

Minutes
Congregational Meeting (virtual, via Zoom) Bellingham Unitarian Fellowship
July 18, 2021

Board Members Attending: Drew Betz, Alex Gilman, Daria Hayes, Bharti Kirchner (**Vice-President**), Henry Ohana, Sarah Pearson, John Stewart (**Secretary**), Melissa Swift, Paul Beckel (**Minister**)

Also present: Sky Hedman (**Treasurer**), Kathy Wahto (**Administrator**)

Minutes by John Stewart, Secretary.

Quorum confirmed, with at least 85 members accounted for based on chat-window check-ins, which exceeds the minimum of 20% of membership (48 members) required.

- Call to order (12:00 pm) – Bharti Kirchner
- Chalice lighting and opening words, Bharti Kirchner.
- **Meeting procedural changes for standard Robert’s Rules of Order**, for this meeting only.
 - Comments limited to 2 minutes.
 - Google poll utilized for voting after the meeting, with acknowledgement of the limitations and how those limitations would be mitigated (such as phone-in and emailed votes being accommodated).
- **Presented minutes from May 25, 2021 Annual Congregational Meeting** for approval
 - There were no questions or discussion.
 - Minutes were included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded.
- **Presented proposal to spent up to \$38,000 for the purpose of upgrading the ventilation system of the BUF building. This project is to be funded from our Building Account and the Building Maintenance Reserve**
 - Sky Hedman presented an overview of the proposal.
 - Questions and Discussion.
 - Proposal was included in online ballot, to be voted on after meeting concluded.
- Instructions for online voting (or call-in voting) - ballot will be active/open for a minimum of 2 hours

Meeting adjourned at 12:36 pm.

Ballot Results from Online Voting: (certified by John Stewart, Secretary, on July 18, 2021)

Minutes from May 25, 2021 Annual Congregational Meeting – **Approved**

Member Votes:

	# Votes	Percentage
Yes	84	100.0%
No	<u>0</u>	0.0%
Total Votes	84	

Proposal to upgrade ventilation of the BUF building – **Approved**

Member Votes:

	# Votes	Percentage
Yes	82	95.3%
No	<u>4</u>	4.7%
Total Votes	86	

Attachments:

- Minutes of May 25, 2021 Meeting
- Ventilation Project Frequently Asked Questions

DRAFT 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

Frequently Asked Questions (Updated)

Will the ventilation improvements mean that we won't have to wear masks when we return to in person services? Will in person services start sooner because of the improvements?

The big picture is that these measures will reduce the risk of Covid transmission within the building, but they will not alone eliminate it. This proposed project is only part of the larger strategy to reduce the risks of Covid transmission at BUF.

The Covid task force will decide on the protocol for use of masks or any requirements for vaccinations as part of their larger strategy. Once in person services resume, you may choose to attend if you feel safe. The goal of these changes is to make the air safer.

Why rush this project through when so many members are away for the summer?

We started discussions about this project in October, 2020. We reached out for quotes from five HVAC companies in the fall. When following up on the quotes, we found that the HVAC companies were too busy to respond to our further questions. After many attempts, we finally received the quote that best works for BUF on June 9, 2021. The Covid Task Force, the Financial Oversight Committee and the Board of Trustees have all approved this project.

One benefit of doing these improvements now is for them to be in place when BUF reopens in September. The safer we make the environment, the sooner we can resume singing and gathering together.

It is also easier to do the work when the building or room is not in use.

Who is making design decisions about the sanctuary?

In considering how to improve the ventilation of the sanctuary, our goal is to preserve the look of the sanctuary while effectively improving the air ventilation system. These improvements will reap long standing benefits and extend the life of that part of the building. We are able to propose a solution that does not require any visible ductwork in the sanctuary. Congregational input on the final design is completely welcome.

What about the classrooms?

In our design, we are working so that everybody can come back in safe environment, including children, who may or may not be vaccinated. By following the protocols mandated by the Covid task force, the upstairs classrooms have been safely used for the last six months.

Will the ventilation changes have other benefits?

