

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Chico Board Meeting

September 21, 2023

Attendance: Board: Lucy Sperlin, President; Susan Bachlor, Bob Crowe, Dave Keller, Angela Risdon, Pam Sachs, Merrily Stover (via Zoom)
Minister: Kathryn Adams
Guest: Wayne Shems (via Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at 6:37 by President Lucy Sperlin. Angela read the Chalice lighting words, followed by brief check-ins from those present. Wayne Shem was introduced as a guest who would be speaking about membership. Dave agreed to be process observer. For the Agenda, the Minister's Report was added. Also, Angela wished to add the announcement of the Gratitude Walk in November, and a report on Church Safety meeting. The Agenda was approved as amended.

Pam moved that the minutes of August 31 be approved. The motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dave gave the **treasurer's report** for which the balance sheet was earlier sent as e-mail to Board members. He noted that we had a good start to our pledge year, with a strong fiscal situation. Our utilities were particularly high in July. This could be the result of renters leaving the door open. New thermostat controls will also help bring down utilities' costs. Dave briefly reviewed the accounts on Balance Sheet and in the Treasurer's Report. There was no Income and Expense Report.

Dave noted that the Finance Committee will need to determine how the Ministers Discretionary funds can be accessed by Kathryn who will be working at a distance. For payroll, he and Susan are continuing to work at figuring out how five extra days of pay for Bryan Plude showing as July expenses can be returned to fiscal year 2022-23. For Personnel, he reported that paperwork has been submitted to hire Kathryn. UUCF had to register as an enterprise doing business in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Her retirement has been set up. Camryn Nelson has been hired to do Sunday morning childcare. We were able to quickly hire her through a childcare service for a six-week term. She will be paid \$38/Sunday which includes the fees to the agency. Lucy will need to be reimbursed.. A letter is being drafted to potential donors to help pay attorney's fees which will total approximately \$7,500 for our use permit appeal.

Minister's Report. Kathryn earlier sent an e-mail with her covenant to be shared with the board. She also noted the use of triangulating amongst members of the Fellowship where people interact by citing other people. Thus anonymous opinions are shared. She cautioned against this practice, instead encouraging people to share their concerns, whether positive or negative, directly.

Use Permit. Bob presented the complete file of communications concerning the Use Permit. This included an 8-page statement submitted to the City. A response is pending. The current bill is \$1,089, for a total of \$5,700 expended to date.

Action: Bob will see that the letter to the City is placed on the Board Google Drive. As a side note, Bob reported that the letter was informally read by another attorney who told Bob that: a) the Fellowship had a strong case through the 1st Amendment of the

US Constitution; b) If the Fellowship's request is denied, the Fellowship should file a complaint with the Butte County Grand Jury, and c) the City should respond within a week or so. However, Bob expects that the city will want to buy time or try to negotiate. The estimated costs for fees for the hired attorney are expected to be around \$6,500.

Auction: Dave reported that he and Megan Johnson are proposing that the UUCF auction be postponed until after the New Year, in late January. The website is ready to go. Donations are now needed. They are hoping to make this a Big Event!

Zoom schedule: Pam reported that she and Jane are working to post the recorded services on the Website. A suggestion was made that those people who used to regularly use Zoom be notified that services are now regularly being supported by Zoom.

Action: Pam will ensure that a notice of Zoom support will be added to worship service announcements and postings.

Grounds: Bob reported that two people have volunteered to help with the Garden Committee to envision and plan the grounds. He noted that we need someone to coordinate with Adrienne and Amber. The irrigation is set up but not yet running since the smaller drip components are not yet set. This will depend on what and where plants are planted. It was suggested a winter garden could be planted.

In the meantime, nothing is getting watered. Concern was expressed that the existing fruit trees need watering and should be put on a watering system as soon as possible.

Action: Bob will coordinate a Zoom session with Pam, Larry and Adrienne to discuss near-term goals, i.e., whether to begin watering or whether to let the grounds go fallow.

The Fellowship property has been cleaned up and debris taken to the dump. In cleaning out the shed, packages of chairs were found which need new homes.

Action : Bob will see that the chairs are removed and given away.

Angela reported that the Fellowship requires a better—or at least a handier—first-aid kit since a member was hurt while clearing the property.

Lay Leaders Meeting: Lucy reported that we will need to change the date of the proposed meeting because of a conflict with new--members' orientation.

Action: Lucy, along with Angela, Pam, and Susan, will plan the Lay Leaders' meeting for Sunday, October 15.

Congregational Meeting: A congregational meeting is planned for Sunday, October 29. The sole item to be voted on will be the budget. Reports can be given by the Use Permit and By-Laws committees. Other updates may be included.

Action: Notice will be placed in the e-news by October 12th to ensure the required time of notification.

By-Laws Committee. The by-laws committee was appointed to consist of Bob, Lucy, and Merrily.

Action: the By-Laws committee will review the rules of membership, the size of the Board, general consistency of the by-laws, and editing concerns.

Administrative/Coordinator position: No updates were presented. The new minister's input is sought as to what support she would need. Some skills will include

communication and bookkeeping. Duties and hours will need to be discussed. The committee will consist of Pam, Lucy, and Susan. Courtney will be consulted as to required technological skills.

Action: Kathryn will send descriptions of similar positions in other UU congregations to Susan.

Membership Coordination: Wayne reported that he has been canvassing for greeters to be at the front door. Some volunteers have stepped forward. David Strohmeyer has been cleaning up the database to develop an up-to-date contact list. People will be contacted via e-mails and phone calls to find out their desire regarding UUFC. It will be a time to re-connect with folks.

The membership committee is also engaging with the Chico community through other organizations. Betsy Taub has a connection to the College. Contacts are being made to the League of Women Voters, the Democratic Club, and Stonewall Alliance. Luke, Shakti, and Anna are continuing to do Sunday morning refreshments. They are being brought under Membership. Luke and Anna volunteered to head up Hospitality.

Wayne reported that there have been 12-14 new members in the last 18 months. An orientation meeting is being planned. He also would like a "Membership Sunday."

Gratitude Walk: Angela proposed that UUFC have a table as one of the stations at the Gratitude Walk scheduled for November 4.

Action: Planning and implementation will be headed by Wayne as head of the membership committee.

Church Safety: Angela reported that she had Bob had attended a safety symposium supported by faith-based organizations and the Chico Police Department. The session also included state and federal agencies to discuss church safety. She noted that security grants for non-profits were easily obtainable to cover such things as cameras, panic buttons, up-grade of windows and doors. A safety plan is needed. **Susan moved that Angela contact a person at the State of California to help do a soft assessment of our property.** The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Calendar: Kathryn strongly suggested that all calendar items be online so that all members can access it.

Process Observer: Dave noted that the meeting moved along fairly smoothly. However, there was some talking over. The general conclusion was that even though the business meeting functions fairly fluidly, more order might be obtained if people raised their hands to be recognized by the chair.

Angela read the closing words. The next meeting will be at 6:30, October 19. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 Pacific time.

Respectfully submitted,

Merrily Stover
Secretary, UUFC Board