

**Foothills Annual Congregational Meeting
Draft Minutes
June 5, 2022**



- 1. Meeting called to order on Zoom at 11:04 by Board President, Sue Sullivan. Chalice lighting was done by Sue Sullivan**
- 2. 103 Members in attendance. Quorum established.**
- 3. Sue Sullivan called for the agenda to be approved and seeing no objections, declared them approved.**
- 4. Sue Sullivan called for the standing rules to be approved and seeing no objections, declared them approved.**
- 5. Sue Sullivan called for approval of the following congregational meeting minutes: May 23, 2021 (Annual Meeting) and December 5, 2021 (Annual Budget Meeting) and seeing no objections declared both meeting minutes approved.**
6. Sue Sullivan presented the yearly **President's report**. She began by noting that the past year had been a very difficult year and that the second challenging year of the pandemic was successfully navigated. The Board of Trustees maintained their focus and mostly met their yearly goals. The Board worked to update the monitoring plan so that it made sure that it was monitoring everything that needed monitoring. This was mostly completed and what did not yet get fully revisited, was how it monitors. This is on the plate for the next Board.
7. Sue reported that in reviewing our policy book with an eye toward monitoring, the Board needed to revise a number of policies that weren't actually monitorable as written. So a number of policy revisions were written and will be on the June Board agenda for a final vote.
8. Sue reported the second board goal of revising the church bylaws to align with the policy governance model. This work began 18 months ago and Sue thanked the Governance Committee (Brian Woodruff, Sarah Parrish, Tim Pearson and Larry Watson with board liaison, Doug Powell) for their hard work. on bylaw revision. Sue mentioned that a rewrite of the church bylaws was the final step in transitioning the church to a policy

governance model. The new bylaws need to be reviewed and approved by the congregation as a whole.

9. So starting later this summer, the next board will begin holding conversations and presentations on the draft changes, and they'll keep that going until we run out of people in the congregation interested in talking about bylaws. At that point, the board will bring it to a vote of the full congregation at the next regularly scheduled Congregational meeting.
10. Sue then addressed the unexpected and difficult development from last fall, when our neighboring UU church informed us that they had decided to hire the music director that we fired for misconduct 5 years ago. The Board wants to be clear that we are committed to being as transparent and respectful as possible in sharing our response. All congregational members should have received an invitation to an information and processing meeting that the Board held this past Tuesday. The Board felt like it was a challenging but profoundly helpful gathering, and we plan to offer another meeting for those who are interested, but were unable to attend this past week's meeting.. The Board is willing to hold as many additional meetings as needed for congregants.
11. The Board is very excited for the construction of our new 400 seat Sanctuary, which if all goes according to plan, should be completed before next year's congregational meeting. Throughout the year, the Board has been working in close collaboration with the building expansion team as they oversee the project costs and change orders. We are also reconstituting our lay-lead engagement and pledge drive efforts, which have been sidelined for several years now, first by our big capital campaign and then by the pandemic complexities. We will be raising funds both to close the gap phase of our sanctuary construction fundraising, and to bolster our annual operating budget, which funds all of our ministries.
12. Sue expressed how proud and excited we are that the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations invited Gretchen to lead the Sunday worship service at this year's General assembly in Portland, Oregon later this month. We are so appreciative of Gretchen's leadership skills, her ability to hold a sacred healthy, creative, and collaborative visionary space for our congregation to grow into who we are called to be together.
13. We will be live streaming the service here at Foothills on Sunday, June 26th, and we are really looking forward to a great watch party.

