

MINUTES

All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church Congregational Meeting

December 19th, 2010

12:30 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.

Claudia Harris called the meeting to order, after a quorum was established. We had two items on the agenda: decide the 2011 budget, and nominate three (3) members to form half of the nominating committee.

Gale Gucker brought to the meeting's attention that our Parliamentarian, Clay Walker was absent. Rick Carlisle, our former Parliamentarian, was asked to fulfill the duties. He accepted.

Laurie Lyons moved to approve the Minutes from the May 16th, 2010 congregational meeting. David McCarty seconded, and the Minutes were approved without any opposition or abstentions.

Claudia called Amanda Lawrence to begin the budget discussion in the absence of Jared Davis, the treasurer. Jared was attending his graduation at LSUS.

2011 Budget: The congregation was presented with an unbalanced budget, \$16,000 short of the desired amount needed. The budget was based on actual pledges, not including the potential pledges still not submitted. The congregation raised many questions, which both Amanda Lawrence and John Allen answered.

The following questions, concerns and discussion were raised:

Pledges:

Barbara Jarrell asked for an explanation of the pledge numbers compared to last year's. Bill Johnston added to Barbara's question by asking for the number of pledges that were not turned in based on the total number of members. So far, twenty-three (23) pledges were not turned in.

Robert Smith noted that the pledges could not be counted individually based on the total number of members, since many couples turn in their pledges together, which would be considered a unit. At the same time Laurie Lyons added that the average number of pledges is the same compared to other churches of our size; however, there are two families who pledge much more than the average.

Gale Gucker asked if the Pledge Committee did all that was possible to contact all of the members regarding their pledges. Amanda answered "yes".

Laurie Lyons added that her experience has shown that many members wait 'till the last minute to turn in their pledge forms, and usually they turn them in by mid January.

Expenses:

Amanda Lawrence explained that our expenses are “good expenses”, like moving to have fair compensation for our staff members. Also, we have removed funding for the committees from the operating expenses. The operating income is funded by pledges and other incomes and not relying on fundraisers.

Gale Gucker wanted to know how much money we had committed for Barbara’s ordination. Amanda answered that we have \$10,000 allotted for the ordination, and we would need more from fundraisers.

Barbara noted that the Worship Committee is included in the operating budget. Laurie Lyons explained it to be a decision made by the Board. Norma Debrow then said that the Worship Committee also pays for the guest speakers, their fees and also for any travel expenses that may exist. Also, the Gwen Gow Music Fund is used not only to pay for the Music Director, but also to pay guest musicians.

Rick Carlisle asked about the origin of the carry over money from the previous year. He was told that the carry over money comes from fundraisers.

Norma Debrow had a question pertaining to the Association Dues. She wanted to know if the amount stated reflected the decrease in the numbers of our congregation, and the increase of the association dues. The answer was yes; it does reflect the increase in the association dues, and the decrease of membership.

Gail Burt also asked why is it that we do not have any advertising for the church. As a new member she didn’t know of the existence of this church until just recently. Susan Caldwell clarified that ads in the newspaper are very expensive; however, we do advertise when we have special events and activities.

Cuts:

Barbara Jarrell noticed that the money allotted for correspondence was reduced. She’s concerned that we will have less money to send out correspondence and newsletters.

Sarah Boswell had concerns about eliminating the position of office manager. She worried that the office work would not be completed, that nobody would be in the office to meet visitors and help members; she strongly feels that we need someone who is administering, connecting and keeping up with members, activities, send messages, etc.

Motion:

Pam Holt moved to discuss the budget for a later date. Susan Smith seconded the motion. Amanda Lawrence suggested that the earliest date to reconvene for another congregational meeting would be January 9th. She also reminded the congregation that we couldn’t always wait for some member to “rescue” the church. That would not be a permanent solution.

Claudia Harris called to accept Pam Holt's motion to reconvene at a later date to discuss the budget. The congregation voted to postpone the voting on the budget 'till January 9th, at a special congregational meeting. The motion passed without opposition or abstentions.

Before moving on to the next item on the agenda, John Allen informed the members that we are struggling just to hold together what we now have. John brought up the concerns discussed by the Board regarding the cost of maintaining this building – repairs, maintenance, old A/C units that would cost about \$70,000 + to replace, erosion threatening the building to slide down the ravine, etc. One of the options would be selling the building while we can.

Emma McCarty asked about the consequences of selling. She suggested that the mortgage of the building is manageable. She asked where would we meet for service. John responded that the Board had thought of this, and that there was a possibility that we could use the facilities at the B'nai Jewish Temple on Southfield Road.

Susan Smith informed the members that this congregation has more professional staff than any other UU church of this size. We have five paid positions while most others have only one- a minister. She commended the Board for having the courage to present an unbalanced budget, and for showing the numbers as they are. We as a congregation must review our Vision statement and then act accordingly.

Barbara Jarrell then proceeded to read to the congregation the Vision statement completed by the Visioning Team. The Vision statement will be brought up at our next congregational meeting for a vote.

Nomination of members to form half of the Nominating Committee:

Claudia Harris then proceeded to the second item on our agenda, the nominations. She explained the duties of the nominating committee, which would meet in March. The members who were nominated all agreed to serve. They were as follows:

Ron Thurston nominated Tony Austin.
Laurie Lyons nominated David McCarty.
Laurie Lyons nominated Pam Holt.

Laurie Lyons moved to accept the nominations. David Seale seconded. The motion passed without opposition or abstentions.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.