

Minutes

Congregational Meeting (virtual, via Zoom) Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship

November 15, 2020

Board Members Attending: Murray Bennett (**President**), Bharti Kirchner (**Vice-President**), Rod Haynes, David Curley, Melissa Swift, Debbie Boots, Henry Ohana, Sarah Pearson, John Stewart (**Secretary**), Paul Beckel (**Minister**)

Also present: Sky Hedman (**Treasurer**)

Minutes by John Stewart, Secretary.

Quorum confirmed, with at least 97 members accounted for based on chat-window check-ins, which exceeds the minimum of 20% of membership (49 members) required.

1. Call to order (1:07pm) – Murray Bennett
2. Chalice lighting and opening words, Murray Bennett
3. **Proposed meeting procedural changes**, for this meeting only (full text appended below)
 1. Debbie Boots moved that we accept proposed meeting changes
 2. Claire Lending seconded.
 3. Q&A, discussion period
 4. Zoom poll utilized for voting, with acknowledgement of the limitations (such as phone-in attendees not being accounted for). However, the votes for Approval were unanimous, overcoming any such limitations.
Motion passed.
4. **Presented minutes from Congregational Meeting** (May 31,2020) for approval
 1. There were no questions or discussion.
 2. Was included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded.
5. **Presentation of Proposed Revised Budget (and Discussion)** - Sky Hedman, Treasurer.
 - BUF's building is closed to the public, most likely through June 2021, which reduces BUF's income.
 - Income
 - Rental income is close to \$0.
 - Mayfaire income reduced to what can be raised through an online auction.
 - Pledges and donations increased, reflecting the generosity of members, friends, visitors.
 - Covid grants less than forecast.
 - Expenses
 - Programs reduced due to building closure.
 - Mortgage interest decreased.
 - Building maintenance, utilities, custodial decreased,
 - Sunday services (technical) increased

- Program expense reduced.
 - Hourly workers adjusted.
 - Withdrawals from reserves are increased.
 - What is preserved:
 - Permanent staff salaries/benefits
 - Sunday morning and Taize services.
 - Small group activities
 - Support for SEJC allies
 - UUA
 - Our greatest resources
 - Culture of generosity
 - Caring and resilient community
 - BUF continues to thrive.
 - There were no questions or discussion.
 1. John Stewart moved that we adopt proposed revised budget.
 2. Michael Betz seconded.
 3. Was included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded.
7. **Presentation of COVID policy** - Murray Bennett, President, for the COVID Task force.
1. COVID Task Force mandated by Board to develop and implement COVID-related policies and procedures.
 - i. Task Force is made up of Paul Beckel, two Board members – Murray Bennett and Bharti Kirchner, two members of the Operations Team – Deb Cruz and Kathy Wahto, and a physician – Ken Gass. And has been meeting weekly since mid-September.
 - ii. Policies and procedures as strict as or stricter than County and State requirements.
 2. Task force will communicate with the congregation to ensure that all activities are in line with policies and procedures.
 3. Will consider requests for non-BUF activities.
 4. We do not expect BUF to reopen while County is in Phase 2.
 5. BUF will enter Phase 3 when declared by County and when BUF can meet all requirements. Phase 4 is in the distant future.
 6. Building & Grounds Committee (Jim Reimer) exploring means to increase building safety – improving ventilation and air quality.
 7. Will only react to a vaccine when it becomes available.
 8. No questions or discussion.
8. **Presentation of the 8th Principle Resolution**, 8th Principle Team. (Text of original resolution appended below)

