

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing
Board of Trustees
268 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road
Titusville, NJ 08560



Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes - [APPROVED](#)
May 8, 2024
Multi-platform Meeting

President Wendy Stasolla called the Board of Trustees meeting to order at 7:03 PM. Also in attendance: Vice President, Jamie Evanini, Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Secretary Colleen McCourt; Trustees: Karen Kent, Michael Waas, Michelle Zechner and Maria Baratta; Senior Minister Rev. Kim Wildszewski, Congregational Administrator, Susan Irgang, Director of Congregational Life, Robin Pugh and Ministerial Intern Lisa Schilansky. Absent was Trustee Gina Turner.

As an oncoming Board member, Dave Thomas attended as an observer. Jim Sanders and Sandee Steinberg attended for part of the meeting.

First Hour

Consent agenda (no vote):

No discussion.

Annual Meeting Prep

Congregational Administrator Susan Irgang has been working on a handbook of procedures and planning is on track. She requested support from the Board on specific items including:

- Funds for breakfast for the day of the meeting
- Volunteer who can be point person for order and bring the bagels and drinks (Karen)
- Volunteers for online check-ins and vote counting
- Volunteers for in-person check-ins (Trustee Maria Baratta, Treasurer Denny Rodgers and Vice President Jamie Evanini) and vote counting (Maria)

Susan went over the overall schedule and speakers. She is in the process of preparing the packet for distribution to the congregation.

There was also a brief discussion of messaging around the upcoming budget meeting.

Budget Review

Finance Chair Jim Sanders and Sandee Steinberg arrived at 7:30 to review the budget that will be presented and voted on at the annual meeting, outlining changes and updates since last month's Board meeting. Key points included:

- After realizing we would have a \$60,000 deficit, all committees/teams were asked to revise numbers by paring back as much as possible – which, along with roughly \$7,000 in one time capital costs as mentioned below, reduces the projected deficit to about \$39,000.
- One time expenses associated with the construction = \$7200.
 - Finance decided that since these are not operational expenses we'll be seeing every year, they pulled those out of the budget lines to re-review the budget without the context of those exceptional costs.
 - Unrestricted Reserve funds are at ~\$317,000, or just over 6 months worth of reserve funds (goal is to have 3-6 months of reserve funds available). Given that, Finance feels it makes sense to use reserve funds to cover the one-time expenses.
- 3 years in a row we've had budget deficits but have ended up with a surplus, for different reasons each year (reduced building use from pandemic, personnel going to part time, memorial funds, etc.), so we actually haven't had a deficit year.
- Things Finance is still watching that could impact the current budget:
 - Income is basically flat, but there are areas in the budget where things might change and that might reduce the deficit.
- Construction loan borrowing from Northfield Bank could possibly be unnecessary — we could use our reserves to pay for construction, then replenish our reserve funds with people's construction pledges as they come in. The more money that comes in before the end of the construction project, the less we would need to borrow

Given all this, the main consideration is voting on a deficit budget with one-time construction costs excluded for a clearer picture. Finance will continue to review the budget on a quarterly basis, and we will consider ways to anticipate any relevant adjustments to timing and messaging around Stewardship and Capital campaigns. Denny made a motion to **vote to approve the budget as presented;** Trustee Karen Kent seconded the motion. The vote passed unanimously.

The Board thanked Jim and Sandee and they left the meeting.

2nd Hour

Service Awards

Wendy reported that we received more award nominations after extending the deadline. Wendy, Maria and Karen reviewed the entries and submitted a list of candidates to the Board. **There was a vote** to approve the list, which passed unanimously. **ACTION:** Wendy will work on write-ups and Susan will work on the relevant Annual Meeting slides.

Fundraising Policy Update

Rev. Kim gave a summary of recent and/or proposed fundraising efforts and the nuances involved, which are not covered by our current fundraising or rental policies. We need a small task force to explore different categories for creativity, clarity and flexibility while formalizing policy boundaries. **ACTION:** Wendy volunteered to do an initial review of the policies, with Marcia Wittman and Maria Baratta potentially in support.

Quick Check-in on Board Goals

Rev. Kim and President Wendy Stasolla provided a brief update. We never officially voted on the draft goals from the last retreat but we have a lot of energy around them and have added them to the monthly agenda for reference. We will go into the next board year continuing to live into the spirit of them, and review them formally at the next retreat. We can decide to keep, refine or transform them. We also need to set a date for the retreat ideally in July or September. **ACTION:** Wendy will put out potential dates via doodle poll.

