

Minutes for the First U board meeting
August 18th 2021

Present: Lisa Sharp, Carl Sonnen, Irvin Waller, Rev Eric Meter, Brent Nicolle, Andrew Drake, Phil Nagy, Amy Berube

Regrets: David Chernushenko, Caycee Price

1. Welcome and call to order

-Time keeper : Carl

-check in

-greeting to Rev Eric, Phil and Amy

2. Consent Agenda

a. **Motion to adopt the agenda for the August 18th, 2021 meeting**

Brent moved, Carl seconded, All in favor

Please note that edits were still needed to the June board meeting minutes. This will be approved at the September 2021 meeting of the board.

3. Appointment of new directors to meet the needs of current board.

a. Appointment of Phil Nagy as Treasurer

b. Appointment of Amy Berube as Co-secretary with Caycee Price

The appointment listed is needed to address the changing needs of the board of directors. Former treasurer Justine had to resign her position, and Caycee Price wanted to avoid doing so by obtaining assistance with her duties. In order to meet these needs, Phil was selected to be the new treasurer and Amy was selected to assist Caycee with her duties.

Support for working leaders of the congregation is paramount, and in an evolving congregation the voices of the young, especially young women need to be at the table. A resignation by Caycee would leave a deficit in this regard, and adding Amy, a former board member, to the fold would allow for another young woman's experience to be heard. Both women have institutional knowledge and will be invaluable in board positions. They will share the duties of secretary in a way that suits their needs, and communicate to ensure the completion of tasks. They will also take turns having voting rights at a given meeting, while the other will be an observer. They will continue in this manner on an interim basis until a vacancy of a member-at-large becomes available, at which point, they will no longer alternate voting at meetings.

Discussion:

-Concerns were brought up about the sharing of position being an issue with regards to the bylaws. There doesn't appear to be an explicit restriction of the sharing of duties. Historically, there has been a sharing of votes on several occasions, include a married couple who shared a vote and rotated who attended meetings. Moreover, a secretary or a treasurer is not required to be a voting member and can merely a support person.

-It was explained that due to the nature of the treasurer position, they should be a full voting member and the current demographics of the current board would encourage the addition of another young woman to provide prospective and options.

-Appreciation for the need of gender parity was shown, but concerns were expressed about the sharing

of the position as it can be difficult.

- It was pointed out that diversity and flexibility is important in the leadership of the church. We need to ensure that the faces of the congregation are represented amongst board members.
- It was proposed that an amendment be made during the congregational AGM to the by-laws to allow for flexibility in case this situation is needed in the future.

Voting:

a. Motion to appoint Phil Nagy as a director on the board of directors

Lisa moved, Brent seconded; four yes votes, Irvin voted no, no abstentions, Passed

b. Motion to appoint Phil Nagy to the role of treasurer on the board of directors

Lisa moved, Carl seconded; all in favour

**Please note it was asked if Phil could commence voting at this time, it was decided by consensus of governance members that Phil could vote on this motion.*

c. Motion to appoint Amy Berube to the role of co-secretary and co-director on the board of directors to be shared on an interim basis with Caycee Price.

Lisa moved, Phil seconded; 4 yes, 0 nos, Brent and Irvin abstain, passed.

4. Information item:

Guy Belleperche and Maury Prevost joined our meeting to make this report.

Please see information document called the eighth principle for more background information.

-Maury gave a summary of information on the report about adoption of the eighth principle. The eighth principle was brought up from the floor to be adopted at the last CUC AGM. It was deemed to be out of order and was retracted from the meeting. At that time, it was decided to do a survey and accept comments about the proposed principle. Some comments noted that dismantling racism is spiritual work and needs to become a component of our beloved community.

-Guy mentioned the history of what happened at the 2019 and 2020 CUC AM's. He mentioned that the eighth principle is especially needed with the demographics of our congregation and that our current principles may need updating.

5. Committee reports:

a. Motion to renew communications coordinator position.

Extending Communications Coordinator from October to December will cost about \$4300.00. When we created this position we planned for a one year position; but we started with a 6 months, renewable contract. We plan to have her position carry through 2022 will be in the budget

Motion to make the Communication Coordinator position a permanent position, effective October 12, 2021; with option to renew for 6 month contract, if Allison prefers to remain contract employee. Funding for this position should be extended to December 2022.

