

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville
Annual Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2023

Attendance: 88 people

Proxy Votes in Advance: 52

Annual Meeting Convened by Clyde Hardin, President, at 12:30 PM.

- Call to Order and Welcome—Clyde Hardin, President
- Chalice Lighting—Rev. Dr. Cathy Harrington, Interim Lead Minister
- Reading of our Congregational Covenant—Margaret McAllister, Board Member
- Meeting Conduct Review: Rules of Order, Process Observation—Clyde Hardin
 - Voice voting will be conducted.
 - In the case a voice vote cannot be determined, a hand count will be conducted.
- Verification of Quorum—Quorum verified—Laurel Amabile, Acting Clerk

State of the Congregation—Rev. Cathy Harrington

- An overview of key aspects of congregation life and activities over the past year.
- A successful search for the next settled Lead Minister has been accomplished—well done!
- “The state of your church is just excellent!”

ACTION-Voting to Approve Minutes from Past Meetings, Clyde Hardin, President

- **Approval of the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting conducted on June 12, 2022.**
 - James Cassara moved to approve the minutes of the 2022 Annual Meeting. Wink Zachritz seconded.
 - The 2022 Annual Meeting summary was unanimously approved by vote.
- **Approval of the minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting conducted on April 30, 2023 for the purpose of calling The Reverend Dr. Audette Fulbright Fulson as our next settled Lead Minister.**
 - Joyce Birkenholtz moved to approve the minutes of the Special Congregational Meeting. Marta Reese seconded.
 - The Special Congregational Meeting minutes was unanimously approved by vote.
- **Financial/Budget Report—Wendy Motch-Ellis, Director of Administration.**
 - Wendy reported the congregation was in an improved financial position as of June 2, 2023.
 - Referring to her Financial Report and Presentation slides, Wendy shared several key points about the trajectory of Fiscal Year 2022-2023:
 - Beginning in FY22, expenditures began to increase and exceed income.

- We developed a 4-Pillar Strategy in FY23 to aid our goal of fiscal sustainability and will continue to implement this strategy as we move forward in FY24.
- While we have lost pledging units (households) since the COVID pandemic began in 2020, pledges to date have increased and helped to stabilize our financial picture.

- **Annual Budget--Questions and Discussion**

- A motion to approve the proposed 2023-2024 Operating Budget as proposed by the Finance Council was made by the UUCA Board of Trustees.
- UUCA staffing budget increase is due to increased compensation and filling open positions.
- There was a question about facility rental income and the impact of the pandemic closures/restrictions, which Linda addressed: Our rental rates are historically lower and provide modest revenue in general.
- Will the Community Plate continue—yes, this will continue.

ACTION: The 2023-2024 Operating Budget was unanimously approved by vote as proposed.

- **Leadership Development Committee Report—James Cassara, Chair**

- The Leadership Development Committee made the motion to approve the election of the proposed slate of nominees, with thanks to the departing LDC members for their service.
 - Board of Trustee nominees: Phil Hammond, Mara Sprain, and Monica Youngman.
 - Leadership Development Committee nominee: Cecil Bennett, Nancy Bragg, and Holly DeMuth.

The slate of Board and Leadership Development Committee nominees was unanimously approved by vote as proposed and with no objections.

- **Introduction of Motion to Adopt 8th Principle—Rev. Claudia Jimenez and read by Ed Presteman and Nancy Bragg:**

Whereas the 8th Principle Team has spent the last year preparing the congregation for this important vote, the Justice Ministry Council of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Asheville moves to formally adopt the 8th Principle. The text of the 8th Principle reads as follows:

“We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote: journeying toward spiritual wholeness by working to build a diverse multicultural Beloved Community by our actions that accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and our institutions.”

Nancy Bragg shared a statement of her advocacy for this motion, including a brief history of the trajectory of UUCA's work toward this motion to approve.

There was a question about the 8th Principle and its impact on the annual budget. Clyde and Rev. Claudia offered a clarifying response that there is a "Justice Fund" established with allocations made for purposes related to the 8th Principle work in this arena.

Mary Alm clarified that the 8th Principle, if approved, is not funding for a project, but rather, a change in the way UUCA embodies our principles as a way of life.

After a period of discussion, Nancy Nachman moved to end the debate. Clif Hall seconded. The motion to end debate passed.

ACTION: The adoption of the 8th Principle approved by vote as proposed, with 4 no votes (including 3 by proxy vote) and 3 abstentions by proxy.

- **Installation of Elected Lay Leaders—Rev. Cathy Harrington**

Rev. Cathy Harrington called upon the congregation to offer our love and trust to these newly-installed leaders. The congregation affirmed its support.

- **Recognition & Thank Yous—Clyde Hardin**

- o Recognition and certificates of appreciation for the service of outgoing Board Trustees Karen Dill and Laurel Amabile, and Julie Stoffels, in absentia.
- o Rev. Cathy thanked and shared her appreciation for the Choir members, Pastoral Care Team, Worship Associates, and Transition Team for their collaboration and service throughout the year.
- o Rev. Claudia offered her words of thanks to the Justice Ministry, Lifespan Faith Development, and The Mountain Retreat Planning Teams, as well as the Soul Matters groups. She affirmed "this congregation is where it's at for families seeking a religious exploration program for their children" with now 90+ families and 141 children and youth attending. Special kudos go to our stellar Religious Educators, Kim Collins and Jen Johnson.
- o Our Director of Administration, Wendy shared her deep appreciation to the members of the Financial Advisory Council, Auction, Annual Budget Drive, Building, Landscape, Long Range Planning, Legacy, Memorial Garden Teams, expressing "these groups help us maintain our Sacred Space on behalf of the congregation."

- **Adjournment—**

- o Clif Hall made the motion to adjourn the Annual Meeting. Ann Cargil seconded.

The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted, Laurel Amabile, Acting Clerk