Assistant Minister Feasibility Team

Denny proposed a feasibility team with representation from Finance, Personnel and Staff to assess on a regular basis our need for an assistant minister, whether it's financially feasible, the potential ROI and candidate search parameters. While this could take a couple of years, the size and needs of our congregation make this a prospect worth planning for, so we can be prepared if the right candidate comes along. The Board strongly agreed that we should put energy around this. Denny stated that the effort would include a needs assessment and feasibility study which can be formalized in a white paper. Rev. Kim suggested that this be combined with a Strategic Planning Task Force in charge of putting together a 2.5 - 5 year strategic plan. The Board expressed support for this concept while acknowledging that the assistant minister discussion can/should be started now because it will tie into a larger strategic plan. **ACTION:** Denny can bring a summary of key points to the next board retreat.

Congregational Pulse Check-in

Rev. Kim gave a brief update on the congregational resignations that have happened this year, which typically happens around Stewardship time due to annual culling. This year's cull seems larger than usual because the past few years were unusual due to COVID. Our current membership numbers are a little smaller as a result. As part of systemic maintenance, we need to remind people to pay some amount toward their pledges in order to vote at the Annual Meeting.

Housekeeping & Action Items

- Small group feedback meetings have been postponed indefinitely. Facility meetings stakeholder meetings will be postponed until after the retreat and tied into the overall calendar planning next year.
- We will look to schedule a board retreat in mid-July or beginning of September.

Open Forum & Check-out

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Colleen McCourt

Secretary, Board of Trustees

Jamie Evanini

Vice President and Scribe, Board of Trustees

Appendix: Executive, Staff and Treasurer Reports

Executive Brief-May 8, 2024

Karen Kent, Maria Baratta, and Wendy Stasolla met to read through nominations for and choose Service Award and Flaming Chalice recipients. We will be celebrating a great group of invaluable members of our UUCWC community.

Karen Kent did the Board Minute this past Sunday, thanking the Auction Committee and reminding congregants that our annual meeting is coming up in June and that attending the meeting puts our faith into action because it embodies the principle about the democratic process.

Minister's May Report
Kim Wildszewski 5/8/24

Create Community

April comes to a close after a month of mushrooms, a centering song for This Wild World and a theme of Interdependence. We turn now to Pluralism, a song in honor of our Chalice and UUCWC's chalice lighting words, and the final installment of earth teachers.

We welcomed back Pauline to the pulpit; honored Earth Day through the complexity of Puffin and Puffling rescue; held Joys & Sorrows through mushroom exploration; received Lisa's wisdom; then brought in May with my 10th anniversary, new member Sunday and a critique of cancel culture and hero worship.

Though we have put Welcome Table Wednesday on hold, there have been many opportunities for connection in recent weeks. I especially lift up the incredible feat and success of the Auction once again; the recent New Member brunch that Robin and I hosted with the help of the Right Relations Committee and Racial Justice Ministry; the fundraising concerts that Nick Mellis is hosting; and the way the ROMEOs have shown up with joy and determination to help pack up the Crossing Room and kitchen. We are grateful!

Celebrate Life

In addition to the above mentioned ways we naturally celebrate our collective life, this month has been filled with service to non-member community members: Carol Middlebrook's memorial service (Amy Middlebrook's sister-in-law); preparation for Linda Leon's memorial (Lindsay Sullivan's mother); planning for a congregant wedding (still to be announced); and a summer child dedication and wedding of two non-church related families.

Lectio Divina continues weekly. I attempted to create a small drop-in group around the theme of *rest* but, ironically, it would have worn me out too much to see the logistics through. I plan to pick it up and think it through again in the summer / fall.

Pastoral care includes right relations issues, some resignations that are following the stewardship campaign, and generally challenging family dynamics and unexpected hardships.

Change the World

In preparation for the annual meeting, I am doing a considerable amount of recruiting for the Board, Endowment, Right Relations, Fundraising, Worship Tech, and Personnel. Each of these positions requires integrity, an ease or comfort with challenging topics (right relations, money, staffing, etc), and comes with entering particular committee dynamics. I anticipate that next year we will have

more strength in some shaky systems, and some uncomfortable, needed growth in each space as well.

I'll soon be turning my attention to the combined staff annual report, Lisa's evaluation and the rest of the staff evaluations I haven't finished.

Robin, Jamie Evanini, Lisa and I are working with Pam Shadzik for Congregational Engagement on rethinking and solidifying the purpose of quarterly council meetings. This rethinking will likely come with a whole new way of connecting with and nurturing leadership throughout the year.

After packing up the offices this and next week (which will take considerable time and energy over the next week) Susan and I will be completing and posting the Church Administrator position. We hope this will go live by May 15th again for a September 1 start. Please note that Church Administrator is a hybrid position – an elevation from an Office Admin and a lower position from Susan's current position of Congregational Administrator. This was one way we could adjust the pay and address concerns around our deficit budget. I feel confident in this decision.

