

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY

Members of the Champlain Valley Unitarian Universalist Society are hereby warned of the 2024 Annual Meeting, which is to take place in person in the Sanctuary and also on Zoom on **Sunday, June 2, 2024**, following the 10am worship service.

MODERATOR: Robin Scheu

Quorum - 25% of 165 official members are needed = 41.25 (so 42). There were 57 members in attendance and 10 members via Zoom. Total = 67.

2024 Annual Meeting Minutes

I. Introduction of current Board of Trustees & Annual Meeting Moderator

Review of Hybrid (in person & on Zoom) meeting procedures

II. Our thanks to the CVUUS Staff!

III. VOTE to suspend the rules and allow our newest members to vote at this meeting

Moved - Liam Battjes Greenwood

Seconded Kate Gridley

Vote - Passed unanimously

IV. VOTE to approve minutes of **2023 Annual Meeting (Minutes attached to warning.)**

Moved - John Barstow

Seconded - Revell Allen

Discussion: A member thanked Kas, the clerk, for an excellent set of minutes. Kas graciously accepted the thanks.

Vote: Passed unanimously

VII. REPORTS: Board of Trustees: Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, *President*

Hannah Sessions, *Vice President*

- **Summary of 2023-24 Board activities** (Kerri)
- **Report on Ministerial Interim Position Share** (Hannah)

It was asked by the Board to move item VII to before item V. No objection was given. Clerk did not take notes on item VII as they are presentations of written reports already distributed with Annual Meeting 2024 warning - these documents are attached in the appendix of these minutes.

V. REPORT: Finance Team and Board of Trustees: Mary Conlon (Board Treasurer) **Treasurer's Report (Budget for congregational vote attached to warning)**

Clerk did not take notes on the report as it was submitted with documents with the Annual Meeting 2024 warning and attached to the appendix of these minutes. Explained history, who worked on it, and etc.

Steve Maier presented the long-term financial health report. The report will be on the website and in the blast as it was just completed on Friday, May 31, 2024. The report will be attached in the appendix of these minutes. Kas didn't take minutes due to having a written report.

Heidi Sulis presented a report on the Stewardship Campaign 2024. Felt it was a success by and large this year. Many individuals made significant

99 pledges totalling \$321,21.00

9 new families and individuals

11 others families/individuals were unable to participate this year that had participated last year.

Hoping for pledges from 10 more by the end of summer which will hopefully yield around \$10,000 more.

VOTE: Approval of Budget for July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

Moved - Paul Stone moved as presented

Seconded - Abi Sessions

Discussion:

1. Treasurer presented about this year's (2023-2024) budget - projection of year end actual budget through June 30, 2024 as of end of March, 2024 - \$385,920 was budget approved last year.
 - a. Income is mostly on target - with building use and non-pledged gifts ahead of pledges.
 - b. Expenses are below budget because we budgeted for a full-time minister, but our contract ministers are at 75% FTE. But expended money in other areas to help the decrease in ministerial support (i.e. communications, etc).
 - c. Projecting \$10,000 surplus by year end.
 - d. Budget approved last year included the potential to withdraw \$12,000 from savings, if needed. We have not needed to do that, which is the first time in a number of years that we have not needed to do that.
2. Balance sheet:
 - a. Interest rate went up so we accrued \$4500 through April this year - not anticipated.
 - b. In Fall we moved \$50,000 into a Vanguard ESG fund - from that fund we are at \$61,000 as of 3/31/24. NOTE: It will go up and down with the market so bear in mind.
 - c. Mortgage is \$445,623 (as of 3/31/24), down from \$468,855 at 6/30/23
 - d. Mortgage rate is locked in at 4.25% until February 2026.
3. CVUUS Board is asking the congregation for an approval of a 2024-2025 Budget of \$388,259.06.
 - a. Some points about the 2024-2025 budget were highlighted - it is attached in the appendix so notes not extensive:
 - i. All of this is a PROJECTION basically since it's not realized yet.
 - ii. It was reinforced not having to withdraw from savings.
 - iii. Anticipation of interest income that will increase for next year not included
 - iv. VT/Quebec Conference gave over \$900 to CVUUS not included
 - v. Salaries:
 1. 3 staff salaries were not meeting mid-point of UUA's guidelines
 2. 24-25 salaries got a 3% COLA for permanent staff
 3. Health Insurance - used a new method of calculating health insurance that is more equitable and fulfills legal requirements we weren't previously though this doesn't impact budget much.
 4. Communications Assistant was added
 5. Guest musicians: increase to \$6200 from \$3200 to allow flexibility in the music program

