

# FirstU Board Meeting Minutes [FirstU Board Meeting Minutes- August 26 2023.docx](#)

Our mission is to “Kindle the light within and inspire courage [FirstU Board Meeting Minutes- August 26 2023.docx](#)

to nurture the web of life and to create a just and compassionate world.”

Date: Wednesday 2023/08/16

Time: 7pm-9pm

Attending: Brent Nicolle, Mary Ella Keblusek, Phil Nagy, Rev Eric Meter, Guy Belleperche, Carmen

Contreras, Michelle Jackson, Nancy Cloutier

Regrets: Jen Brennan, Carl Sonnen (minutes taken by Amy Berube)

Timekeeper: Phil Nagy

Process Monitor: Amy Berube

1. Call to Order: Welcome to the meeting and back after a busy summer!
<p>2. Consent Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Approval of this Agenda</li> <li>b. Approval of Board Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Note with update from Michelle, Brent made and circulated the updated minutes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Moved</b> by Brent, Seconded by Amy, Carried</p> <p>3. Capturing for the Minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. BE IT RESOLVED THAT: the Board approves the proposed revisions to our Charitable purposes in the attached document "Charitable purposes - response to CRA - clean copy - 30-June-2023.docx" [Att. 4].</li> </ul> <p><b>Moved by Guy</b>, seconded by Brent, <b>passed</b> by email 2023/06/30.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b. BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Bob Armstrong be added as an additional cheque signing authority.</li> </ul> <p><b>Moved by Phil</b>, Seconded by Brent, <b>passed</b> by email 2023/07/24.</p>
4. Minister’s Report <i>appendix A</i>
<p>5. President’s Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Nominating Committee members need to be replaced</li> <li>b. Rev Eric Meter has just passed his two year mark as our settled minister. Minister evaluation will be underway shortly.</li> </ul>
<p>6. Campus Planning Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Q&amp;A from “Theia Update to Board - July 2023.pdf” (see attached document)</li> <li>b. Notes regarding Charity Law: There has been an ongoing conversation over the summer with Karen Cooper (KPMG, Charity Law) with respect to legalities of our land-transfers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. While the current regulations are being reviewed, the CRA currently considers real-estate transfers from charities to non-qualified donees (like OAHS) to be high risk. There are ways to mitigate the risk; these</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>will require extensive due-diligence of FirstU with respect to OAHS, and will affect the terms of the land-transfer.</p> <p><a href="https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/policies-guidance/charities-making-grants-non-qualified-donees.html#toc28">https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/policies-guidance/charities-making-grants-non-qualified-donees.html#toc28</a></p> <p>ii. Also, a ruling on our updated Charitable Purposes by the CRA is necessary before asking for a ruling on our proposed land-transfer. This dependency puts our Charitable Purposes update on the “critical path” for campus development.</p> <p>iii. Karen recommended seeking a real-estate lawyer for the negotiation of the Agreement of Purchase and Sale (APS) negotiations, since this was not Karen’s area of expertise.</p> <p>c. Engaging a Real Estate Lawyer: Rita Asangarani is an independent real-estate lawyer (unaffiliated with a large firm; her website is <a href="https://ritalaw.ca/">https://ritalaw.ca/</a>). Rita advises that we wait for the “other parties” (Theia, OAHS) to assemble their respective Agreement of Purchase and Sale (APS), since this can be time-consuming/expensive. Rita can be engaged to represent FirstU once the APS is nearing completion.</p>
<p><b>BE IT RESOLVED THAT FirstU should engage Rita Asangarani to advise and represent as real-estate lawyer for land-transfers.</b></p> <p><b>Moved</b> by Brent, seconded by Guy Belleperche, Carried</p>
<p>7. Evaluating our Progress on 5-Year Plan</p> <p>Follow-up from last meeting, and Board Retreat.</p> <p>How can we effectively and efficiently evaluate the 24 objectives in the plan? Will we need external help (before/after)?</p> <p>Amy shared a document that she and Justine de Jaeger have been working on. It has isolated the goals for the first two years and what data points need to be collected to evaluate the goals. They will create an evaluation process and then share with the board.</p>
<p>8. Follow-up from Board Retreat</p> <p>Let’s pick a single board focus, and 3 objectives for the year.</p> <p>suggestions: campus planning, eighth principle, spiritual roots, leadership development. The staff were also asked to make suggestions. Further discussion at the next meeting.</p>
<p>9. Closing: adjourned at 9pm. Thank you for attending.</p>

