

**BUF Board of Trustees Meeting (via Zoom)**  
December 20, 2022

Attendees: Murray Bennett, Drew Betz, Daria Haynes (President), Alex Gilman (Vice President), Sarah Pearson, Lew Phinney, Jim Reimer, John Stewart (Secretary), Paul Beckel (Ex Officio)

Not present (excused): Henry Ohana

Other participants: Sky Hedman, Treasurer

Minutes by John Stewart, Secretary.

Chalice lighting 7:00 pm; Alex

Agenda Review/Changes:

- Add approval of prior minutes to Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda: Alex

- Approval of minutes: Minutes from the 11/22/2022 meeting were approved by email on 11/22/2022
- Minister's Report

**John moved and Lew seconded that the minutes from the 11/22/2022 meeting be approved and that items on the Consent Agenda be accepted. Motion passed unanimously.**

**Treasurer's Report:** Sky (Report appended)

- Pledge income lower in November after a higher October collection rate. Monthly pledge collections are variable.
- Expenses are running ahead of budget, but too early to call for measures to reduce expenses.
- Still have an influx of Employee Retention Credit Funds, this year, which will no longer be available next year.
- Budget is essentially flat.
- Discussion of new dishwasher and associated drainage problems
  - Elimination of drainage problems require jackhammering floor to repair/replace drain line.
  - Problem is created by accumulation of food particles in drain line.
  - Favinger Plumbing has scoped out line. We haven't received an estimate yet.
- Discussion of budget process followed.

**Knowledge Transfer with Treasurer:** Alex and Sky

- Sky offered to do a Board training session (separate from Board meeting).

**Human Resources Report:** Paul

- Most staff seem satisfied and morale is good
- Salary increases are important this year

- Barbara Ellis-Quinn has chaired the committee for 8-10 years and is doing great work.
- More volunteers are needed
- Need to add another part time AV for Sunday Services (to complement Walt Ellis). Walt is currently working 4 hours/week. \$2,000 should be added to Budget Wishlist.
- **Drew moved and Hank seconded that the need for an additional \$2,000 be referred to the Financial Oversight Committee. Motion passed unanimously.**
- Kathy Wahto's job is too time-consuming. Need to budget \$7,000-\$8,000 for overlap when she transitions to retirement (approx. 1½ years from now).
  - Answering the door is a distraction
  - Outsourcing of Payroll and moving the Midweek Update to a volunteer made it possible to combine the formerly separate jobs of administrator and bookkeeper.

### **3-year Review: Paul**

- Bylaws/Board Policies – recently reviewed and now being regularly reviewed by the Governance Committee
  - Mission Statement
  - Board Covenant
  - Volunteer operation job descriptions
  - Operations Policies + Procedures – more volunteers needed
- Board members are urged to review documents (all on website) and suggest revisions at next meeting.

### **Fiscal Sponsorship Follow-up**

- Contract with PNW Plateful was signed in December.
- Murray and John will put new policies and procedure on website.

### **Auction Update: Board Cruise: Sarah**

- San Juan Cruises – Sunset Wine Cruise has been chosen. \$44/person. Sarah will send out poll to determine an exact date and attendees.
- Goal of 12 extra tickets: sell 10 and retain 2 for incoming Board members

### **Update on Chairs**

- Paul is working with Judy Fruhbauer and Drew on selection of chairs. A leading contender is a padded, metal chair costing \$65 each.

### **Calendaring:**

- BUF Auction, Feb 11, 2023
- Mar 6 – All Church Retreat @ Hovander Park
- Oct 20-22, 2023 All Church retreat @ Silver Lake

**Next Meeting Date: January 26, 2022**

**Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.**

**Future Calendar Items:**

- Volunteerism
- 3-year review

**Summary of Action Items:**

- John moved and Lew seconded that the minutes from the 11/22/2022 meeting be approved and that items on the Consent Agenda be accepted. Motion passed unanimously.
- Murray and John will put new Fiscal Sponsorship policies and procedure on website.
- Sky will plan a Board training session (separate from Board meeting).
- Drew moved and Hank seconded that the need for an additional \$2,000 be referred to the Financial Oversight Committee. Motion passed unanimously.
- Sarah will send out poll to determine an exact date and attendees for San Juan Cruise for Board Auction Donation.
- Board members to review documents for 3-year review (all on website) and suggest revisions at next meeting.

