

**Unitarian Church of All Souls
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
1157 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY
Sunday, September 24, 2023**

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Church of All Souls was convened in the Forrest Church Gallery of the Church by Board President Mark Leeds at 12:53 p.m.

Trustees Present: Mark Leeds (President), Gus Young (First Vice President), Li Yu (Second Vice President), Richard Esposito, Beryl Jones-Woodin, Judith Moldover, Matthew Singh, Shivani Singh. Absent: Dixie Goss.

Also present: Rev. Galen Guengerich (Senior Minister), Nadira Shiwram-Singh (Director of Finance and Administration); Cecily Millen Elizondo (Director of Growth); Deborah Taylor (Building Advisory Task Force); Pamela Patton (Director of Congregational Ministries); Howard Turner (architectural consultant); Arthur Hopkirk (Secretary to the Board).

Board President Mark Leeds called the meeting to order at 12:53 p.m.

Leeds opened the meeting by recognizing the service to All Souls of George Collins, who died a few days ago. Collins was a past Board president and long-time leader of Monday Night Hospitality, an All Souls program that provides meals and social services to persons in need. Leeds said that All Souls should devise an appropriate tribute to Collins' extensive service to All Souls.

Leeds delivered a reading by Rev. Forrest Church.

Rev. Galen Guengerich, who had delivered a written report to the Board before the meeting, referred the Board to that report in which he listed those who would preach at Sunday services through the end of February 2024. Rev. Guengerich plans to preach at most Sunday services over the next five months. Others will preach on October 1st, October 29th, November 12th, November 26th, Human Rights Sunday in December, December 31st, January 28th, and February 18th and 25th.

Pamela Patton summarized a written report that she provided to the Board that, as requested, focused on communications and community building activities. Taylor Gallihue, a communications assistant who was hired in January, has been working on producing the daily and weekly (on Fridays) emails. A new process has been

developed to make the production of the weekly email more efficient. Gallihue has also been updating and adding content for posting on the e-sign facing Lexington Avenue. All Souls' subscription to Connex was cancelled because it was not being used extensively. Ending the subscription will save \$1000 annually.

Patton announced that a draft of Phase 1 of the church's new website should be ready for beta testing by the beginning of November. Leeds interjected that the website will include a drop-down menu for affinity groups and a complete church calendar. The new website is designed to provide high-quality access through either a computer or phone. Leeds praised the work of Alex Goodwin, a volunteer and Christine Goodwin's son, on the website.

Patton said that high-resolution photos of the building, staff, and church activities were needed for posting on the website.¹ Stock photos are being used temporarily. According to Patton's written report, Phase 2 of the website will integrate Buddhism & Mindfulness and Religious Education content. During Phase 1, there will be a link to separate sites for Buddhism & Mindfulness and RE.

Patton discussed Fall community building events. Her written report mentioned, among other events, her monthly Tea and Talk program; monthly Young Adults Nights and Bagel Brunches hosted by Gretchen Gabrielson; a potluck on October 1st; usher training; a six-week Invitation to Meditation program; and a daylong retreat with Pilar Jennings (Saturday, October 14th). For newcomers, there are also bagel brunches, a monthly All Souls in 20 (Minutes), and a three-session, semi-annual course on Pathways to Membership.

Howard Turner, a retired architect and congregant who has been working with Deborah Taylor and the Building Advisory Task Force, gave a report on issues related to the storage of sports equipment used in Reidy Friendship Hall by FastBreak. In consultation with the architect who was hired, it was determined that the Mary Ella Holst Room and the AV room (next to the Forrest Church Gallery) could be used to store items other than those belonging to FastBreak. Turner discussed the possibility of redesigning the doorway separating the Forrest Church Gallery (FCG) and Reidy Friendship Hall (RFH) to allow FastBreak's basketball hoops to be stored behind a curtain in the FCG. In Q & A with Shivani Singh, Turner

¹ Cecily Millen Elizondo mentioned in her report that she planned to hire a photographer to get more lively photos of church events to be used on the website and in promotional materials. A meeting participant suggested reaching out to a particular photographer who might be willing to provide their services at a reduced cost.

gave a “rough” estimate that such a re-design of the doorway might cost in the range of \$8000 to \$10,000 and take a few months to complete.

Regarding longer-term planning, Turner proposed consulting with wedding planners on the viability of RFH as a venue for wedding receptions. Turner and the architect have discussed what might be done about lighting for RFH to make it a more attractive location to host receptions. Richard Esposito suggested to Turner that he investigate having a sound system included in the cost estimate if All Souls is exploring the possibility of RFH being used for wedding receptions.

Mark Leeds made a motion that was seconded by Richard Esposito to authorize Howard Turner to (1) do a feasibility study on altering the doorway between Reidy Friendship Hall and the Forrest Church Gallery to allow storage of basketball hoops and other equipment used by FastBreak behind a curtain in the Forrest Church Gallery; and (2) to develop an estimate of the cost of that project. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Leeds made a second motion that was seconded by Li Yu to authorize Cecily Millen Elizondo and Mark Leeds to approach FastBreak as soon as possible about assuming the full cost of alterations to the doorway between Reidy Friendship Hall and the Forrest Church Gallery, and associated expenses. That motion passed by a vote of 5 to 3.

