

Minutes
Congregational Meeting (virtual, via Zoom) Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship
May 23, 2021

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

Board Members Absent (excused): Debbie Boots

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

Minutes by John Stewart, Secretary.

Quorum confirmed, with at least 67 members accounted for based on chat-window check-ins, which exceeds the minimum of 20% of membership (49 members) required.

- Call to order (1:03 pm) – Murray Bennett
- Chalice lighting and opening words, Murray Bennett.
- **Proposed meeting procedural changes**, for this meeting only (full text appended below)
 - Lee Seaman moved that we accept proposed meeting changes
 - Rick Steele seconded.
 - Q&A, discussion period
 - 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.
- **Presented minutes from November 15, 2020 Special Congregational Meeting** for approval
 - There were no questions or discussion.
 - Minutes were included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded.
- **Annual Report:** Murray Bennett (President) provided an overview of activities and accomplishments at BUF from the past year, mentioning in particular the amount of volunteer hours and energy that have gone into mitigating the effects of the pandemic and keeping BUF vital ever since we closed our building in March, 2020. Among other important activities, Murray reported:
 - The Fellowship voted to adopt the Covenant of Beloved Community. As a result of that commitment, the Fellowship has implemented several programs:
 1. Widening the Circle: very broadly, is a program to increase our awareness of White Supremacy culture and our role in it.

2. Action for Beloved Community, or ABC. The mission of Action for Beloved Community is to engage BUF in social action toward actualizing Beloved Community through collaboration of BUF and students. At the moment they are working on two projects. One project is a scholarship for the Call Me Mister program being launched at the University of South Florida for Black men wanting to be teachers. The other project is a mentorship partnership with the Education and Social Justice Minor and/or the Family and Community Engaged Teaching) Program at Western Washington University.
- Deb Cruz had intended to submit a resolution to this meeting. She hoped that BUF would resolve to add a signature to a petition that is going to the governors of Washington, Oregon, and California, and to the premier of British Columbia, the lands which border the marine territory of the Southern Resident Orcas. It asks that the governors and the premier to, first, acknowledge a number of items, and second, urges them to undertake some actions. Unfortunately, Deb could not get all the information she needed in time to submit a resolution – resolutions must be presented to the Board 60 days or more before the meeting. Furthermore, the petition had to be signed by May 24th, tomorrow, so it cannot simply be presented at the next congregational meeting. So, to finally get to the point. In situations like this our bylaws empower the Minister and Board to bypass the requirement for a congregational meeting. The Board, with Paul in accord, voted unanimously that BUF should be a signatory to the petition. And so, as President of the Board of Trustees, I signed the petition on behalf of BUF. A copy of the petition is attached.
 - **Board of Trustees election:** Barbara Gilday (Nominating Committee Chair)

The process of selecting nominees began in January with consultation with the Board for their perceived needs, brainstorming within the committee and discussions with members of the congregation. For the first time, a request was made in the Mid-Week Update for members interested in joining the Board. Video interviews and written bios for the three new Board nominees were shared with the congregation prior to this meeting. Voting will be done via online ballot, after the meeting. Nominees are:

 - Daria Haynes
 - Drew Betz
 - Alex Gilman
 - Sarah Pearson moved that we accept the slate of nominees
 - Kaitlin Davis seconded.
 - Approval of nominees was included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded.
 - Thank yous to departing Board members (Murray, Rod, David)
 - Nominating Committee Election. members are staying on (but they need to be voted in every year, so they are on the ballot). Nominees are:
 - Barbara Gilday
 - Jeff Copeland

- Ann Lackland
 - David Curley
 - Annie Sorich
1. Ken Gass moved that we accept the slate of nominees
 2. Michael Berres seconded.
 3. Approval of nominees was included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded.
 4. Thank you to retiring Nominating Committee member (Claire Lending)
- **Presentation of Proposed Budget (and Discussion) - Sky Hedman, Treasurer.**
 - The complete proposed 2021-2022 budget had been presented ahead of the meeting, so it was not presented in full during the meeting. Sky presented an overview of the budget and provided details of how the pandemic had affected BUF's financial situation in the current budget year, and the assumptions that were made when planning ahead for the next budget year. Since there are many unknowns, BUF may likely hold another Congregational Meeting in Fall 2020 to refine the budget.
 - Lee Seaman moved that we adopt proposed revised budget.
 - Michael Berres seconded.
 - Approval of the budget was included in online ballot to be voted on after meeting concluded.