**Attachments:** (below)

- Minister's Report
- Treasurers Report
- Human Resources Report

Minister's Report to the BUF Board  
December 2022  
Rev Paul Beckel

### **Affiliated Community Ministers**

Thank you for affirming my proposal to make Rev Barbara ten Hove an official BUF Affiliated Community Minister. She and I are working on a final covenant and intend to hold a small ceremony during a Sunday service in January. Rev Tessie Mandeville and I are also working on an update for our BUF affiliated minister covenant. Jeff Packer, who has retired from chaplaincy at St. Joseph Hospital has decided to retire as well as an affiliated lay minister.

### **Having Covid**

I had covid in November and missed my first scheduled Sunday service in 27 years. I'm very grateful that volunteers, staff, and my retired colleague Peter Luton were willing and able to jump in and take care of everything. Kevin Allen-Schmid in particular has taken on multiple extra duties over the past few weeks: coordinating the Trans Day of Remembrance service, the Festival of Carols Sunday service, much of the Partner Church service, and the Interfaith Thanksgiving service, which I also missed.

Regrettably, several volunteers and staff have had covid in the past few weeks, but, as far as I can tell, congregational activities all continued as planned.

### **Congregational Life in 2023**

A newsletter from the UUA this week includes this advice:

Congregations which are thriving...are finding a way to do what is most needed and important, rather than trying to do everything they used to do before COVID. In many congregations, there is less volunteer support (energy and funds) for ministry right now, and ministers, staff members, and lay leaders who try to do everything that was a part of ministry before COVID with less support are burning out. Right now, success in ministry may look more like joyful gatherings, meeting a need in the community in tangible way, and moments of grace, gratitude, and kindness than 26 fully-functional committees cranking out church work.

I am happy to say that I am not feeling burnout, but I am saddened by reductions in volunteers. In particular I'm concerned that many volunteers who have done extraordinary work over the past few years are continuing without relief from new leaders.

**Monthly Treasurer’s Summary Report to the BUF Board of Trustees  
November 2022 Financials (42% of the fiscal year)  
Prepared for the December 20, 2022 Board Meeting**

**Overview of current and projected status:**

**1. Month of November, 2022:**

- a. Pledge income was \$19,889, 85% of budgeted amount for the month.
- b. BUF received \$2076 in rent for November, 2022.
- c. Net Ordinary Income (Profit – Expense) is -\$9,901 for the month of November.

**2. Year to date (July, 2022– November, 2022)**

- a. Pledge income is 97% of the amount budgeted for this point in the fiscal year.
- b. Net Operating Income (Profit – Expense) is **\$3,243** year to date (July-November), which is 21% compared to 42% budgeted for this point of the fiscal year.

**3. Cash on Hand for November, 2022:**

- a. The **October** Cash On Hand report incorrectly reported the WECU checking account balance.
- b. The corrected Cash on Hand for **October** 2022 is -\$11,674.
- c. The Cash on Hand for **November** 2022 is -\$21,668.
- d. BUF’s budget for 2022-2023 included monthly withdrawal from the Emergency Operating Reserves to cover operating expenses.
  - i. To date, these monthly withdrawals have not been implemented.
  - ii. The YTD amount that was budgeted but has not been transferred is \$11,845.
- e. The Year to Date income exceeds the budgeted income by \$13,295.
- f. Some capital expenses have been covered through the operating budget.
- g. The Year to Date expenses exceed the budgeted expense by \$25,474.
- h. The difference between YTD Income and YTD Expense is -\$12,179.

**4. Reserves**

- a. Building Repair & Maintenance Reserve: \$47,664
- b. Emergency Operating Reserve: \$73,135
- c. Sabbatical Reserve: \$7,575

**5. Fiscal Sponsorship:**

- a. BUF has entered into Fiscal Sponsorship with PNW Plateful.

