

Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist (CCUU) of Palatine IL
Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: January 21, 2026

Location: Virtual, on Zoom

Attending: Gary LaBedz (President), Mike Berry (Vice President), Rick Rayborn (Treasurer), Pat Wydell (Secretary), Bailey Pierce, Ryan Schaefges, Peggy Simonsen, Elizabeth Van Orden, Dan Yokas (Trustees); Reverend Karen Mooney, Reverend Pam Rumancik (Co-Ministers)

The regular monthly meeting of the CCUU Board of Trustees was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Gary LaBedz. Ryan shared an opening reading, and Gary recited the Board Covenant. A quorum of trustees being present, the meeting proceeded with business.

Last Month's Minutes: Gary moved to accept the December 17 minutes; Elizabeth seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

New Business

Minister's Retirement and Ministry Search: Revs. Pam Rumancik and Karen Mooney have announced they will retire from ministry at the end of June 2026. Rev. Pam explained that Countryside is an amazing church and we need a minister who can be us for the long term to provide stability. Revs. Pam and Karen cannot stay with us for the next decade, but they look forward to being with us for the next few months to help us figure out next steps.

Gary and Mike met yesterday with UUA Congregational Transitions Director Christine Purcell. She said there is no way we can do a search for a settled minister right now, given that interviews for settled ministry have already begun. She recommended a "contract to call" minister search, which is quicker and easier. Rev. Pam said we will get more candidates if we say we're searching for a contract-to-call minister, rather than simply a contract minister. Discussion that followed covered these issues:

- **Timing:** It's not clear from the UUA guidelines at what time a settled search should begin once a contract minister is hired. The UUA recommends waiting till the end of a contract minister's second year to decide to call that minister, but Rev. Pam said we could decide to call a contract minister by the beginning of the second year. Rev. Karen said that announcing their retirement now gives us enough time for a settled search, because it takes 1 ½ years for a good search. We could form a search committee soon and go through the same process as any search for a settled minister requires, but we would interview the internal candidate before considering any external candidates. She recommended we talk to the Evanston Unitarian church, as they successfully went through the contract-to-call process.

- **Motion to Search:** Gary moved that, in light of Rev. Pam and Rev. Karen's upcoming retirement, we conduct a search for a contract minister. Elizabeth seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.
- **Formation of Search Teams:** It became clear as we talked that we will need two teams: 1) a contract minister search team, and 2) a called minister search team. There are significant differences between the two teams.
 - **Contract Minister Search Team:** Since the Board hires a contract minister, the search team often has several Board members on it and the Board determines who is on the team. It could be a 5-person team. The work is less time-consuming than a called search. The work can start immediately, and could potentially end as early as March 23 with a successful hire.
 - **Called Minister Search Team:** This team conducts a full-fledged search for a called minister. It could start fairly soon, with the aim of completing a hire a year from now, in mid-April 2027. Board members are not allowed to be on this team. The ultimate decision to call a minister is determined by an all-congregational vote. Our by-laws state that when a Ministerial Search Committee for Senior Minister is to be formed, the Nominating Committee shall present 5 nominees for congregational election. The remaining 2 Ministerial Search Committee members are appointed by the Board. The Board discussed whether members of the last search team should or should not be invited to join the new team. The UUA recommends forming an entirely new team, but several Board members felt that keeping one or two people from the past team will be useful for guidance/experience. Board members also felt strongly that the search team should include some younger members who will be around in the next 20–30 years.
 - Here is a link to the UUA recommended schedule for a settled minister search: https://www.uua.org/files/2024-06/Settled_Search_Calendar.pdf
- **Motion to Form a Contract Search Team:** Gary moved that a search team for a contract minister be formed, consisting of 5 members, including 2 members of the Board (Pat Wydell and Elizabeth Van Orden) and 3 additional members to be chosen soon. Peggy seconded the motion, and the motion was approved with 9 yes votes and 1 abstention.
- Bailey offered to ask for a volunteer from the Young Adults group to serve on the contract search team. Pat offered to provide her with information on what is involved in the work to share with interested people.
- There was a brief discussion of the possibility of having a lay-lead ministry if no contract minister can be found, but most considered that not a good option. The Board decided to defer a decision on whether the contract will be a "contract to call" or not.