14. Gretchen then presented her **Minister's Report**. She started by saying that this is a time where there's a huge need for ministry, specifically Unitarian Universalist ministry in the world right now. She called on us to respond flexibly, creatively, and faithfully to that call. And even as we're trying to figure out exactly how we're supposed to show up during this time, it continues to be a time of big transition of what it means to do church, and even more what it means to be the Church in 2022 and beyond.
15. Gretchen used charts and graphs to show the significant increase in attendance from last year to this year. It indicates that people are hungry to come back in person which means we need to rebuild all our systems and volunteer teams to meet the needs of in-person services after such a long time of focus on online services.
16. Gretchen mentioned that one of the significant things that has helped us care for each other and sustain us through the pandemic years is our small groups: sisterhood groups, Wellspring groups, Journey groups, Gather groups, Circles, Study groups, and all kinds of other small groups. She expressed gratitude to all the many people who have led and shown up as a part of caring for each other in the last several months. And of course, the caring network that Elaine oversees. All of these form a kind of steady way that we've been able to stay in community over the past two years.
17. Gretchen related that there are still a lot of people doing a lot of things that just aren't being highlighted and our justice teams and our other teams have all been really active throughout the past few years, including most recently the coming-into-being teams: our Be More Gay team and also a Reproductive Rights team.
18. Other teams that Gretchen mentioned were the Board of Trustees, the Music Director Search team, the Finance team, our Sunday Support teams, youth ministry, and our history project team. All of these make all the work happen.
19. Gretchen then turned things over to Katie Watkins, who gave a finance report. Katie started by saying that we have experienced what most churches have experienced, which is some adjustments in our budget, and the way that our finances are working. It is financially a more challenging season than we have experienced in a while. There are a couple of reasons for that. Pledging is down. We experienced about a 9% drop in pledging in 2021, but we did see some increase in designated giving. So there's a little bit of a trend around how people are choosing to give. But the overall is that we were under a little bit of our expectations on funding, and then there were a lot of expenses with launching 3 new versions of church: an outdoor version of church, our 8:30 in-person service here, and then we also were doing an online and a rebroadcast at the same time.

So through a combination of those things, we ended the year with about a \$50,000 net loss. We are able to cover that from our operating reserves. But it means that our operating reserves are limited.

20. Katie stated that we know that there's a lot of opportunity to bring in the new folks who have joined us from the start of the pandemic in this new iteration of church, who are ripe to receive a message, and we just want to invite all of you to be companioning these new folks who are coming into the church and helping us do that work. And you'll get more information about that in the coming weeks.
21. Katie then invited Bonnie Inscho, representing the History Project to report on how that is going. Bonnie said that the book is almost ready to go to print, that it will be about 200 pages and should be printed by the end of the year, if not Fall. The book will be available for a suggested donation of \$20 to recover costs of printing. Bonnie gave a shout out to Claire McCrea who stepped up to do the editing pro bono.
22. Katie continued her finance report by talking about the biggest challenge to our budget and that is that the pledge drive is still \$60,000 under budget for the year. Katie expressed that there's a lot of opportunity in newcomers to transfer to membership and to get on a plan to give meaningfully. She said that we have lots of resources that we're putting into that, but if you are able to give more, this is a year when we definitely need a little bit more support. The board team will be launching and will need help in supporting the sort of fundraising drive that we'll be doing in the future to educate those who have not participated in giving consistently. We do need to get the building over the finish line.
23. Katie then spoke about the Building Expansion. She expressed excitement about the building construction. The Building Expansion Team has been working very hard. It is a phenomenal group of people who you've all been introduced to a number of times. They were excited to have our groundbreaking on May 17th. We had over 150 attendees, many faces that we have not seen since before the pandemic, who came to celebrate that moment with us. And so we also see it as an opportunity to bring some folks back in who have been waiting to rejoin us.
24. We have seen about a half a million dollar increase from the last time we presented on the budget that is primarily due to the city of Fort Collins Fees as well as the continued costs of construction materials and labor increasing. We are now locked in with our subcontractor prices where we shouldn't see as much of that anymore, and we'll be using the contingency funds that we've budgeted to keep moving forward. but we are looking to raise at least a half a million, if not a little bit more, as part of this next fundraising

campaign.

