



Foothills Board of Trustees Meeting Monthly Meeting Minutes Approved January 20, 2020

Submitted by Debbie Gentry

Board Members in Attendance: Brendan Mahoney, Sue Sullivan, Sara Steen, Debbie Gentry, Joan Woodbury, Glenn Peterson. Rev. Gretchen Haley (ex-officio board member).

Meeting convened at 6:00PM.

Consent agenda:

Gretchen requested removing the Senior Minister Evaluation Task Force Report from the consent agenda. **Sue moved to approve the remaining consent agenda items** (consisting of the Finance, Nominating, Personnel, Governance, Restoring Wholeness and Endowment reports) **minus the Senior Minister Evaluation Task Force Report. Motion passed.**

A small correction to the Senior Minister Evaluation Task Force report was made changing Glenn's name to Rev. Gretchen's name as mentioned wanting additional feedback. Rev. Gretchen confirmed that the Senior Minister Evaluation Task Force would meet on Wednesday, January 22, 2020. She recommended her evaluation be done every 3 years in a way similar to her preliminary fellowship evaluation identifying different areas for evaluation with no anonymous feedback and a goal of encouraging a culture where feedback is welcome and trust is strengthened. It was determined that the Board did not need to approve the process of evaluating the Senior Minister and the Charge was amended removing the requirement that the task force present its process to the Board for approval. The revised charge is as follows: To design and implement a process for our Senior Minister's triennial evaluation. The process developed will be added to the Board Handbook upon approval. The evaluation itself will proceed as scheduled and complete its evaluation for Board review by the end of April. The entire revised charge can be found at:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wgfXKGu1cjsOtsR56hcAjjX3VBc2pcyMWrOHw4evjpY/edit>.

Brendan moved to approve the Senior Minister Evaluation Task Force Report and Charge as revised. Motion passed.

Gretchen then mentioned she wanted to make sure the 4 questions for discerning how to respond to congregational feedback were easily accessible and Sara said she would put them on the Basecamp Message Board. The 4 questions are as follows:

1. *Is there a policy that should be addressing this concern and if a policy exists, does it need to be defined more clearly?*
2. *Does the concern suggest the board needs to revise its five-year vision?*
3. *Does the concern inform how we think about monitoring and if so, do we need a monitoring schedule that includes this type of feedback on a regular basis?*
4. *Does this have the potential to help the board build trust by listening to the concern and then helping the person get connected with the right person in ministry that can address the concern?*

Approval Agenda

Minister's Report:

Rev. Gretchen discussed staffing needs including replacing the church custodian, hiring a facility person with knowledge on caring for a facility especially around safety issues, and the possibility of hiring a receptionist. Notice would be sent out in the new Communicator newsletter launching the third week of February and going out every other month. The Communicator would be an annual subscription renewal unless a person was over the age of 70 or had been in the church for more than 20 years in which case they would automatically be subscribed. Rev. Gretchen mentioned more commitment was being asked of new members which might account for membership numbers being slightly lower and to keep this in mind when looking at future Visioning. She also reported the church would be providing monthly meals for Homeward Alliance and delivering the meals to their "warming center". Consideration was being given to this becoming a youth ministry which would connect our youth with our adults to make this happen, thereby fulfilling the first Vision Statement.

Glenn moved to approve the Minister's Report. Motion Passed.

Nominating Committee Report:

Sara noted the Nominating Committee job descriptions had some revisions that will need board approval. Joan clarified the March Board meeting would be March 26th instead of March 19th due to spring break.

Joan moved to approve the Nominating Committee Report. Motion passed

Policy Change Request Regarding Misconduct:

Rev. Gretchen provided the framework that existed at the time of both misconduct disclosures. She noted the church had just adopted a policy governance structure and the congregation was struggling to understand this structure when the disclosure on Music Director, Ryan Marvel, was given. Adequate policies on how to manage future types of misconduct were not written when Senior Minister Rev. Salkin's misconduct was brought to light later that same year. She noted at that time, Rev. Salkin was given complete authority over the congregation, there were no clear lines of accountability and there were no requirements for him to interact with other colleagues or to meet expectations of the UUA. Also at that time, misconduct had not been defined and he was not required to submit a monthly report. She also expressed her desire that ministers should be required to report on their efforts at self-care/sustainability or healthy practices that might include seeing a spiritual director and/or attending collegial gatherings. It was in this context that the Restoring Wholeness Task Force was created in April, 2019, and the need for policies on misconduct were built into their Charge. In October, 2019, the Board revisited the Task Force Charge and made the decision to remove policy development from their Charge and give to the Governance Committee who then requested the Board provide a structure on how policy would be developed. Rev. Gretchen suggested the policy make clear on whose authority the decision to disclose would fall and that policy needed to be clear in guidance, limitations and also have an element of time for disclosing. Sara brought forth 4 items for the Governance Committee to consider when drafting the policy on misconduct