Income and Expense	<i>Year-to-date</i>	<i>% of budget to date</i>
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<i>Pledge Income</i>	\$ 140,304	97%
<i>Total Donations</i>	\$ 152,023	96%
<i>Fundraising Income</i>	\$ 8,008	100%
<i>Rental Income</i>	\$ 9,685	73%
Total <b>Income</b> Year to Date	\$ 184,204	108%
Total <b>Expenses</b> Year to Date	\$ 180,962	116%
<b>YTD Op. Income minus Expense</b>	<b>\$ 3,243</b>	<b>21%</b>

### Cash on Hand

	<b>This month</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>Prior month</b>	<b>Prior month</b>
Checking balance	\$ 11,349	-28%	\$ 15,749	\$ 42,541
Cash assets under Board control	\$ 175,152	-6%	\$ 194,545	\$ 222,217
<b>Cash on Hand</b>	<b>-\$ 21,668</b>	86%	<b>\$ -11,674</b>	<b>\$ 1,613</b>

### Funds Activity Report

<b>Funds Activity</b>	<b>This month</b>	<b>Prior month</b>
Total Restricted Investment Funds	\$ 55,228	\$ 55,228
Total Restricted Bank Account Funds	\$ 137,458	\$ 151,535
Total Designated Program Funds	\$ 60,287	\$ 62,428
<b>Total in all funds</b>	<b>\$ 252,973</b>	<b>\$ 269,191</b>

### Fundraising Summary

<b>Fundraising Event</b>	<b>Income YTD</b>	<b>Income Goal for year</b>	<b>% of Goal</b>
Dinner Auction/Gala	\$ 296	\$ 20,000	.15%
Other Fundraising	\$ -	\$ -	-%
Pandemic Grants & Income	\$ 7,712	\$ 0	100%
<b>Total Fundraising</b>	<b>\$ 8,008</b>	<b>\$ 20,000</b>	<b>27%</b>

Members of the Financial Oversight Committee are Sky Hedman (Treasurer), John Stewart, Frank McDonald (Assistant Treasurer), Brian Quick, Cathy Campbell, Sue Sayegh, Lew Phinney and Sharon McCarty..

Treasurer's Summary Reports and selected Financial Reports generated by Administrator are placed Administrator in BUF Workroom.

*Cash On Hand reports:*

*Assets that are available to Board under normal operating conditions: Checking, Savings, and Accounts Receivable. (It does not include Endowment, Humanitas, A. Herrmann Social Justice Account.)*

*Equity that is subtracted from Assets are those that are not available under normal operating conditions: Restricted Funds and Designated Program Funds. Liabilities are adjusted to include only one month of the Principal payment for the mortgage.*

Financial Reports attached:

Monthly I&E Comparison

Cash on Hand Report

Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison

I&E YTD Annual Budget Comparison  
Treasurer's Report

Date: Dec. 16, 2022

To: BUF Board of Trustees

From: Barbara Ellis-Quinn (representing HRC members: Murray Bennett, Daria Haynes & Nancy Braun)

RE: Annual Report of the Work of the Human Resources Committee

## **I. Committee Transitions:**

### *A. Loss of Committee Members:*

Since Dec. 2021 we have had three people resign their roles on the HR Committee: Carl Nyblade (mainly due to health issues) Kathy Fonte (partly due to Covid and wanting to find another volunteer role at BUF) and Melissa Swift (due to moving away from Bellingham).

### *B. Gain of New Committee Members:*

We were fortunate to have one established BUF member who was willing to serve on this committee and that is Daria Kurkky-Haynes. Then a very new member who has extensive business and HR related experience joined our team. This is Nancy Braun. We are very pleased to have these new members but would still like to have at least one more person on the committee. So if anyone knows of a BUF member who you think would work well on this committee please let any of us know.