- Beginning in December 2019, a team of representatives from BUF's Black Lives Matter, Native American Connections, Immigration Rights teams, the BUF/C2C Partnership team and SEJC was brought together. Also engaged with the Healthy Relationships Team to help with facilitating the resolution process.
- Two goals to accomplish:
 - To honor and hold up the UU communities of color request to bring anti-racism understandings and actions to a more prominent position within UU consciousness as written and adopted in their own language and
 - To have BUF, as a whole congregation, acknowledge the critical importance of engaging in direct and accountable anti-racism and anti-oppression work and the building of a diverse, multicultural Beloved Community within BUF and within its sphere of influence.
- If approved, the passed resolution will then be forwarded onto the UUA's Article II Study Commission for consideration as it reviews the UUA's Principles and Purposes called out in its bylaws.
- If approved, the passed resolution will see BUF become engaged in anti-racism efforts whether implementing the Board goals of a couple of years ago, the activities and goals created by the Beloved Conversations teams and/or other potential ideas that come to mind as we begin our journey in earnest.

Q & A, discussion period with engaged extensive discussion and questions.

Amendments:

1. Amendment proposed by Rory McLeod, seconded by Jeff Copeland (text of amendment appended below)

- Q & A, discussion period.
- Question to end debate and proceed to voting on amendment passed.
- Amendment passed.

2. Amendment proposed by Lew Phinney, seconded by Andrew Shoneberg (text of amendment appended below)

- Q & A, discussion period.
- Question to end debate and proceed to voting on amendment passed.
- Amendment did not pass.

The 8th Principle Resolution, as amended, was included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded. The full text of the amended resolution is appended below.

- Question to end debate and proceed to voting on the 8th Principle Resolution, as amended passed.

9. Instructions for online voting (or call-in voting) - ballot will be active/open until 5:45pm

10. Closing reading (Murray Bennett)

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Ballot Results from Online Voting: *(certified by John Stewart, Secretary, on November 15, 2020)*

Minutes from 2020 Congregational Meeting - **Approved**

Proposed Revised Budget for 2020/2021 – **Approved**

Proposed 8th Principle Resolution, as amended - **Approved**

Attachments:

- Proposed meeting procedural changes
- 8th Principle Resolution
- Amendment proposed by Rory McLeod
- Amendment proposed by Lew Phinney
- 8th Principle Resolution, as amended and adopted

Proposed procedure for the Special Congregational Meeting

Annual meetings are to be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order. We will be conducting the meeting using the Zoom teleconferencing app which adds considerable constraint when attempting to run an orderly meeting. With this in mind, the first order of business will be to adopt a set of rules to be followed for the remainder of the meeting.

We will ask that questions, comments, etc be typed into Chat. They will read aloud by the Chat moderator, and then discussed by the presenter. This system worked well at the Annual Meeting in May. However, we are aware that some longer comments and questions might be difficult to type into Chat and that it may be better in these cases if people speak. We have not finalized plans on this yet. Be aware that if we enable this option, speakers will be limited to two minutes, or some relatively short time.

Voting

Votes on all items will be taken via an electronic form, or by phone for those who do not have internet access.

Voting will be permitted only during a two hour window immediately following the meeting adjournment.

Absentee voting is not permitted, as per the Bylaws. On the election voting form each member will need to attest to having been present

The voting form will have been prepared in advance of the meeting

8th Principle Resolution

Whereas: White supremacy perpetuates the assumption that white people and their culture are superior to other races, and those in power use this assumption to dominate others and to serve their economic, political and social interests;

Whereas: White supremacy and colonialism have had adverse impacts: on indigenous people, beginning with the Doctrine of Discovery; on subjugated African peoples rooted in the transatlantic slave trade; on dominated and exploited Hispanic and Latinx peoples, beginning with the "discovery of the Americas" and on other historical colonization and domination events; and on other communities of color through discrimination, subjugation and exploitation.

Whereas: Domination and supremacy also manifest beyond race to other groups based upon such characteristics as ability, age, ethnicity, education, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, and religious affiliation.

Whereas: The UUA Seven Principles are intended to affirm and promote worth, dignity, interconnectedness, justice, acceptance, and equity. Despite these Principles, white supremacy and privilege endures and UUs have been unable to establish the necessary institutional change.