I am preparing to participate in a lobbying day for Reparations on May 20th. I meet with the Pastoral Care team and leadership this month, which is long overdue.

Lastly, this summer we must turn our attention to a formalized strategic plan, allowing the many conversations we've been having to all live under one roof: what to do with the building post construction, short and long term staffing decisions, questions around the use of funds and savings, children and youth programming and more.

Susan Irgang

Administrator BOT Report for May 2024

General Note: On Monday, May 6th, we were given the notice that the kitchen, Crossings Room needed to be fully packed and cleared by Friday, May 10th; the offices need to be packed and ready for movers by May 17th. As a result, this will be a brief report as my attention is shifting to this next phase of construction.

Create Community

April/Early May continued as another challenging month, with multiple priorities:

- Preparations for moving, storage and clearing of areas as noted above came with 1-2 weeks notice.
- I worked with the **Auction** team had many logistical challenges and communication for the event, particularly the kick off party; it was a great success!
- As of May 6th, we are just under \$6000 from our goal of \$433,000 for the pledge drive by **Stewardship!** We are hoping to hear from a few last households and will be looking to discern the status of those folks who have not pledged or contributed in the past year or two. We will be sending out thank you notes to those who have pledged this week.
- Annual Meeting preparations have begun; this will be discussed at our meeting.

Celebrate Life

We currently have 280 church members, 26 Friends, 12 Participants and 27 Attendees. There are also currently 34 registered children/youth. These numbers may change after the pledge drive follow ups.

We had a small memorial service for a relative of a member earlier this week.

Change the (UUCWC) World

We will be asking for an extension for abatement of one final fire inspection violation that requires some more extensive work than expected. All other items were abated.

Shortly after the last CrossCurrents was issued, the UUCWC website crashed, and I had no access to it. Ben Steinberg, our webmaster, identified the issue which could only be corrected by the vendor who provides our domain registration. While the website was down for less than 12 hours, emails were also impacted and the issue was not resolved until late Sunday. This took a great deal of time connecting various parties to work toward resolution. It should be noted that we have not had such a crash in my

13 years, and did not have an adequate process in place; I will be working with others to put together a flow chart of who to contact for the future.

Rachel Hansen, Lynne Quinto and Roberto Santiago continue to support administrative and facilities work behind the scenes.

To: UUCWC Board and Kim Wildszewski

From: Robin Pugh

Date: May 8, 2024

Re: Monthly DCL Report

Celebrate Life (Worship and Rites of Passage)

· We celebrated new member Sunday with four new members on May 5th. Two are already in the choir and another is ready to be more active at UUCWC.

· I was away on study leave for one week attending a training on “Awakening the Creative Spirit”. I will use some of what I learned in worship and adult faith engagement classes.

Create Community (Small Groups).

· Kim and I planned a new member lunch on 4/14. Eighteen enthusiastic new members who joined since March 2023 attended. There was time for connection, and to hear from Right relations and the Racial justice ministry about the importance of their ministries at UUCWC.

Change the World

· Kim, Lisa, Jamie Evanini and I are working with Pam Shadzik for Congregational Engagement on rethinking the purpose of quarterly council meetings. We hope council will be a new way of connecting with and nurturing leadership.

- To give our GA delegates information about how interested people feel about the proposed language, we are polling the 38 participants of Article 2 lectio divina on their views of the proposed language (in favor, can live with it, not in favor).

This primarily serves as an FYI about my professional development opportunities that benefit my leadership at UUCWC.

I attend the UUAMP, (the Association of Membership Professionals) weekly meetings when time permits. I see a Spiritual Director monthly. I will attend for General Assembly.

**May 2024 Board Report
Ministerial Intern's Report
Lisa Schilansky**

Celebrate Life (Worship & Rights of Passage)

This past month offered multiple opportunities to lead and offer elements of worship both at UUCWC and beyond. On April 14th I was the guest preacher at the Unitarian Society of Germantown, located in Northwest Philadelphia. I spoke about the myriad of ways to be a person of faith and I brought in the theological perspective of Unitarian James Luther Adams and the crucial Humanist voice of Rev. Kendyl Gibbons to demonstrate the breadth of Unitarian Universalist beliefs. Guest preaching is a valuable opportunity for me to learn the liturgical customs of other Unitarian Universalist churches and to hone my ministerial voice in a new setting. Guest preaching will only serve to further my work here at UUCWC.

On April 28th I preached here on intergenerational communication and the universal feeling of being disregarded. I received an immense amount of feedback about this sermon, including conversations that were pastoral in nature. The prayer that I wrote for that Sunday, speaking to the complexity of this time, was then offered in the April 30th Caring Note.