1. When to report misconduct to board
2. When misconduct needs to be disclosed to congregation and details about how to disclose
3. What kind of follow up ministry should be provided to the congregation after disclosure
4. What type of ongoing ministerial self-care needs to be included in the policy

Several other considerations in writing a policy on misconduct were brought forward including that it would be helpful for the congregation to understand why a disclosure of misconduct was necessary, caution on writing a policy that provided enough guidance for ministry to respond without placing too much restriction on their ability to respond, that the disclosure would clearly meet the definition of misconduct and that clarity as to whether it would be classified as a violation of the covenant of an individual's behavior or an employment violation.

Sara clarified that the current policy states only the Senior Minister or President of the Board needs to be notified of misconduct and not the full Board and that clarification

needed to be written as to when or if the full Board would need to be notified. She further clarified that in the current Employee Handbook, disclosure of misconduct would come first to the Senior Minister and policy first needed to address whether the disclosure met the definition of misconduct and then whether the minister would always be directed to report it to the Board. Also discussed was whether misconduct by lay leaders as well as non-ministerial staff would be held to the same standards as ministerial staff. It was decided that misconduct, at its core, was a power differential that allowed a person(s) to take advantage of others to further their own end and therefore anyone in the church in a position of power would be held to the same standards thereby necessitating misconduct by ministerial staff and lay leaders would need to be reported to the Board.

Sara mentioned that in the Employee Handbook, a reporting phase and an investigative phase was built in that could be used to determine if there was reasonable evidence of misconduct and that most agreed these phases would apply to lay leaders and/or employees of the church (including called ministers).

Sara suggested that the policy for current lay leaders or ministers be written as follows: If there is reasonable evidence that misconduct may have occurred at Foothills UU either by current lay leaders (defined as ...) or current employees of the church (including called ministers), the Senior Minister *shall* report that misconduct to the Board no later than..... When adding an element of time, gathering information from other UU congregations would be helpful.

Gretchen suggested the following core values would be helpful to the minister in discerning whether or not to disclose:

- Does it reveal a systemic issue or pattern
- Does it shift the narrative significantly about our past
- Does it provide lessons that will help us shape our future
- Does it have policy implications and
- Does it potentially harm the reputation of the church

Rev. Gretchen also added our policy should state, "Ministers shall provide an annual report of their plan of sustainable ministry to the Board." To clarify this further, she reported that the UUMA was setting guidelines that would require ministers to be an active member of the UUMA and abide by the guidelines set forth by that organization, including their upcoming requirements for continuing education. These requirements are scheduled for approval this June. She further recommended that all staff be required to be a member of their professional organizations.

Sara suggested that a reminder be given to come back to the question of when and how to disclose misconduct to the congregation until the next steps are given to the Restoring Wholeness Task Force.

Review/debrief of long-time member gatherings:

Sara reported two gatherings had been held for long term members of the church and all Board members had attended at least one of these gatherings. Reflecting on what was heard, several key points were brought forward:

- These gatherings helped members to feel heard and were important for building trust and connection for those members feeling displaced due to age, stage and size.
- These gatherings gave long term members the opportunity to express their grief over those members who had left the church while still remaining proud of the work the church is doing now.
- These gatherings gave long term members a sense of connection through the opportunity to hear from each other.
- These gatherings suggested more education was needed around our Policy Based Governance system.
- These gatherings brought forth a desire for greater understanding about the misconduct that had occurred with Ryan Marvel and Rev. Salkin. Sara recommended further discussion take place when the Board meets to discuss the Restoring Wholeness Task Force in February.

Glenn discussed the idea of having regular gatherings as part of the Board's Linkage plan. Gretchen voiced her support adding these gatherings might be based on length of time in the church, age, lay leaders, past Board members, etc. She also noted that part of the Linkage plan was to meet with stakeholders and community partners and that bringing those people together in one meeting might also be very beneficial. Sara suggested we discuss this further in March and will put together some thoughts and bring it to the Board for volunteers to help in organizing these meetings. Gretchen requested the Board keep in mind the 4 questions for discerning how to respond to congregational feedback when planning additional informal gatherings.

Discussion of Restoring Wholeness Task Force future work

It was decided that another board meeting be scheduled in February specifically for discussing the future work of the Restoring Wholeness Task Force. Glenn mentioned the Task Force would be meeting with Rev. Gretchen on January 29th to discuss disclosure narratives on both Ryan Marvel and Rev. Salkin. **Brendan moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:15PM.**