

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse Unapproved Minutes
Board of Trustees Meeting, October 20, 2015

Board members present were Jerry Beasley, Shelley Burnes, Marco Cabrera, Nick Erber, Mike McDonald, Becky Somsel, and Gail Trill. Also attending was Rabbi Chava Bahle.

President Somsel welcomed guests, reading the prepared statement in the agenda.

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order by President Becky Somsel at 12:40. The CHALICE was already lighted. The board read its covenant in unison.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER MINUTES September minutes were approved as corrected. Motion Beasley, second ?

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA Beasley made a motion to extend public comment to 30 minutes, second Trill. Motion passed. Time allotted was three and a half minutes, and speaking conditions were suggested to allow multiple speakers. Nick Erber was designated as time keeper.

Trill asked why there were additions to agenda which had not been discussed in last week's planning meeting with the executive committee. Trill duplications of items should be consolidated. Trill asked the purpose of the closed session and was told that it was held at Trill's request. Trill stated what she had to say did not have to be said in closed session; it had nothing to do with specific personnel matters. Cabrera stated that he had need for a closed session. Trill asked to be placed on the agenda in new business. She moved that she be placed on the agenda, Beasley seconded. Motion passed. Rabbi Bahle asked the items Trill would speak on. Trill said actions the board should take.

SPEAKERS

Sherri Cope commented on the time services are being held, suggesting a time change to 9:30-10:15 and 11:30-12:15. She also wants the board to address distribution of community needs donations, considering international needs as well as local.

[We need a copy of Sandra's statement, if it's available.](#) Sandra Mc Donald joined one and a half years ago. There were good vibes then. She is disappointed that since the end of August things have deteriorated. They have seen other

congregations with problems but have never seen such hostility and disrespect for leadership. This cong has a reputation for this Why? UU principles call for respect. The underlying anger calls for deep congregational soul searching. Calls for a long term program to look at learning trust and problem solving. Outside professional help is expensive but critical.

Karl Love & John Ort passed their opportunity to speak.

Judith Halstead read a letter to the board as a member of vocal ensemble. We need to keep singing Time to move on. A [copy of Judith's letter should be included here](#).

Mary Van Valin, with Richard Miller, Gretchen Kronk, and Nancy Cotcamp standing with her, read a letter to the board (attached) with a diagram (attached) showing how their plan would work. The plan formally requests the board to select 2-3 board members to work collaboratively with the eleven signatories to find a way to reach common understanding and healing. Signed by Richard Miller, Solveig Gustafson, Mark Gustafson, Gretchen Kronk, Nancy Cotcamp, Mary Van Valin, Lynn McAndrews, Mary Cheney, Jim Horrocks, Beryl Striewski, Misty Sheehan

Christie McGue realized when she was asked to attend a meeting that folks are taking sides. Years ago in times of strife, she left the congregation. It hurt her. The congregation is her tribe, her family. She hates to see us doing the same things again. We need a process to work together. We need professional help. Other congregations don't have these issues; it's not just a UU thing. This congregation needs to work together to get to the bottom of this thing. She would support the congregation's working together if there are two sides, but we need professional help. [Don't know if Christie had a copy of what she said](#).

Karen Mars has seen what happens when congregations pull this stuff. She can't believe we're not pulling together. Maybe the issue was not handled well. We need to put policies in place. We must not crucify the pastor we've chosen. She's here to stand with the pastor and the board to make sure we do not do things like she has seen in other places to this congregation. [We need a copy of Karen's statement if one is available](#).

President Somsel stated. [We need to insert the text of Becky's statement here](#). Gist of it is: Nancy didn't make decision under duress; she was not fired terminated, dismissed. Board won't violate confidentiality. Nancy won't be rehired. We feel our actions were appropriate. **Destructive actions by a very small minority will no longer be tolerated.**

End of public comment session

CONSENT AGENDA Trill asked to remove Rabbi Bahle's report from the consent agenda motion and put it in officer and committee reports. Clarified that no motion is needed to move the report out. . Consent agenda approved with removal of Rabbi's report. [Consent agenda items should be up on the site. Becky should ask Susan to post them with this package](#).

RABBI'S REPORT

Trill had questions on the Rabbi's report. **Significant moments** section: are we keeping a record of attendance each Sunday? The numbers are in a binder in the greeters' cabinet. Trill asked to have the numbers in the Rabbi's report to the board each month.

Trill noted that 14 new members were reported and asked whether new members are getting education and background in UU principles; are there workshops for new members before they join? Rabbi answered that perspective/new member orientation has a short teaching on UU history and that the November programming is on the history of Unitarian-Universalism. Trill asked if there is any teaching on **UU polity** and the role of the congregation in running the show in UUism. Rabbi responded that the process is described in the welcoming book for new members. Somsel noted the confusion about democracy and how the congregation functions as a republic would, where we elect people to represent us. Trill noted that UU polity works differently; more membership involvement is expected in a UU congregation than we are allowing for at this time. Cabrera asked if a policy recommendation would be offered on the issue. Trill will come back with one next month.

How has my view of the future changed? From Rabbi 's report: vandalism is charged. Was this reported to the police? Cabrera stated that it was reported and the police report is available today for the first time, it taking three weeks for a report to be available on line. Trill asked that the board discuss in depth the questions raised by the Rabbi. Somsel noted that an outside consultant can help us with the questions as well.