- The UUA recommends having small group meetings to find out what the congregation hopes for in a new minister. We did such meetings two years ago, and so we wondered if we have the time or the need to do them again. Rick offered to include questions about ministry in the cottage meetings that will happen in February as part of the Stewardship drive.

RE Sale: Rev. Karen reported that the RE children will sell small bowls during the SUUPER bowl fundraising event. The kids made these bowls during a lesson about food insecurity and will use the money from the sale to purchase food for POC. Board members had no objections.

Ongoing Business

Solar Panels/Roof Update: The team working on solar panels has received proposals from three solar vendors, and has chosen All Bright Solar, which came in with a bid of \$85,000. A contract from All Bright is coming tomorrow. We currently have one completed roofing bid for the solar expansion project. It is from A-1 Roofing and is \$78,378. We are waiting for two more bids, but our roofing vendor should be pinned down soon. The solar/roofing project is targeted to begin March 23. The donor agreement will be set up so we can take advantage of government rebates.

Motion to Approve Solar Project: Rick moved that, pending receipt of a signed letter of understanding from our donor and his donation of \$135,00 into an escrow account, the Board approve the use of All Bright Solar as our solar vendor and a roofing vendor still to be determined for a cost not to exceed \$80,000 for the necessary roofing enhancement. Peggy seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Capital Campaign: Rick laid out what needs to be done in the next three years for capital projects, based on input from a team of people. Phase 1 (year 1) projects will cost \$321,578. Phase 2 projects will cost \$357,475. Phase 3 projects will cost \$175,050, which includes \$100,000 set aside for future capital expenses. At the end of the 3-year campaign, Rick recommends that we budget \$25,000 each year to roll over into the Capital Reserve so that there is no need to do another capital campaign.

Year-End Fundraising Campaign: We raised about \$14,576 through the year-end campaign. We needed \$10,000 to balance the budget. Elizabeth moved that the rest of the money (\$4,575) be rolled into the Capital Reserve. Mike seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Stewardship Campaign Planning: Rick reported that the “Rooted in Love, Growing Our Future” campaign will run from Sunday 2/15 through Sunday 3/15, with stragglers coming in through 3/29. The budget will be presented to the Board mid-April, presented to the congregation in early May, and voted on at the Annual Meeting in late May. We also plan to notify the congregation of the Capital Project needs at that time.

CORRECTION: At the Board meeting, Rick reported that we are going to need somewhere between \$620,000 and \$660,000 in pledges for next year’s the budget. On reflection the next

day, he realized his math was off. His conservative estimate for pledges for the upcoming year is in the range of \$550,000–\$600,000. At this point, the numbers are only an estimate.

Current Financial Status: Rick reported that, at the moment, we are \$55,000 ahead of where we thought we would be by budget. However, expenses are likely to catch up to revenue in the second half of the year.

Chalice House: Chalice House will need a new roof soon. This is a congregation capital expense. However, Laura Mandell plans to do a “raise the paddle” at the next Time & Talent event to raise \$5,000 toward that expense.

Ministry Council Meeting and Next Steps: Mike reported on a Jan. 10 meeting of the Ministry Council. They plan to hold 3 meetings a year. The next one will be in May. A small group was formed to work on streamlining our organizational chart. This is a first step toward a strategic plan.

Closing Reading & Adjournment: Ryan shared a closing reflection and the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Submitted by: Patricia Harrington-Wydell, Board Secretary

Next Regular BOT Meeting: February 18, 2026, on Zoom

NOTE: The Zoom link is always listed at the top of the meeting agenda.

Readings for Future Months

February 2026	Rick Rayborn
March 2026	Elizabeth Van Orden
April 2026	Gary LaBedz
May 2026	Dan Yokas
June 2026	Pat Wydell

Announcement Schedule link (2025–26):

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1187K56z2yJZMCM1fQiCrSm1whh1Pdp8g/e/dit?gid=700670809#gid=700670809>