



**Foothills Board of Trustees Meeting  
Approved Monthly Meeting Minutes**

**August 20, 2020**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Sue Sullivan, Doug Powell, Sara Steen, Glenn Pearson, Brendan Mahoney, Debbie Gentry, Rev. Gretchen Haley (ex-officio member)

**Board Member Absent:** Andrea Delorey

**Staff Member Present:** Katie Watkins, Director of Finance and Operations

Online meeting convened at 6:00pm via Zoom with a virtual chalice lighting and check-in.

**Consent Agenda**

*Item 1 - Housing Allowance for Rev. Elaine Aron-Tenbrink*

As required by federal tax law applicable to all clergy, the board reviewed Rev. Elaine Aron-Tenbrink's request to designate \$11,000 of her salary as her tax-exempt housing allowance. **Glenn moved to approve the housing allowance of Rev. Elaine Aron-Tenbrink. Motion passed.**

*Item 2 - July 28, 2020 Board of Trustee Meeting Minutes*

**Debbie moved to approve the July 28, 2020 Board of Trustee meeting minutes as written. Motion passed.**

*Item 3 - Board members Conflict of Interest forms affirming compliance with policy*

**All board members affirmed that they had completed the Board Member Conflict of Interest forms and filed them with Debbie as secretary of the board.**

**Regular Agenda**

*Item 1 - Any items pulled from the Consent Agenda*

Doug asked to pull the 2020-2021 Board Covenant from the Consent Agenda.

### 2020-2021 Board Covenant

In reviewing the 2020-2021 Board Covenant, it was decided that a sentence about speaking in one voice needed to be added. The sentence, "*Communicate with one unified voice when presenting Board conversations and decisions to the congregation*" was added to the Board Covenant. **Glenn moved to approve the 2020-2021 Board Covenant with the addition of the sentence regarding speaking with one voice. Motion Passed.**

### **Monitoring**

#### Item 1 - Senior Minister's Report

Sue asked Rev. Gretchen for an update on whether she had talked with Scott Denning about writing the Restoring Wholeness Task Force narrative. Rev. Gretchen communicated that she had talked with Scott and that he had agreed to write this narrative and that most likely it would be ready for board review at the October board meeting. Upon the board's approval, it would be presented to the congregation at the November congregational budget meeting. Sue added that she would be speaking with Scott about this in a few days.

Rev. Gretchen returned to the senior minister report advising there were two issues she would like to address: policy work and financial oversight. Rev. Gretchen reported she would be reviewing each financial policy in detail and every other month would report back to the board. Doug recommended that shortening and simplifying each policy would make them much clearer and concise. Rev. Gretchen mentioned that some of the financial policies might be better classified as monitoring. Sue added that as she reviewed other UU policy books it became apparent that the board needed to set reasonably conservative limitations meant to protect the assets and financial health of the church while empowering ministry to creatively and flexibly manifest the vision. She added that an efficient set of monitoring reports would limit the amount of time Rev. Gretchen needed to prepare these reports and would decrease the time the board spent in making sure we were spending the right amount of money on the right things. **The senior minister's report was accepted by the board.**

### **Board Goals Related Work**

#### Item 1 - Financial Monitoring and Oversight Update from Rev. Gretchen and Katie Watkins, Director of Finance and Operations

Katie Watkins, the new director of finance and operations, presented a budget oversight presentation to the board in a first attempt to provide the board with a greater understanding of the church's financial picture. She included in her report that she felt the church was financially sound at this moment and provided an accounting of what had shifted as a result of implementing a January to December fiscal year budgeting cycle. Rev. Gretchen clarified the connection between the ministry's decisions on how to budget finances and the board's responsibility to monitor whether ministry was interpreting the ends in a reasonable way based on the vision that had been set by the congregation. She also clarified that the board would "affirm" the next fiscal year budget at the October board meeting but the congregation would "approve" the next fiscal year budget at the November congregational budget meeting.

Rev. Gretchen brought up monitoring priorities for the board to consider including how much and in what way the ministry should veer from the approved budget before the board is consulted and what policies the board would need to address when inevitable variances in the budget occurred. Another point she mentioned was for the board to provide direction regarding core values and priorities and the impact the board wanted to have in fundraising and budgetary compliance that would empower ministry to be creative and flexible in accomplishing the vision. Further, she noted that the board's responsibility was to set reasonably conservative boundaries in operational authority to limit financial vulnerability and protect organizational assets with a certain degree of checks and balances focused on the long term future of the church. She reminded the board that their responsibility was to always remain future focused. Rev. Gretchen reviewed the current monitoring policies which included reviewing the budget versus actual reporting on a quarterly basis along with an annual internal audit and an external audit every 5 years.

#### *Item 2 - Policy Development, from Sara*

Sara began by reminding the board of this year's goal of getting our policy book up to date. She described the process of policy revision she would be using which included involving the governance committee, with Doug as the liaison, when background research was needed. She set a goal of having the policy revisions completed by mid-year in order to begin revision on the bylaws. She noted Section one would be completed first followed by sections two and four and Section three, which had the most substantive revisions, would be completed by year-end. Revision of the bylaws would then begin in January with the goal of being completed by the end of the 2020 board year in June, 2021.

She noted she would be presenting the initial revisions to Section one tonight in order to get feedback from the board. Afterward she would make changes based on tonight's feedback and post the updated policy revisions on basecamp for review. The Consent Agenda for September's board meeting would include the final revisions to Section one for actual approval by the board and this same process would be implemented going forward. She added that she would attempt to keep as much of the original language and structure as possible especially in

this first section although it might be necessary to change more of the language in the following sections. Rev. Gretchen mentioned that the financial oversight committee could follow this same process of every other month taking a “deep dive” into the content of the financial policies and bringing this to the board for review.

*Item 3 - Restoring Wholeness Update, from Sue*

Sue noted earlier that she would be talking to Scott Denning in a few days about the Restoring Wholeness Task Force narrative.

*Item 4 - Linkage/Communications:*

It was agreed that Sue would work on a blog post that would go out to the congregation about what occurred during this board meeting and post on basecamp. Debbie noted that this was part of the secretary’s responsibilities and asked Sue for guidance in writing future blogs. Rev. Gretchen suggested this blog include the board’s full involvement in policy governance and that revisions to the policy book were being made that would reflect our current model of governance. Doug suggested we also note that the revisions would be written in such a way as to make them clearer and more concise. Rev. Gretchen also suggested that the board report that it is strengthening its financial oversight role in these uncertain times. Rev. Gretchen asked the board to forward her the blog post for this month and she would decide how it would be distributed to the congregation.

*Check out*

Each board member was asked to give a brief summary of what was on their mind as the board meeting came to a close.

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:29pm.**

Minutes written and presented by  
Debbie Gentry,  
Board Secretary