Trill asked if this report is now posted on the website. Cabrera said it is currently on the website. Trill asked if it will remain up. Cabrera reported we don't know if they'll stay up. We wanted them up as soon as possible. We need to analyze that. Trill noted that the system is not user friendly.

As you know....Trill was under the impression that Cabrera would not act to meet the staff privately after she recommended against it. It has already happened.. Rabbi asked what her objections were. Trill stated that she believes that no one earning money from an organization and who is seeing heads roll will answer such questions candidly, especially in such a small sampling.

Beasley said he believed it was appropriate for the Rabbi to take this step to have our board liaison talk privately with staff and have them recommend steps we might take. It made sense to him . Trill acknowledged that part of it makes some sense so she will recommend the personnel committee take that over.

A Final Thought read aloud: spiritual leaders need time to be human. Trill expressed sorrow for the stress on Rabbi's health so she has missed opportunities to get that kind of support, and recommended she absolutely get peer support from other UU professionals. She needs to meet regularly with a peer support group even here in town.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT (ATTACHED) Mike McDonald reported that at the end of September, 28.5 % of pledges were in for the year, as compared to 29% last year at this time. The Finance Committee feels this should be watched but that it is okay at this time.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE REPORT (ATTACHED) Special meeting October 5, 2015

Trill questioned whether it was advertised. It was not. Cabrera stated personnel committee meetings aren't really advertised because they deal with so much that is confidential. This meeting was specifically to discuss insurance. Trill challenged, saying that a special committee meeting should deal only with the special items it was called to address. This was denied by other members of the board who said that if other business comes up, a committee can deal with it

at a special meeting called for another purpose. Trill asked Beasley to check Robert's Rules on this. All agreed that confidential matters should be kept confidential.

POLICY COMMITTEE Jerry Beasley reported that the Policy Committee met at the end of September. Nick Erber was not there but away at training. Mary Grover is in China so the committee won't meet this month. They will meet, possibly twice, in November to make up for lost time. There is no agenda yet.

BUSINESS

New Safe Harbor dates are March 27, 29 31. We will be serving dinner and furnishing evening hosts. Sign up will be in February

Autumn Affair: John and Pinky Hoffman will be offering meals donated to the Autumn Affair at Thanksgiving Dinner at Twin Lakes Lodge. Nick Erber moved to split proceeds from this between the operations budget and General Assembly scholarships. If there are any unused GA funds, they are to be given to community needs. Beasley seconded. Motion passed.

Legality of confidentiality document presented by Marco Cabrera He has had many, many questions recently from congregants about what is confidentiality. Looked on line and couldn't find a lot on employment so he looked at our policy manuals. Document attached is from our personnel conflict management. policies. The point of all the info is to identify what we have agreed to in signing on to this board.

Personnel committee thinks we need to address two things re confidentiality. 1. Re confidentiality in personnel committee, we decided to have clear and concise response on a card: "for the protection of our staff we must hold confidentiality."

2. Cabrera then handed out a confidentiality agreement, since none of the board has signed one recently, and the agreement expires each June 30. What Cabrera labeled our confidentiality agreement which we must sign as part of the board was handed out. In actuality, the document was to be signed by "members of congregational staff, the Treasurer, or as a designated member of the Stewardship Committee." It clearly is not for the use of the board.

Trill asked why all of our board communications suddenly have confidentiality notices on them. Cabrera answered that when something came up over the last few years, we realized there were holes in the process and part of that needs to be that every email has a confidentiality notice. Board communication is NOT public communication.

Trill: if you send me something, I can't share it with anyone else in the congregation? Cabrera: The notice on board communication is mainly for CYA purposes. Trill asked if we could simply put on the confidentiality notice when we need it. Cabrera: It is important to have our internal private communication. Trill: We already have two forms of communication, one which is trustees only and one which is available to board, Rabbi Chava, and Susan Sherman. Isn't that enough? I have a problem with everything being marked confidential and being secret. Suggestion that Trill read the board manual's distinction between confidential and secret. Trill moved that the board act

immediately to remove all notices of confidentiality from communication about board business. The motion died for lack of support.

ACTIVITIES IN COMPLETE/IN PROGRESS:

Trill read attached statement with motions. Discussion of the composition of the personnel committee at various times followed. Erber moved to table the discussion until the November board meeting. Beasley seconded. Motion passed. Trill will send motions to board members.

Marco Cabrera gave a website update. A template for the new site is available now. Secure log in is included.

OLD BUSINESS

The board retreat on November 17 will be at Rabbi Chava's cabin starting at least at 10:00. Details will follow.

CLOSED SESSION

Roll call vote to go in to closed session. Trill abstained.

[The only information which can come out of a closed session is a report on any actions formally undertaken.]

In the closed session, a motion was made by Marco Cabrera, seconded by Mike McDonald, to ask for Gail Trill's resignation. In a roll call vote, all but Trill voted to request Trill's resignation from the board. Trill abstained. Trill declined to resign.

The session was not formally closed; President Somsel did not announce the time the session ended.

The closing words, Psalm 101, were read by Jerry Beasley. Chalice was extinguished. Meeting was not adjourned, everyone just left without calling back the congregational members who were waiting to hear any motions reported out of the closed session.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Trill, Secretary