- a. Don't know who will be Music Director and what skill they will have.
 - 6. Ministerial Internship - is just a one year position but a place holder in the budget (due to ministerial situation)
 - 7. RE - after reviewing offerings and hours of comparable size congregations - reduced salary and operating budget
 - 8. Flower Budget -small increases to Flower Buds, Landscaping and Small Group Ministry. And a \$2,000 increase to the Social Action Committee budget.
- vi. Reasons to feel really good about financial health at CVUUS currently and for future but there are areas that need improvement:
 - 1. Building Reserve needs rebuilt
 - 2. Maintenance of building costs
 - 3. Growing our endowment for long-term stability
- 4. Member asked for clarity on the transfer in of designated funds
 - a. A gift toward doing our monthly mortgage
 - b. Holding as designated also the grants that we've received from the VT-Quebec Conference
- 5. Asked clarification on whether the unreported interest income was included yet - it wasn't yet.
- 6. A Member asked what is the VT-Quebec Conference and how it generates money?
 - a. An explanation was provided by Doug Richards.
 - b. Essentially they propose a percentage of the fund (a sustained investment that is managed so it doesn't run out) to distribute that fund to the various members of this Conference.
- 7. A member asked clarity on blank spaces in the year-end projections such as the Health & Safety Committee and the Green Sanctuary committee - do we need the money for them and if we don't then can that money be shifted elsewhere?
 - a. Lise Anderson spoke on the Green Sanctuary Committee. It has transitioned to a Climate Action and Social Action group that has not requested any money and won't so it could go back to the budget to be allocated as needed.
 - b. Alan talked about Health and Safety COmmittee (known as the Safety Committee) and will continue.
 - c. Landscape Committee will use the funds that is listed so far but it's usually spend late spring early summer due to when landscaping can happen.
 - d. Some explanatory comments were given on why the budget is set up as it is on the sheets.
- 8. Asked about the reduction in the RE Director and BUdget and how it will impact us.
 - a. Rev. Tricia addressed the question - this change came up rather late so we haven't had a chance to address this yet but we will.
 - b. We will gather people including the financial and personnel committee and other stakeholders to discuss what this impact will be and how it will play out.
 - c. Hannah Sessions shared her research of RE Directors and programs of similar sized UU congregations to CVUUS that was used to come to the decision to reduce the DRE and what the programs offered (a majority did not include Adult RE though some did). The majority only offered 20 hours per week for the DRE.
 - d. A friend commented on concerns:
 - i. The comparable positions were open not current
 - ii. And we couldn't find the information in the executive summary - had to hunt to find it so