## Appendix A

Minister’s Report to the Board of Directors of the  
First Unitarian Congregation of Ottawa  
August 2023

Let’s begin with the big news, shall we? First, my heartfelt thanks to Margaret Linton and Amy Berube who joined me on the Director of Religious Exploration Search Team. As you would expect, they were organized, insightful, thorough and a joy to work alongside.

We were grateful to have quite a few qualified applicants. In the end, we interviewed four candidates, three of whom would have made fine DREs. Still, our choice for DRE, Jodi McIntosh, had the most to offer our

community. She'll be starting shortly and has a novel program in mind to kick things off with. As I don't want to steal her thunder, look for her article in the upcoming Parkway Spire for details. One other detail I should add: the DRE position is for 20 hours each week. We'll be looking for someone to replace Jodi as the Program Assistant (10 hrs/wk) shortly.

One congregational member asked why this position only focused on children and youth. Shouldn't we be bringing on someone who would lead lifespan religious exploration instead? Eva Berringer and Jane Lindsay began working to bring our Adult Programs back to life at the start of the calendar year. Jane's accident slowed their progress, but the two are back now. Frankly, it makes the most sense to me for Jodi to focus on our children, youth and families with children, and Eva, Jane and I to focus on Adult Programs.

A side note on that: Rev. Linda Goonewardene has asked me to join her in offering an intentionally mixed gender offering of Cakes for the Queen of Heaven, a UU women's history/theology course developed by Rev. Shirley Ann Ranck. I had previously only heard of this as a women's course, and am very much looking forward to trying out this new approach.

Thanks to Bob Armstrong, our worship associates and guest speakers, we've had an exemplary summer of worship services this year. I've watched all the speakers on our YouTube site and am more than impressed with what we had on offer over the last couple months. In range and depth, I couldn't be prouder.

As I mentioned briefly last Sunday, I surprised myself a week or so ago when, as talking to folks in the office, I realized that, two years in, I had yet to mention that one of the origin stories for ice cream sundaes involves Unitarians. It's a story I originally picked up from Rev. Laurel Hallman, minister emerita from our congregation in Dallas, TX. I've done more research since then. I've often celebrated the beginning of summer by offering ice cream sundaes during coffee hour. While last week wasn't the start of summer, there was no reason not to celebrate mid-summer, so those at church enjoyed the treat. Tarrel Armstrong even went to get more ice cream to ensure we'd have enough. My plan now is to try offering sundaes twice a year, as a start of summer celebration and as part of our Ingathering Sunday. So sundaes will return on Sunday, Sept 10. Call it a sweet little perk for showing up in person.

Looking ahead, I hope to see you all at the September 7th Fish Fry. I've heard stories about how great the last pre-Covid fish fry was and can't wait to help out in the next incarnation.

Before I close, I want to mention two upcoming trips of mine. As I've included in previous reports, I will be away in October (18-23) for the memorial service of my mother-in-law (before she died of Covid-19 in Feb of 2021, she asked that no memorial be held until it was safe for folks to travel and gather again). A new trip has also appeared on my horizon. My stepson is taking Ann and I to Australia in February (9-23). CJ's best friend moved there some time back, and CJ had an extra plane ticket. Simply put, we're not going to pass

this up. I'll be working with Bob Armstrong, the worship associates, our caring teams and staff to ensure continuing smooth sailing during those times.

My sense is that this year is going to be a great one for the congregation. While this seems like this should be an exaggeration, now that the mask mandates are relaxed and we are more often seeing each other's faces, it feels like I'm just now beginning to get to know the congregation as a whole. Finally.

My best to you all,  
Rev. Eric Meter