Cecily Millen Elizondo reported that FastBreak uses the FCG as, among other things, space for a dance program. Millen Elizondo also said that All Souls has reached 23% of its annual goal for rental revenue. She has secured a Hungarian school as a tenant to use classrooms on Saturdays.²

Millen Elizondo reported that the church had launched its Annual Giving campaign the previous week with the inclusion of envelopes for pledges included in the September 17th order of service. Millen Elizondo’s written report mentioned that 15 pledges had been received so far for this fiscal year and that in coming weeks she planned to contact 85 additional persons or families that had pledged last year about renewing their pledges. In response, Li Yu raised the issue of increasing the number of pledges for this year and asked what would be required to double the number of pledges to 200. Shivani Singh proposed that the Board could work with Rev.

² Millen Elizondo’s written report stated that the contract with the Hungarian school would generate \$18,750 of annual revenue.

Guengerich and Millen Elizondo to augment contributions from the church's second- and third-tier donors.

Nadira Shiwram-Singh has drafted a process for approving capital projects exceeding \$50,000. She read from the proposal that had been distributed before the meeting. Shivani Singh asked for clarification as to how All Souls defines "capital expenses." Shiwram-Singh indicated that capital expenses referred to non-routine building-related expenses. Shivani Singh suggested that in the future both operating and capital budgets should be published, and noted that keeping these budgets as separate as possible could help prevent future drawdowns from the endowment.

Deborah Taylor stated that she planned to give a significant presentation on needed capital projects at the next (October) meeting. Shiwram-Singh requested that that presentation be postponed until the November meeting because she is busy working on the annual audit. Shiwram-Singh and the Building Advisory Task Force (Taylor and Max Schneider)³ have been developing a capital budget that will identify projects that should be undertaken in the next 1 to 5 years, the next 5 to 10 years, and over a longer period.

The public portion of the meeting was adjourned at 1:56 p.m. The Board then went into executive session.

At the Executive Session, by a unanimous decision of the seven trustees present,⁴ the Board reaffirmed Jennifer Vermont-Davis's appointment to the Nominating Committee subject to her recusal from deliberations and voting on nominations for Clerk of the Society.

Addendum: In an executive session held in August 2023, new members for some Board committees were selected and new advisory committees were established by the Board. The new committees are entitled Religious Education/Adult Education Committee, Diversity Committee, Volunteerism Committee, Young Adults Committee, and Congregational Polity Committee. The Nominating Committee's membership is Judith Samuelson, Chair; Miles

³ Schneider is the owner's representative hired by All Souls to manage approved projects on a day-to-day basis and address emergencies that arise. He is working closely with Deborah Taylor of the Building Advisory Task Force.

⁴ Shivani Singh had left the meeting by the time of this decision.

Chapin; Jeong-A Kim; Karen Steele; Jennifer Vermont-Davis; Li Yu, *ex officio as trustee*. A full list of committees and their memberships is attached.

At an executive session of the Board held on August 1, 2023, Nadira and Galen presented the updated final FY 2023 actuals and the revised FY 2024. The Board approved the FY 2024 budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Hopkirk
Secretary to the Board

Existing Committees (as of September 2023)

Audit Committee

Shivani Singh, Co-chair and *ex officio* as trustee
Beryl Woodin-Jones, Co-chair and *ex officio* as trustee
Julie Brannan
Carol Kirkman
Paula Stelzner
Mark Leeds, *ex officio* as President

Finance Committee

Eric Lamm, Chair
Anne Bradley
Julie Brannan
David Poppe
Judith Samuelson
Rachel Ziemba
Elizabeth Wahab, *ex officio* as Treasurer
Mark Leeds, *ex officio* as President
Richard Esposito, *ex officio* as trustee
Matt Singh, *ex officio* as trustee

Investment Committee

David Poppe, Chair
Peter Dolan
George Dorsey
Tom Malone
Melanie Niemiec
Elizabeth Wahab, *ex officio* as Treasurer, bylaws mandated
Mark Leeds, *ex officio* as President, bylaws mandated

Nominating Committee

Judith Samuelson, Chair
Miles Chapin
Jeong-A Kim
Karen Steele
Jennifer Vermont-Davis
Li Yu, *ex officio* as trustee

Personnel Committee

Mark Leeds
Dixie Goss
Judith Moldover
Augustus Young
Li Yu

Building Advisory Task Force (BATF)

Deborah Taylor
Fritz Reuter
Howard Turner
Matt Singh, *ex officio* as trustee

New Committees Established by the Board

Religious Education/Adult Education Committee

Li Yu
Dixie Goss
Augustus Young

Diversity Committee

Beryl Jones-Woodin
Judith Moldover
Li Yu

Volunteerism Committee

Beryl Jones-Woodin
Judith Moldover
Dixie Goss

Young Adults Committee

Matt Singh
Li Yu

Congregational Polity Committee

Beryl Jones-Woodin
Shivani Singh