- iii. \$4500 being reduced from RE but others being increased - and felt that having all the stakeholders involved before these decisions should have been made.
 - 1. Clarified the reduction in hours was in the Executive summary
 - 2. Clarifying statement that if we leave DRE as is it will add an additional \$8000 to the budget.
 - e. Margy Young moved to amend to the budget to apply \$3200 to be moved to the DRE salary budget from the following areas and to increase:
 - i. Green Sanctuary Committee of \$200
 - ii. Health & Safety Committee of \$600
 - iii. Increase in the small group ministry of \$300
 - iv. Increase of the Social Action Program of \$2100
 - f. Elio seconded.
 - i. Since the above amendment is not changing the bottom line we do not need to address it at this point.
 - g. Motion by Tracy Harrington and Gina Seconded to amend the budget to add the \$4500 in interest income to the bottom line budget.
 - i. Discussion:
 - 1. A member pointed out that the anticipated \$12,000 decrease in pledges needs to be added to the bottom line based on the amended motion plus some questions asking for clarification on increase in actual expenses this year and will those continue for next year.
 - 2. A member is concerned that with all the added incomes and removing anticipated losses means that we need to be as responsible as we can and realize the numbers now.
 - 3. A member is extremely concerned about diminishing the hours of a 'very capable staff person' - and we as a congregation are having big changes currently and so not wanting to have to cut the DRE hours cut - feels very strongly about this. But they are confused on how to vote.
 - 4. It was clarified that \$4500 added to the bottom line is the only motion on the floor.
- Vote:
- Yea - 30
- Nay - 20
- Abstain - 6 abstain
- Motion carried.
- h. A member asked for clarity on what we just voted on and that the congregation only votes on the bottom line - not on individual line items. The above vote doesn't mean the bottom line was actually changed as it was only added to the income line item NOT the overall budget - the amount will be adjusted on the expense side. The board determines what to spend where on the individual line items. Board can and will obtain recommendations from the congregation
 - i. Jean Terwillger moved that we reduce the overall budget bottom line to reduce the expenditures by \$7500. (The difference between the \$12,000 pledge shortfall minus the \$4500 interest income). Avi Freund seconded.
 - i. Discussion: A member asked to clarify that we actually did vote to increase the revenue by \$4500 which actually put us at an unbalanced budget.

- ii. It was suggested rather than do specific numbers - direct the board to amend budget responsibly to try not to reduce the compensation of staff.
- iii. A board member explained that the board has had these same discussions and it was not an easy decision but we have to address what the issue is.
- iv. Another member is against this new amendment. But would rather direct the board to do what it is necessary to balance the budget with individual line items.
- v. Another member is against this and would not want to cut the budget.
- vi. Another member retracted a statement about the DRE position.
- vii. Treasurer stressed the additional gifts - the influence of non-pledge gifts and they are increasing - pledge drive income is \$342,000 but can't put a number on anticipated non-pledge gifts as we don't have those.
- viii. Jean is willing to withdraw the motion and Avi is willing to agree.
- ix. Now back to the original motion of passing the bottom line as was presented (\$388,259.06).
 - 1. Clarification of previous amendment of adding \$4500 to expense line now being added to revenue - so are we approving the presented budget with a small surplus.

Vote on Original motion:

Yeas - All

Nays - 0

Abstain - 0

Motion carried

Asked if needed further discussion on direction to the board regarding staff reduction? Yes, some just reinforced that the Board should consider not reducing DRE hours.

Some more commentary and a bit of heated discussion on those comments - Secretary didn't record all as not new topics.

VI. REPORT and VOTE: Nominating Committee

Nominating Committee Report/Slate

Mike Greenwood will Present

Board of Trustees

VOTE for Members of the Board of Trustees (3-year term) Proposed Slate:

- Margy Young (First full term: July 1, 2024-June 30, 2027)
- Llyn Rice (First full term: July 1, 2024-June 30, 2027)

Asked for nominations on the floor. Steve Maier moved to close nominations and Elise Anderson seconded

Yeas - All

Nays - 0

Abstain - 0

Motion carried

Continuing Board of Trustees members

- Hannah Sessions (First full term: July 1, 2022- June 30, 2025)

- Kerri Duquette-Hoffman (Second Term: July 1, 2022- June 30, 2025)
- Alan Moore (First full Term, July 1, 2022-June 30, 2025)
- Mary Conlon (First term July 1, 2023- June 30, 2026)
- Brett Millier (First Term July 1, 2023- June 30, 2026)