The work proposed for the sanctuary addresses long standing problems with air quality in that room, which predate Covid. Even if Covid disappeared, we still need to fix the lack of fresh air, cross ventilation and recirculation in the sanctuary.

How much of our pledge money will go towards this ventilation project?

Our goal is to cover the costs of the ventilation upgrades using the Building Fund, which has existed but not used for ten years. We are lucky to have this funding source, which is leftover from the expansion of BUF in 2010. Any overruns not covered by the Building Fund will be paid out of our Building and Maintenance Reserve, which we contribute to each month based on rental income. 15% of rental income goes into this reserve. None of the cost is coming from pledge money.

Will the new ventilation system in the sanctuary be noisy?

The HVAC contractor (Feller) reports the Energy Recovery Ventilators that we would install are quiet. He says you won't know that they are on. One of our goals is to avoid introducing mechanical noise into the sanctuary.

What are other churches doing to address the challenges of Covid?

We have not communicated with any other church. We communicated with the Pickford Film Center, Fairhaven Runners, and Brandywine Kitchen to learn from their approach. The Pickford Film Center took the same approach that BUF is proposing. The only difference is that the Pickford added UV ultraviolet germicidal light into their HVAC units, a process which produces ozone.

How will the ventilation system in BUF's building be improved?

The first step is the upgrade of filters to MERV 13 for the air handlers throughout the building.

- Replace MERV 8 filters currently installed.
- Add motorized fresh air dampers and duct modifications

The second step is increasing and controlling the mix of fresh air in the sanctuary.

- Add controls and relays with a 24 hour timer to allow the air to be refreshed before it is occupied.

The third step is increasing the movement of air in the sanctuary by installing Energy Recovery Ventilators (ERV).

How will the movement of air in the sanctuary be increased?

We are proposing the installation of two Energy Recovery Ventilators on the upper level of the sanctuary. The ERVs will improve the movement of air. The ERV will also make our HVAC system more efficient because it will recover heat and moisture from the exhaust air and use it to warm the incoming air (in the colder months.) It works in reverse in the warmer months.

Why don't we just open the windows?

Cross ventilation that was present in the original part of BUF's building was lost by the building expansion in 2010. The windows on its south and southwest sides were blocked.

What other challenges does the sanctuary present?

The original building does have a fresh air intake vent. However, it must be adjusted, opened or closed, manually.

In addition, the location of the cold air return at the front of the stage at floor level (pulling air from the room back to the furnaces) is inadequate. Our current proposal is to transfer the fresh air into the sanctuary through grills on the upper part of the front and back of the sanctuary. Input from the congregation is welcome.

Is BUF getting air conditioning?

No, this project does not include air conditioning, which would increase the cost of the project beyond our immediate resources.

How will BUF pay for the project?

The primary source of funding will be BUF's Building Fund. After the new addition was constructed in 2010, about \$28,000 in BUF's Building Fund remained. If the cost of this project exceeds the quoted amount, BUF would meet any overrun from the Building and Maintenance Reserve up to a total of \$38,000.

Will the improvements include the social hall?

The filters for the air handlers in the social hall will be upgraded. Further improvements are not included in this phase of the project because of the additional cost. The social hall does have windows and doors that can be opened.

Does MERV 13 filter out smoke?

Per the EPA: a true high efficiency filter (MERV 13–16) can remove as much as 95% of the particles that pass through it. Upgrading to a filter rated MERV 13 or higher can be especially important during smoky periods to effectively remove fine particle pollution from smoke in the indoor air.

Who can answer questions about this project?

Feel free to contact Jim Reimer (Building and Grounds) (jdreimer@comcast.net) or Sky Hedman (Treasurer) (treasurer@buf.org)

Where can I learn more about the science behind indoor air quality?

<https://www.epa.gov/wildfire-smoke-course/preparing-fire-season#HVAC>

<https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/technical%20resources/covid-19/guidance-for-re-opening-buildings.pdf>

<https://www.grainger.com/know-how/business-operations/emergency-and-disaster-preparedness/kh-hvac-strategies-to-control-airborne-pathogens>

<https://www.grainger.com/know-how/industry/commercial/kh-the-device-that-can-make-your-hvac-system-work-smarter>