

West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church
2023 Annual Meeting Minutes
Sunday, May 21, 2023, 12:02 p.m. - 2:05 p.m.
Approved (with final corrections) August 23, 2023, 6:45 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Opening Words - Brian Gardner, Board of Trustees President

The annual meeting affirms the power of each individual church member to have a voice. Bylaw changes reflect changes in context of the pandemic aftermath, how we continue to move forward, and our dreams of what our church can become.

2. Brief Overview of Annual Meeting Protocol

This is the first time we've met in Baker Hall for our annual meeting since the pandemic began. Quorum requirements:

- 30% of current church members in attendance was required for bylaw changes = 134.
- 20% of current members required to affirm Justice Vision = 90.

3. Call for Quorum

Total members in attendance counted in person, via Zoom and by proxy = 134.
Quorum called by Brian Gardner.

4. Congregational Vote to Affirm the Justice Vision Roadmap

Kathy Kosiorek and Joan Clark presented an overview of the Justice Vision. The vision was presented to the Board of Trustees by the West Shore Justice Visioning Task Force in October 2022. The pamphlet outlines the direction for the congregation; it offers a road that's open to different directions and that the church can integrate in a way that gives everyone the opportunity to join in social justice work.

Brian Gardner moves that the congregation affirm the Proposed Vision for our Social Justice Program (Justice Vision Roadmap) as put forward by the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting. Dorothy Richards seconds. Affirmed by hand vote of more than 50% of those in attendance.

Consideration of bylaw changes and updates

5. Article III, Section 7: Quorum

Summary: The church bylaws specifically state that people can vote in different ways. Because prior language was so vague, it left it open to interpretation from year to year. The intent is for the process to be clear and consistent.

Floor amendment made changes to language, as proposed:

Twenty percent (20%) of the eligible voting Members *present in person, online, voting by proxy, or mail-in ballot*, constitutes a quorum, except for the following cases when the quorum shall be thirty percent (30%) of the Members....

Brian Gardner moved to accept changes to Article III Section 7 as presented by the Board of Trustees, and as amended at the annual meeting. Kathy Kosiorek seconded. Those in favor easily exceeded the threshold of 90. Specific vote count not tallied. Motion passed.

6. Pledge as Membership Requirement

Proposed Bylaw Change: ARTICLE II, Membership Section 2

CURRENT WORDING:

A Member is one who has affirmed a commitment to the Church by signing the Membership Book, and making a commitment to support the work of the Church. Members constitute the official roll for purposes of reporting Membership to the Unitarian Universalist Association.

PROPOSED REVISIONS:

A Member is one who has affirmed a commitment to the Church by signing the Membership Book, ~~and making a commitment to support the work of the Church~~ *commits to supporting the work of the church through their time, talent, and making an annual financial pledge as they are able*. Members constitute the official roll for purposes of reporting Membership to the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Open Discussion

In support:

- Proposal to add a clause that the financial commitment can be waived at discretion of senior minister
- Spirit of our principles may seem to go against requiring a pledge.... If it's not broken, don't fix it... it's not just an amendment for pledging, it affirms the work of the church. The pledge drive is a census of who members are, and their volunteer contributions as well. Time, talent and treasure....
- "As able" sets expectation for financial support, as they are able applies to the entire series of contributions.

In opposition:

- Financial support is implied in the original wording
- More comfortable, if it or making an annual non-binding pledge...
- This addition is too much like Mormon, Catholic and evangelical and other churches like that.

Brian Gardner moved to accept changes to Article II Membership Section 2 as presented by the Board of Trustees. Motion seconded by Elizabeth Garanzer

In person, zoom and proxy votes counted: 89 total votes, which was not a two thirds majority of quorum. The motion did not pass.

7. Adjustments to Finance Bylaws

In summary: These finance-related revisions are intended to be more logical, allow more flexibility, and clean up some of the bylaw language.

Brian Gardner proposed that we vote on all three of these bylaw changes at the same time.

Article VI: Board Officers, Section 4. Treasurer

CURRENT WORDING:

The Treasurer, in collaboration with the Church's financial manager, shall keep a complete and accurate account of the finances of the Church on books which are the Church's property and which are open for inspection at any reasonable time to any Member, and assures that a financial statement is provided to the Board at each regular Board Meeting and to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting (see Article III, Section 3). The Treasurer, who is appointed by the Board, serves as a non-voting advisor to the Board, unless serving as an elected Trustee simultaneously.

PROPOSED REVISIONS:

The Treasurer, in collaboration with the Church's *Finance Manager and Senior Minister*, shall *ensure that appropriate financial reports are* ~~keep a complete and accurate account of the finances of the Church on books which are the Church's property and which are open for inspection at any reasonable time to any Member, and assures that a financial statement is~~ provided to the Board at each regular Board Meeting and to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting (see Article III, Section 3). The Treasurer, who is *nominated* ~~appointed~~ by the *President for a 3 year term and approved by the* Board, serves as a non-voting advisor to the Board, unless serving as an elected Trustee simultaneously.