VOTE for Officers of the Board of Trustees Proposed Slate:

- Hannah Sessions, President (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 - completing vacated term)
- Brett Millier, Vice President (July 1, 2024- June 30, 2025 - completing vacated term)
- Kerri Duquette-Hoffman, Secretary (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 - completing vacated term)
- Mary Conlon, Treasurer (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2026)

Steve Maier moved to close nominations and Lise Anderson seconded

Yeas - All

Nays - 0

Abstain - 0

Motion carried

Nominating Committee

VOTE for Nominating Committee Member (2-year term) Proposed Slate

- Doug Richards (Two-year Term: July 1, 2024-June 30, 2026)

Rich Wolfson moved to close nominations and Steve Maier seconded

Yeas - All

Nays - 0

Abstain - 0

Motion carried

NOTE: Moderator had to leave so Kerri Duquette-Hoffman took over

VIII. RECOGNITIONS-thank you!

- Doug Richards and Kas Singh for their service to the Board and the Congregation
- Ronnie Romano, for his service to the Congregation as Director of Music, 2021-2023
- And of course--***all of you!***

IX. OTHER BUSINESS that may regularly come before this meeting.

1. Jordan Young moved to encourage the board to increase the DRE back to 24 hrs/Dee Carroll seconded.
 - a. Discussion
 - b. A member asked that we separate the person from the position. And that the Department of Labor is bringing about changes in requiring part-time workers log hours and they get paid overtime to those who work more than they are hired to work. And that Poppy will be kept employed though maybe those hours are not only for DRE position.
 - c. A member has an issue with 'direct the board' in the motion as the Board makes the decisions on the details of the line items regardless - there are many mitigating factors in these decisions and it's the board's job to make these decisions.
 - d. Jordan rephrased amendment that the Board make efforts to readjust the DRE position in light of the earlier discussion and amendments. Avi Freund seconded.
 - e. Some thanked for the rewording

- f. A member clarified that the Finance Committee and the Board looked hard and had lots of discussions and it was a difficult decision and not taken lightly.
- g. A member reinforced these are not easy solutions and how this feels from his point of view.
- h. Another member pointed out their conflict came out that there seemed to be many increases and the only decrease was the DRE which is the last place this member would make the reduction. So disagrees with board's decision.
- i. A member brought up the congregation is aging and that we need to engage the younger generation so keeping the DRE budget is one way to keep it going.
- j. Staff member says what attracts people is the relative view of youth and our importance on it. But hears us and knows we have to adjust to financial reality. Also was feeling like there wasn't advance notice and that process of the budget decisions could involve the office manager more as she can see some inconsistencies. Read a thank you card from Addison County Mental Health for our lovely space. They reinforced that the CVUUS congregation and board is amazing and is glad to be a part of you.
- k. A member shared what moved him to join was our ministry to children as stated by Poppy: "Poppy said the best ministry we do is to children."
- l. Another member mentioned that in the 36 years of budget issues we've faced we've always maintained and even grew the RE program. Urge the board.
- m. Another member brought up that Poppy has been doing this on her own - no RE council and lack of volunteers so it's on the CVUUS community to make up that shortfall if it's so important.
- n. A zoom member reinforced the importance of RE program.
- o. A member spoke against this motion - said that we are all talking as if we are eliminating the RE Program but we are merely reducing the hours from 24 to 20 hours per week.
- p. Question is called.
VOTE:
Yea - all others
Nay -
Abstain 1

VOTE to amendment:

Yea - 23

Nay - 21

Abstain - 5

Motion Carries

- 2. A comment to help with this issue is to raise our pledges - it's easy to suggest but can be hard individually maybe. Used a tool that the Burlington UU church used to help increase their pledges. Look into our hearts to see what we can do.
- 3. A member said that this is what our democracy looks like even though it is painful

X. ADJOURNMENT

Brett Millier moved to close and Alan Moore seconded

VOTE: Passed unanimously.