

Unitarian Church of All Souls
Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting
1157 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY
Sunday, January 21, 2024

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Church of All Souls was convened in the Forrest Church Gallery of the Church on January 21, 2024, at approximately 12:47 p.m.

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

Also present: Rev. Galen Guengerich (Senior Minister); Cecily Millen Elizondo (Director of Growth); Nadira Shiwram-Singh (Director of Finance and Administration); Arthur Hopkirk (Secretary to the Board).

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:47 p.m. and a reading was presented.

The minutes of the November 19, 2023, meeting of the Board were approved.

A trustee reported on voting procedures and the hybrid voting system to be used at the Annual Meeting scheduled for February 4, 2024. The hybrid system will permit voting both in person and remotely over the internet. The Board previously approved use of a hybrid voting system. The Board had a discussion last year to ensure that the voting procedures would comply with New York law.

The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) recommends the use of ElectionBuddy, a company that has successfully helped to run 200,000 elections in North America using electronic voting. The trustee and Cecily Millen Elizondo have had discussions with ElectionBuddy about the requirements for voting at the Annual Meeting and ensuring compliance with New York State law. ElectionBuddy has the capacity to allow for votes on motions from the floor of the meeting. The system has safeguards to ensure that no one votes more than once. Millen Elizondo has been inputting the email addresses of qualified voting members of the congregation and sending them to ElectionBuddy.

Arrangements are being made to allow congregants to vote at the Annual Meeting even if they make the required financial contribution in the period immediately

before the meeting. Millen Elizondo wants to encourage those attending the meeting in person to bring smartphones with them so that they can vote electronically and thereby streamline the voting process. For those who do not have smartphones at the meeting, kiosks will be set up to allow attendees to vote electronically. It will also be possible to cast votes by paper ballot. Those ballots will be manually inputted into ElectionBuddy's electronic system by Millen Elizondo. Her work will be observed by the Inspectors of Elections. Four deacons have volunteered to be Inspectors.

Before the date of the Annual Meeting, ElectionBuddy will run a mock vote with All Souls staff members to ensure that the system is running smoothly.

Rev. Galen Guengerich said that if Pamela Patton is ordained and becomes an Assistant Minister, she will be considered a staff person for purposes of salary and benefits. For those financial purposes, she will be in a comparable position to Nadira Shiwram-Singh, Cecily Millen Elizondo, and other senior staff members.

Trustees from the Interim Minister Search Committee gave a report. An interim minister would normally begin their service on August 1st of the year a vacancy arises. Since Rev. Guengerich will step down as Senior Minister effective at the end of 2024, there will be a period of 7 months before an interim minister would be available. The UUA recommends that All Souls have a "target ministry" from January 1, 2025 through July 31, 2025. Thereafter, an interim minister would serve for 1-to-2 years starting on August 1, 2025.

The person to become the "target minister" is proposed by the UUA. The All Souls Board of Trustees would decide whether to hire that person. Following the confidential work and recommendation of the Interim Minister Search Committee, the final decision to hire the interim minister is made by the Board.

In contrast, the search committee for a senior minister will be elected by members of the congregation. The decision to call a senior minister recommended by that committee is made by a vote of members of the congregation.

A trustee mentioned that it will be desirable for the Interim Minister Search Committee to begin holding listening circles and meetings with members of the congregation to get their input and explain the process leading up to the calling of a minister in 2026 or 2027. The search for an interim minister is expected to begin in January or February 2025. Once the interim minister begins their term at All Souls,

a “transitions team” will work with the congregation during the period leading up to the search for a called senior minister.

A motion was duly made and passed for the Board to pursue participation in the “target minister” program through the UUA.

Rev. Guengerich invited questions on a written report he had submitted before the meeting. Discussion of one question from a trustee was deferred until the executive session.

Millen Elizondo responded to questions about Annual Giving. Contributions to Annual Giving as of December 2023 are down by about \$200,000 from December 2022. The number of donors is down by perhaps 6 to 10 people. However, some of those had been major donors. There was discussion as to whether there was a need to review the budget in light of a possible shortfall. Rev. Guengerich said that he thought it was an open question as to whether some of those people who had not contributed yet will donate later in the fiscal year.

Millen Elizondo said she had had conversations recently with 6 mid-level donors, i.e., persons who had previously contributed between \$500 and \$2500 annually. Several of those people have agreed to increase their pledges for this fiscal year. Millen Elizondo has a small committee working with her on reaching out to mid-level donors and more meetings with such donors are planned. One trustee urged building the base of smaller donors. However, Millen Elizondo said the current priority is increasing contributions from mid-level donors.

Millen Elizondo announced that records were recently sent to donors for use in filing 2023 tax returns.

Rev. Guengerich reported that a contract had been signed with J.D. Klote & Associates to work with All Souls on a capital campaign, as authorized by the Board at its December 17, 2023 meeting. It is expected that a feasibility study will be conducted in Spring 2024.

On January 28, 2024, the forum for candidates for the Board of Trustees will be held. It will be followed by the Procrastinators Holiday Party, a social occasion featuring food and drink. Millen Elizondo said that wireless microphones will be used at the Candidates Forum. This is being done, in part, to improve the ability of persons watching the event online to hear what is being said.

The public portion of the meeting ended at about 1:40 p.m. The Board then met in executive session.

Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Hopkirk
Secretary to the Board