9. Instructions for online voting (or call-in voting) - ballot will be active/open until 4:15pm

10. Closing reading (Murray Bennett)

Meeting adjourned at 3:40 pm.

Ballot Results from Online Voting: (certified by John Stewart, Secretary, on May 23, 2021)

Minutes from November 15 2020 Special Congregational Meeting - **Approved**

Proposed Budget for 2021/2022 – **Approved**

Board of Trustees Approved (All)

- Daria Haynes
- Drew Betz
- Alexander Gilman

Nominating Committee Approved (All)

- Barbara Gilday

- Jeff Copeland
- Ann Lackland
- David Curley
- Annie Sorich

Attachments:

- Proposed meeting procedural changes
- Call to Bring Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut Home

Proposed procedure for the Annual 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

Call to Bring Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut Home

We, the undersigned, in representing ourselves, our memberships, and/or our constituencies, support the Lhaq'temish (Lummi) effort to bring Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut home and, further, call upon the Governors of Washington, Oregon, and California, and the Premier of British Columbia, the lands of which border the marine territory of the Southern Resident Orcas, to jointly sign a Proclamation that would acknowledge that:

- The Southern Resident Orcas of Xw'ullemmy (the Salish Sea bioregion) are a unique and iconic population, holding significant spiritual and cultural value for people in this region and throughout the world.
- The Lhaq'temish people of Lummi Nation, like many Coast Salish peoples, have lived in reciprocal relationship with the orcas since time immemorial. The Lummi term for orca is "qwe'lhol'mechen," which means, "people under the water." Western science is now aligned with traditional Indigenous knowledge that orcas are indeed much like people, in possessing tremendous intelligence, language, complex societies, culture, and capacity for love.
- Ancestral teachings hold that the Southern Resident Orcas and the Lhaq'temish people are family. In order to reaffirm these kinship bonds, the Lummi held a traditional naming ceremony for the Southern Resident Orcas, bestowing upon them the family name "Sk'aliCh'elh."
- The life of each and every member of Sk'aliCh'elh is extremely precious, as this critically endangered population is down to 75 orcas.
- In August of 1970, Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut, whose name means "daughter of Sk'aliCh'elh," was one of over 50 young orcas violently stolen from the Salish Sea and sold to aquariums. She is the last remaining Southern Resident Orcas to be held in captivity.
- For over 50 years, Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut (also called "Tokitae" and "Lolita" in captivity) has been held at Miami Seaquarium in the world's smallest orca tank, subjected to cruel and unnatural conditions, including relentless sun and heat, extreme social isolation, and exposure to dangerous hurricanes.
- It is the Xa xalh Xechnging (sacred obligation) of Elders and others within the Lummi Nation to bring Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut home. A Lummi Nation Motion to bring Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut home was passed in 2017.
- Building upon the Lummi Nation Motion, in 2018 the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians passed Resolution #18-32, calling on Governor Inslee and Washington State legislators to

support her return and actively work with representatives from Lummi Nation to secure any state permits that might be required. <https://bit.ly/3clM1eI>

- The international legal norm established by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples reaffirms the inherent right of the Lummi People and the sovereign Nation to conserve, protect, and steward their current and traditional territory, including the Salish Sea, its ecosystems, and species.
- A Statement of Solidarity for Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut has been signed by Indigenous leaders worldwide, and continues to gather signatories. <https://bit.ly/3uo8DH9>
- The current effort builds on decades of prior lawsuits and campaigns to return Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut home. Over 600,000 people have signed petitions calling for her release. Since 2017, Lummi ceremonies, actions, and totem pole journeys have further garnered international attention and support. <https://bit.ly/3sXgSd2>
- Leading experts, under the guidance of Lummi cultural advisors, have developed a comprehensive plan to safely and responsibly bring Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut home to the Salish Sea, where she will receive ongoing care by a dedicated team of veterinarians, scientists, and Lummi spiritual/cultural advisors.

We further urge the Governors and Premier of our Southern Resident Orca territories to:

- Support and endorse the efforts being coordinated by representatives of the Lummi Nation to return Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut to her Salish Sea home.
- Call upon Miami Seaquarium, Festival Fun Parks (DBA Palace Entertainment), Parques Reunidos and EQT to agree to negotiate the terms and conditions for Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's release from Miami Seaquarium and safe return to her natal waters; and
- Work with representatives of the Lummi Nation and other relevant entities to secure any state permits that might be required for the return and rehabilitation of Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut and her reunion with her human and Orca family.