Whereas: Oppressive systems and actions violate the human dignity of both the oppressed and the oppressor, hindering deeper and more genuine relationships for everyone. The result has been that marginalized communities continually remind BUF that it has not followed through on promises to be diverse, inclusive and equitable.

Whereas: Our UU Principles guide us to an ideal of Beloved Community as a faith-based guide to our thoughts, words, and practices in:

- Journeying toward spiritual wholeness as individuals who seek right relationships based on honesty, trust, mutual respect, and love, and who are willing to re-examine habitual expressions of prejudice and exclusion.
- Journeying towards right relationships as members of the BUF community by practicing radical hospitality with all people including those with different races, abilities, genders, sexual expressions, gender orientations, educations and experiences, ethnicities and traditions, and socio-economic classes.
- Journeying towards truth-telling and accountability and justice, equity and peace in relations in BUF, and in our wider community by re-centering:
 - truth-telling and accountability by seeking out and listening carefully to the experience, wisdom, and leadership of people that historically have been oppressed or marginalized; and
 - justice, equity and peace by identifying forms of domination, oppression and exploitation in BUF and in our wider communities, and by working to achieve just and equitable alternatives.

Therefore, we resolve to adopt and implement the Eighth Principle which states that:

“We, a member congregation 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.

Amendment Proposed by Rory McLeod

Amendment to the Eighth Principle Resolution

Change the *Resolve* statement from:

Therefore, we resolve to adopt and implement the ***Eighth Principle*** which states that:

to:

Therefore, we resolve to adopt and implement the ***Covenant of Beloved Community*** which states that:

Amendment proposed by Lew Phinney

Proposed amendment to 8th Principle Resolution

Delete some words and add other words such that the new (complete) resolution would be: "We commit to work to build a diverse multicultural community and to dismantle racism and other oppressions in ourselves and in our communities."

8th Principle Resolution, as amended

Whereas: White supremacy perpetuates the assumption that white people and their culture are superior to other races, and those in power use this assumption to dominate others and to serve their economic, political and social interests;

Whereas: White supremacy and colonialism have had adverse impacts: on indigenous people, beginning with the Doctrine of Discovery; on subjugated African peoples rooted in the transatlantic slave trade; on dominated and exploited Hispanic and Latinx peoples, beginning with the "discovery of the Americas" and on other historical colonization and domination events; and on other communities of color through discrimination, subjugation and exploitation.

Whereas: Domination and supremacy also manifest beyond race to other groups based upon such characteristics as ability, age, ethnicity, education, class, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression, and religious affiliation.

Whereas: The UUA Seven Principles are intended to affirm and promote worth, dignity, interconnectedness, justice, acceptance, and equity. Despite these Principles, white supremacy and privilege endures and UUs have been unable to establish the necessary institutional change.

Whereas: Oppressive systems and actions violate the human dignity of both the oppressed and the oppressor, hindering deeper and more genuine relationships for everyone. The result has been that marginalized communities continually remind BUF that it has not followed through on promises to be diverse, inclusive and equitable.

Whereas: Our UU Principles guide us to an ideal of Beloved Community as a faith-based guide to our thoughts, words, and practices in:

- Journeying toward spiritual wholeness as individuals who seek right relationships based on honesty, trust, mutual respect, and love, and who are willing to re-examine habitual expressions of prejudice and exclusion.
- Journeying towards right relationships as members of the BUF community by practicing radical hospitality with all people including those with different races, abilities, genders, sexual expressions, gender orientations, educations and experiences, ethnicities and traditions, and socio-economic classes.
- Journeying towards truth-telling and accountability and justice, equity and peace in relations in BUF, and in our wider community by re-centering:
 - truth-telling and accountability by seeking out and listening carefully to the experience, wisdom, and leadership of people that historically have been oppressed or marginalized; and
 - justice, equity and peace by identifying forms of domination, oppression and exploitation in BUF and in our wider communities, and by working to achieve just and equitable alternatives.

Therefore, we resolve to adopt and implement the Covenant of Beloved Community which states that:

“We, a member congregation 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.