Andrew moved, Carl seconded; all in favour

b. SRC process

The SRC has been working on sponsoring an Ethiopian woman, and is now in the final stages of filling out the application. The SRC has \$15,800 set aside for refugee sponsorship that we can use to cover our share of the cost (which is estimated at about \$10,000). We are also following up with Bob's estate to see if his estate bequest of \$10,000 was meant to be used for this sponsorship. **In order to be in compliance with**

governmental refugee sponsorship rules, funds for this purpose need to be put in a separate bank account and be accounted for separately.

Motion: First U shall create a separate bank account for each new refugee that we commit to; and shall transfer the required funds from the SRC refugee designated funds account into the account for our current Ethiopian refugee.

Lisa moved, Andrew seconded; all in favour.

c. COVID task force:

-There is a tentative talks about the possibility of the congregation re opening for live Sunday services as of September 12th 2021. This is not confirmed at this time, and there are doubts about this going forward.

-Discussions are happening about Jen and Michelle returning to work on campus. Such a move would have to be a full time return, as they currently have their desktop computers and other equipment at home.

-Logistics about a potential scaled down fall fair were also discussed at the last meeting.

-The next meeting of this committee will take place on August 19th, 2021.

Discussions:

-It was noted that there might needs to be more gender and age parity in this group.

d. Board committee positions:

-Traditionally, the each board member has been on a committee as a board representative. Board representatives are should be abreast of what is happening on their committee but don't necessarily need to attend all of the meetings.

-Please email Lisa about preference for board committee appointments before board retreat on September 11th 2021.

-If committees need to present information to the board, documentation needs to be provided and a request needs to be made a minimum of one week before the board meeting.

6. Staff report:

-Rev Eric spoke about how he is meeting staff members, exploring the congregation and learning about our organization. He is currently having many positive experiences with congregants. Historically, the summer is a more quiet time at first U Ottawa, and Rev Eric is using that quiet time to adjust to life in Ottawa and ease into ministry here.

7. Other business

Please note, these items will be discussed at the next meeting:

a. Campus plan feasibility study

b. Ajashki Project Update

The congregational strategic plan will be discussed at the board retreat.

Meeting adjourned.

Addendum i

The Canadian Unitarian Journey to Consider Adopting an 8th Principle

This is a brief document intended to provide some context for current motion being considered by UU congregations across the country to adopt an 8th principle. This motion states:

“We, the member congregations of the Canadian Unitarian Council, covenant to affirm and promote: “Individual and communal action that accountably dismantles racism and other oppressions in ourselves and in our institutions.”

The idea of proposing the adoption of this 8th Principle by Canadian UUs grew out of consideration within the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) in the US over the past several years of a similar 8th Principle. Two Canadian UUs, Beverly Horton and Rev. Julie Stoneberg attended the UUA General Assembly (the UUA’s annual meeting) in 2017 in New Orleans and were inspired by what they heard about this possible new principle. They thought it would be important to adopt a similar or the same principle here in Canada.

Leading into the 2019 CUC National Conference and Annual Meeting in Toronto they were considering proposing an 8th Principle, but decided that it would be more appropriate to bring forward a motion to establish a Dismantling Racism Study Group (DRSG) to gather information for a future annual meeting to consider. The motion was passed and Beverly and Julie were identified as co-chairs, with 5-7 others to be selected to form the committee.

This was done and the committee began its work, a major part of which was to conduct a national survey of all Canadian UUs regarding their views and experiences with racism in their congregations. The survey was available for several months and 34 FirstU members participated.

The DSRG completed its work and submitted its report just the day before the 2021 CUC Annual Meeting. Following their presentation of the report to the membership during the meeting, one of the delegates was so moved she proposed adopting the 8th Principle immediately. Enough of the other delegates shared this enthusiasm that they voted to suspend the usual rules of the meeting, which don’t allow for motions from the floor, and proceeded to vote by a strong majority for the 8th Principle.

Shortly after the annual meeting was concluded it was realized that the CUC Bylaws direct that there must be an opportunity for any motion to be considered by all member congregations before being presented at a meeting of the CUC member congregations. The bylaws supersede the rules for the annual meeting and so the vote for the 8th Principle could not stand.

The CUC Board very much supports the work of the DSRG and thinks it is important to move forward with consideration of 8th Principle motion. It wants to provide time for consideration of this, but thinks, especially because of the strong positive feeling expressed during the annual meeting, that this should be done before the 2022 annual meeting. That is why a special meeting of the CUC member congregations has been called for November 27.