25. Katie then turned things back over to Gretchen, who addressed the search for a new Music Director. The Search team includes: Georgia Peoples, Chris Hutchinson, Jack Morgan, Gretchen O'Dell, and Kara Shobe. This team has narrowed the search down to two candidates: Benjamin Hanson and Emily Jaworski Koriath. They will be visiting over the next two weeks. The hope is that they'll start at least by September. This is a full-time position so it's a really big move, and it's long awaited and much needed.
26. Gretchen said that we have secured our funding to make this offer for the Music Director position this year, but part of that fundraising campaign is about making sure we have a pledge base that includes funding this full time position into the future.
27. As she circled back to a fundraising campaign, Gretchen emphasized that we need to move back into more of a shared ownership orientation, where we have more widespread partnership. We are rebuilding all of our volunteer teams and a more widespread regular and percentage based giving which is what we need to do to be a UU church. How do we do that while still being multi-platform: online and in person? We need both small groups, and a sense of feeling connected to the larger whole. We need the commitment to the larger institution and the power of what it means to be a part of that larger mission.
28. Gretchen challenged us with these questions: Who will we be when we are no longer talking about needing a new building? What is the next conversation that we want to be having? What is the ministry that's needed in our community as we look 10 years out? In what ways are we being asked to grow and deepen and to change?
29. Gretchen expressed appreciation for two outgoing leaders. Doug Powell, who stepped away from his Board position to prevent any kind of conflict of interest, as his wife came onto the staff. Doug offered incredible service for the Board in all kinds of ways. And Sue Sullivan is completing her tenure on the Board, most recently as Board President for the past two years. Sue has brought incredible leadership to our church. Sue has an amazing ability to make sense of something that feels like it might not make sense.
30. Walter Nash then added his appreciation of the job that Sue did as Board President and presented her with a gift (a rare plant which Sue, the amazing plant person that she is, greatly appreciated).

31. Sue was given the floor again to introduce the election for the Board. Sue stated that because of the pandemic, leadership development has been difficult. Because we haven't been in person for so long and the leadership development needed for the fairly complex new governance system of policy based governance has not been possible, the Board was not able to give the Nominating Committee enough lead time to develop a full slate for election. And because we are now a mission and vision driven church, we didn't want to rush that second appointment. We have the flexibility in the bylaws to hold off on filling one position right away. We're asking if there's anybody out there who is interested, to please reach out to Gretchen soon, because we're going to do an accelerated leadership development process over the next couple of months as things slow down in the summer. We hope that we will have a candidate that the Board can appoint for the remainder of this year, and then the position will open up for a congregational vote to fill the remaining 2 years of that term. Sue then turned over the election process to Susan MacQuiddy of the Nominating Committee.
32. Susan noted that the Board job descriptions and committee charges were revised last year. She added that they continue to reflect the current work of the Board and committees. There are still two vacancies on the Endowment Committee, and the Nominating Committee with the consent of the Board, recommends continuing those vacancies until the policy governance structure process is complete.
33. Susan then presented the 2022 slate of candidates for the Foothills Board of Trustees. Diane Hutchinson is nominated to fill one of the Board positions. Current Board member, Mary Klecan, is nominated to fill the remainder of Doug Powell's Board term. And current Board member, Walter Nash, is nominated to move into the position of Board President. Susan then moved to accept the slate of nominees for these elected positions. Because this came from the Nominating Committee (which consists of Susan MacQuiddy, Ben Manville, Christine Englen, and Board liaison Linda Kothera) this motion does not require a second.
34. The question came up in the Chat as to whether or not a Vice President is nominated. Sue answered that the position of Vice President is typically appointed by the Board as are the Treasurer and Secretary positions of the Board. These are not positions which need to be elected by the congregation. Since the President is elected for a two year term, the Vice President is selected at the beginning of the President's second year and the Vice President becomes the President-elect.
35. The election was held through a Zoom poll and the motion passed.

36. Sue expressed gratitude and appreciation for the newly elected Board members and especially to Walter for stepping into the position of President. She then turned the meeting over to Walter.
37. Walter then gave an inspirational talk to begin his Presidency after which he concluded the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:58.

**Minutes written and presented by
Mary Klecan
Board of Trustees**