Article V: Board of Trustees, Section 6.

CURRENT WORDING:

No later than its regular meeting in June, the Board shall adopt a balanced budget for the new fiscal year. The Board may revise the budget as necessary after adoption. The financial books and records of the Church shall be examined annually by an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who shall render a reviewed financial statement with agreed upon procedures, as determined by a Church Finance Committee and the Board in consultation with the CPA. The reviewed statement shall be submitted to the Board for review and approval.

PROPOSED REVISIONS:

No later than its regular meeting in June, the Board shall adopt a balanced budget for the new fiscal year. The Board may revise the budget as necessary after adoption. The financial

books and records of the Church shall be examined annually by a *qualified independent third party accounting professional approved by the n-independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) who shall render a reviewed financial statement with agreed upon procedures, as determined by a Church Finance Committee and the Board in consultation with the CPA.* The *final report from the third party accountant reviewed statement* shall be submitted to the Board for review and approval.

The financial records of the Church are the Church's property, and are open for inspection at any reasonable time to any Member.

Article II: Membership, Section 3. Election and Appointment of Officers

CURRENT WORDING:

The incoming President appoints a Treasurer and Historian, with approval of the Board. These Officers are non-voting advisors to the Board, unless they are simultaneously serving as an elected Trustee.

PROPOSED REVISIONS:

The incoming President nominates ~~appoints~~ a Treasurer and Historian, with approval of the Board. ~~These~~The Historian and Treasurer ~~Officers~~ are non-voting advisors to the Board, unless they are simultaneously serving as an elected Trustee.

Brian Gardner moved to accept the changes to:

- 1) Article VI: Board Officers, Section 4,**
- 2) Article V: Board of Trustees, Section 6, and**
- 3) Article II: Membership, Section 3. Election and Appointment of Officers, as presented by the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting. Larry Wise seconded. In person, zoom and proxy votes counted. Proxy votes push total votes over 90. Motion passed.**

Bylaw change considerations concluded.

8. Senior Minister's Report - Reverend Anthony Makar, annual highlights at the conclusion of his fourth year as senior minister. These include:

- Adoption of the 8th Principle
- Collective Justice Vision was just approved.
- Year-long worship series around Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweet Grass*
- Earthfest in April, hosted local community groups and non-profit organizations
- Ongoing support and participation in Greater Cleveland Congregations (GCC)
- Stewardship-related Next Steps Weekend in February.
- Disruption of service in February, with a coordinated and effective response. We have since made and will make future improvements to campus security.
- Introduction of our Reproductive Justice Task Force
- PEACH support group for parents with estranged children.

- Sanctuary lighting fixed and Chancel screen lights operational on Easter.
- Volunteer Survey and opportunities for service.
- One area that's not seeing growth: Our intern minister search was not successful. There's a scarcity of interns interested in a parish setting.
- Member generosity is growing, for a decade the pledge drive was stuck around \$525,000. Has since grown to \$537,000, \$600,000. Still, pledging units are decreasing, and roster of members is declining. Dollars lead to changed lives.... People.
- We are looking forward to 2023-2024 with love, courage and cheer.

9. Incoming Nominating Committee and Board of Trustees members

To be in compliance with the church bylaws, as relates to incoming members of the Board, and the Nominating Committee members, 45 days notice is required for Slates of Incoming Candidates. Annual meeting bylaws were discussed.

Motion brought by the Board of Trustees to vote the slate of three incoming Nominating Committee members (Carol Sweet, April Stoltz and Rachel Modzelewski), and three new Board members (Matt LaWell, Kathy Little, Linda New).

Because of the 45-day notice requirement, a special meeting and vote was set for June 25, 2023, to vote on the nomination of Kelly Pinkas to fill a 2-year vacancy on the Board of Trustees.

[Council Reports canceled because of time.]

10. Treasurer's Report - Jen Wynn

- Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 Church total operating revenue budget \$858,919: Total expenses of \$898,163 = \$39,244 deficit.
- The Childcare Center has a separate balanced budget for FY23 of \$865,484, using CARES Act funds to cover operating expenses
- We're on track to be in much better shape for 2023-2024, and the Budget for 2023-2024 was approved in the shortest meeting ever.
- Introduction of Finance Committee activities, and a special thanks to the finance committee volunteers; Suehana Kieres, Finance Manager, and Hilary Beatrez, our independent accountant.

Adjournment

Brian Gardner Board president thanked everyone for their contributions and participation, and gavelled the 2023 annual meeting to a close.