

March 20, 2024
UCM Board Meeting Agenda

People present: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval; UCM Board Officers Ansel Ploog (Vice-President), Fran Dodd (Financial Officer), Brenda Bean (Secretary); At-Large Members Steve Gold, Hugo Liepmann, and Jen Matthews; and ET member Leslie Parr.

4:00 Check In – We shared feeling less-than-energized and appreciative of Spring and the return of robins.

4:15 Chalice Lighting and Reading – Ansel read from Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy by Barbara Ehrenreich.

4:20 Approve Minutes of March 6 Meeting – **Steve moved and Ansel seconded approval of the minutes, with which the Board agreed.**

4:25 Pledge Drive Update – Joan reported that UCM has so far received \$319,153 in pledges for FY25 from 152 households; last year 192 households pledged. The Stewardship Committee may request more funds from the congregation but wants to be careful not to interfere with the April 14 Gifts of Love fundraising event (which will not include an auction).

4:30 Minister's Report – We thanked Joan for her written report, asked about the status of the VOSHA testing (air sample test results not yet received), then focused on professional development. The ET is the usual channel for dealing with personnel and professional development matters but because Joan was asking for more support for herself, she sought approval from the Board.

There are professional development events Joan wants to attend this year (the UU Minister's Association Annual Retreat, a study group meeting, and a 5-day worship/arts stay at a Presbyterian Retreat Center in May with Donia) that will cost about \$1,500. (Joan will not have to pay to attend GA because she will be a virtual presenter there.)

She pointed out that the budget for professional development for this (and prior) church year falls short of the UUA Guidelines for Fair Compensation. For her position, the UUA recommends budgeting the greater of \$8,000 or 10% of salary, yet for FY24, UCM budgeted only \$6,500. We acknowledged wanting to meet those Guidelines.

Fran moved and Hugo seconded approving the additional expense for Joan's professional development, with which we all enthusiastically agreed! We left it up to her to figure out from where in the budget to find the \$1,500.

4:40 Policy Monitoring:
Regularly scheduled:

- **GP-5:** Board Roles and Responsibilities – Full Board – *We discussed that we think we are doing well, not having heard otherwise. However, we might not know without a third-party evaluation of the Board, which in other churches is sometimes conducted by a Committee on Ministry.*
- **GP-6:** Board Committees and Task Forces – *The Board's committees and task forces currently include Stewardship (this should perhaps operate year-round), FRuuT (may not meet again), and a Climate Resilience Research Group (not yet convened). There has been extensive narrative and financial reporting from/with these groups, and communication has been satisfactory. Joan asked if the Board wants other groups to help it, like a Nominating Committee; we did not decide.*
- **EL-6:** Communications and Support to the Board - *We discussed that the ET feels communication with the Board is unduly burdensome now. This has happened because of delays in the ET receiving the information needed to complete its reports, which backed up the monitoring. We hope the problem will be solved by the ET receiving the necessary information in a timely way so it and the Board can return to the regular monitoring schedule.*

Catch-up:

- **EL-3:** Compensation and Benefits to Church Staff - *Leslie and Joan reported that there is inherently a tension in this policy because it requires both budgeting within the funds available and paying Fair Compensation to the staff. Though UCM is committed to being a Fair Compensation Congregation, UCM does not have the resources to strictly adhere to all the UUA recommendations.*

The ET spoke with a UUA representative who acknowledged that the new UUA guidelines, especially, are a stretch for many congregations. While the guidelines are not based on the Central Vermont job market, the ET believes they are reasonable for UCM's hiring needs and that UCM can/should (continue to) take tangible steps toward meeting them.

The Board concluded that this policy could focus on progress toward adequate budgeting for Fair Compensation, not just on compliance. And it could say that if progress is not being made, the ET will provide an explanation. [Ansel will add this suggestion to her list of possible changes to the Governing Policies.]

- **BE-3:** Delegation to the Executive Team – *With ET – In Section 1 this policy says that the Board instructs the ET “to achieve specified results for specified recipients at a specified cost.” The ‘specified results’ are to be “developed systematically from the broadest, most general level to more defined levels and will be called Church Mission and Ends.” The ‘Church Mission and Ends’ are found at the beginning of the Governing Policies. Joan suggested the Ends statements that define the more general Mission statement may need revision.*

5:10 Board Meeting Schedule – *Do we still need to meet 2X a month? This schedule allows us to thoughtfully discuss all the business. One 2-hour meeting a month is not enough, even if there are additional subcommittee meetings. Joan asked that we minimize meeting time by scheduling the agenda tightly and sticking to it. **We liked the idea of avoiding meetings during the summer (if possible) except for a Board Retreat in August. We agreed to assess during the second meeting of each month whether we need to meet twice during the next month. Accordingly, we decided to meet twice in April to deal with both the budget for FY25 and the agenda for the Annual Meeting.***

5:30 Review Board Goals – *The Goals for the year apply to actions of the whole church, not just the Board. Accordingly, we noted the following:*

- *The Board has not yet addressed the Personnel subset of its Stewardship Tasks.*
- *Not much has happened with the Green Sanctuary effort.*
- *UCM continues to provide many of the volunteers for Community Lunch, both on Mondays and the other days at the Episcopal Church.*
- *Volunteers have provided overnight shelter at UCM to help homeless people avoid the coldest winter weather (below 10 degrees Fahrenheit).*
- *We have a couple new Seasoned Souls groups, and Joan led 4 sessions of a workshop about the proposed changes to the UUA's Article II.*
- *Community Pouch is one way that UCM partners with various organizations.*
- *UCM has partnered with other organizations [like the Central VT Refugee Action Network (CVRAN)] by offering use of free space for their meetings and by offering leadership (like Joan's co-chairing Vermont's Poor People's Campaign and helping to start the new Disaster Recovery Network for people who were affected by the flooding in Central Vermont).*

5:45 Other Business - **Steve will facilitate the April 3 Board meeting.**

6:00 Adjourned.