Finally, this past Sunday I had the honor of providing the prayer- experimenting with a more spacious, meditative element.

Create Community (Small Groups & Pastoral Care)

I continue to offer pastoral support to numerous congregants through email and more informal conversations. These are occurring more frequently in coffee hour and other impromptu opportunities.

Breathe: the world needs you whole, relaunched this past month. Attendance was low, but there was one new attendee joining returning attendees and the group was very engaged. This past Sunday I was approached by multiple people who are interested in learning more about the program and hoping to attend this week. I am conscious of the fact that it can take quite a bit of time to launch any new program at a church. I am encouraged by the positive feedback I am receiving from the offering and by returning attendees recruiting new people to join. Having the first evening-only, online-only offering was successful.

Change the World

I am continuing to participate in the meetings of NJ Faith Action (NJFA), including attending their statewide hearings on Reparations in NJ. Preparations are beginning for this group's May lobby day and I will be attending a lobby day training on May 7th. I hope to attend

at least part of the actual lobby day on May 20th, but it does conflict with my other job, so timing may be difficult.

I was excited to return to Racial Justice Ministry this month, now that my Tuesday commitment has expired. I had a wonderful opportunity to join their Reparations Council Hearing watch party and will be attending their meeting on the 8th, offering support and engagement into their important work.

On April 29th, I had the incredible opportunity to serve as a guest lecturer in a world religions class at Mercer County Community College. Continuing a partnership established by Rev. Kim last year, I was able to offer a fifteen minute lecture on Unitarian Universalism and then answer the students' questions for approximately fifty or so minutes. It is no secret that Unitarian Universalism is an oft misunderstood faith tradition, and I was excited to have the opportunity to interact with students who were so engaged and curious about us. I hope that we can continue to be a progressive voice in a world that is shrinking the political meaning of what it means to be a person of faith.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,
Lisa

Treasurer's Report to Board for April 2024

April Actual vs budgeted

Total gross revenue for the month exceeded budget by \$8,789 due to pledges being at 129% of budget. Expenses were within \$443 of budgeted amount.

Investment income totaled \$1,940.69 **and exceeded budgeted amount by \$628. See NOTE below.**

July - April YTD Actual vs April YTD Budget

Gross revenue is at 99.92% of budget.

Expenditures remain short of budget at 93% .

Cash Analysis & Financial Statement

\$317,572 Non-restricted/Reserve Cash Available will cover 6.74 months budgeted expenses, far exceeding our goal of 3 months or better. Project near 6.00 by end of year.

An additional \$6,366 will transfer from Northfield escrow to non-restricted reserve. New Cap project loan replaced this escrow.

Forwarding Notes

Things are even better than the Fiscal Year **Expenditures** line reflects because \$14,488 new construction debt service budgeted for the fiscal year will not be incurred until '24-'25.

On the **Revenue** side, Richard Knight's NJ tax refund will be deposited for Lisa's '24-'25 stipend. Amount not yet known.

NOTE

Wendy will authorize Lynne to transfer \$50,000 from Northfield to ML.

If needed, cash is available from ML in 1-4 days.

Unitarian Universalist Church at Washington Crossing

Financial Summary Report YTD Apr 2024

July 2023 - April 2024

	TOTAL			
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET	% OF BUDGET
Revenue				
A1. Plate Collections	30,390.17	31,248.00	-857.83	97.25 %
A2. Operating Pledges	349,370.29	430,840.00	-81,469.71	81.09 %
A3. Other Misc Gifts/Contribs	51,767.75	50,000.00	1,767.75	103.54 %
B. Fund-Raising	2,272.10	32,550.00	-30,277.90	6.98 %
E. Other Income	25,522.02	20,800.00	4,722.02	122.70 %
Total Revenue	\$459,322.33	\$565,438.00	\$ -106,115.67	81.23 %
GROSS PROFIT	\$459,322.33	\$565,438.00	\$ -106,115.67	81.23 %
Expenditures				
A. STAFF	288,063.96	361,160.00	-73,096.04	79.76 %
B. OPERATIONS	72,869.08	95,164.04	-22,294.96	76.57 %
C. PROGRAM	35,700.16	46,387.00	-10,686.84	76.96 %
D. DENOMIN	17,069.25	22,759.00	-5,689.75	75.00 %
E. DEBT SERVICE	21,220.80	39,952.96	-18,732.16	53.11 %
Total Expenditures	\$434,923.25	\$565,423.00	\$ -130,499.75	76.92 %
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$24,399.08	\$15.00	\$24,384.08	162,660.53 %
NET REVENUE	\$24,399.08	\$15.00	\$24,384.08	162,660.53 %