congregational Fund in 2024. The board and the congregation approved this with the operating budget of 2024. a \$30,000 COVID recovery and \$40,000 rainy day transfer , for a total of 70,000 transferred from the internally restricted fund, as seen within the audit.

Moved: Phil, Seconded: Guy, Passed

- Auditor motion Be it resolved to present a motion to the FirstU membership that Kelly Huibers McNeely be appointed the FirstU auditors for the 2025 fiscal year. Moved by Phil, Seconded by Carmen, Passed
- Consider cancelling 5% staff salary reduction for the balance of 2024. MOTION: Be it resolved to cancel the 5% cut in hours for the staff who wish to return to full hours. This restoration will begin with pay period 14 for 2025, that is, sometime after June 30, and will cost between \$5000 and \$6000. Moved by Phil, seconded by Guy, Passed

6. (Goal: Reliable, Structures and Resources)

Review plans for the May 3 AGM

- The proxy form is up on the Members' Only part of the website.
- AGM materials will be sent to members on April 23, 10 days before the meeting.
- The AGM will run from 4pm to 5:30pm on Saturday, May 3 in Worship Hall.
- Registration will begin at 3:30.
- Refreshments (coffee, tea, soft drinks, fruit juices and snacks) to be available in Fellowship Hall before the meeting. To confirm the availability of Fellowship Hall and who might organize this.
- The AGM will be streamed on Zoom so people can ask live questions and can be shown on the screen in Worship Hall.
- Those viewing by Zoom will need to have a proxy attending in person in order to vote. They won't be able to vote on-line. This is the approach that has been used in recent AGMs.
- We will talk-up attendance at the AGM in the next Fellowship Hours after services for the next weeks and at other gatherings like choir practices getting people to attend and if they can't to have them submit a proxy. Written proxy forms have been made available at the church.
- Mary Ella will oversee scrutineering, including confirming the list of current members has been updated properly, organizing the onsite registration process, and providing individuals to count votes if needed. The scrutineering team is expected to be 3-4 people.

7. (*Goal: A Responsible, Mission-Oriented Campus Development*)

Campus-related topics [Note 3]

- Community Bonds – Information was given about the community bonds that are being proposed to fund a larger equity share in the campus projects.

Motion to recommend to the congregation that FirstU issue community bonds.

Moved by Brent, Seconded by Phil, Approved

8. (*Goal: A Responsible, Mission-Oriented Campus Development*)

Relations with Unitarian House

- Discussions about parking

We have been continuing discussions with Unitarian House about the reconfiguration of their parking area. Bill Van Iterson developed an alternative design that could save UHO funds and provide a larger number of parking spaces. The FirstU team sent UHO a proposal that included these suggestions, an offer to rent 14 spaces on the western edge of their parking area and a proposal to share the cost for adjusting the path that travels along the north of the parking area.

Our team has met to discuss a response, which we will be developing and sending to UHO this week. It will suggest ways they can still reconfigure their parking area and provide enough parking spaces to be able to rent 14 to FirstU.

- Creation of a parkette on UHO leased land where Cleary ends

Our team met with UHO and Theia to discuss proposals regarding having the city develop a parkette on the eastern end of the CPR strip, along Cleary Ave. Those discussions were paused due to Jackie Holzman's travels and the departure of Melanie Lefebvre. Those were going positively and it is expected that they will be picked back up and settled soon.

- Joint executives (and any board who want to join) meeting on Wednesday, May 7, to receive a briefing about the UHO strategic plan

On Wednesday, May 7, 7pm, there will be a special meeting at UHO for them to present their strategic plan. This session is focused on the Executive Committees from UHO and FirstU, but all board members from each organization are invited to participate.

- On-going connections

There are currently worship services going on monthly, led by Rev Eric and Jen Bernston.

There are continuing information sessions regarding campus development being had bi-monthly with UHO.

10. Closing

There was a closing reading and some feedback from the process monitor.