## **II. Staff-HR meetings:**

A. We have had two series of meetings with all of our regularly employed staff members since 2021.

B. Our first series of meetings were conducted in January 2022. In those meetings a good part of our discussions were about how the staff dealt with the many changes in their jobs and how services were being conducted at BUF since the pandemic. Some challenges (mostly technical) that still existed at that time were discussed. But everyone agreed that the staff was working well together and producing very good services on Sunday. At that time Kevin was worried about losing choir members because of not being able to meet in person and having to deal with unusual choir rehearsals over Zoom. Genia was worried about the lack of children and families who were participating in Zoom sessions. Because of the falling numbers of children she has been helping to facilitate many adult RE groups. Two major concerns were discussed with Kathy during her meeting: How was the newly combined position working out? It was still too soon to tell but she thought that it would ultimately lead to savings for BUF. The second concern was about the series of break-ins at BUF. These unexpected losses considerably added to the stress of Kathy's job as well increasing her workload in order to deal with the repercussions.

C. Our second series of meetings were conducted in November 2022. I will recount these in more detail.

#### *1. Walt Ellis:*

He enjoys his job and has learned a great deal. He believes that we need to train more A-V tech helpers for Sunday services. He discussed some off the security measures that have been taken to safeguard the equipment. He thought that there should be more and different wired and wireless microphones for Sunday services in order to pick up all of the sound better for the Zoom audience. Walt gave us warning that he will be graduating from Western in the spring or next fall and he can't guarantee that he will be staying in Bellingham, or at BUF, after that time. So BUF needs to be planning ahead on how to fill his position when he might leave.



## 2. *Kathy Wahto:*

The transition to Kathy doing all of the bookkeeping work is coming along well. She believes that we need to switch to the online version of QuickBooks because this would allow data to be accessed by the Financial Team from any location. Rentals are back, which is good for the budget, but it is a time consuming part of her job. It would be really helpful to have a volunteer, or paid person, who could do the more mundane office tasks. There is currently a lack of volunteers at BUF, most especially with Buildings and Grounds. The renovation of the kitchen has taken lots of Kathy's time as well. A time saver for Kathy, however, was the switch to having Patricia Conover take over the production of the Midweek Update. When BUF and Kathy agreed to the combining of the Administrator and Bookkeeper jobs into one position she agreed to work for 3 more years. So we are in the middle of the second year at this point. That means we need to be planning for looking for a new Congregational Administrator in the next fiscal year.

## 3. *Melanie Rieck:*

Melanie is happy to be back to working in the sanctuary instead of at home. She is generally happy with her job at BUF as keyboard artist I and choir accompanist. She has recommended that Paul and the Board have an annual staff appreciation luncheon or dinner to allow staff to socialize with each other and feel that they are important to the operations of the congregation. Melanie has asked for a raise since she felt that she missed out on the last raise that other employees received prior to the pandemic.

## 4. *Andrea Rackl:*

Andrea loves her work for BUF and feels invigorated since Paul's return from his sabbatical. She also liked the change of pace of working with Barbara tenHove. Andrea has found new resources to bring in additional diversity into the music that she performs. We spent a good deal of time talking about the possible need to change the music program so that it might attract younger people. Maybe something similar to the praise bands that are found in evangelical churches.

## 5. *Kevin Allen-Schmid:*

Kevin is generally satisfied with his job. He feels that he is in a very supportive environment and he works well with Paul, Barbara tenHove and the keyboard artists. He also mentioned that it might be good for BUF to bring in more musicians during Sunday services. However, this is not his expertise. Maybe a future Music Director would be able to bring such a change to BUF. Kevin has asked for an increase in his salary for the 2023-2024 year. He is paid for 20 hours a week but he often works many more hours and with the current inflation he feels that an increase in compensation is in order.

## 6. *Genia Allen-Schmid:*

Just as in the previous year there are very few children and families coming to Sunday services even though we are back in person in the sanctuary now. She also is worried about the lack of volunteers to help with the youth RE classes. At the moment there is only one class because of the lack of help and the low numbers of children and youth who show up on Sundays. It seems like parents and children got used to doing other things on Sunday mornings during the pandemic. One highlight of the youth program, however, is the beginning of the OWL (Our Whole Lives) program for middle and high schoolers. The students are from BUF, the Congregational Church, the synagogue and the Bellingham community. Genia has also launched the BUF-Night-In (formerly Wednesday Night Dinners). It is a simpler meal (soup, salad and desserts) and it is going well. Genia is attempting to help people to get to interact with other people instead of just sitting and talking to their friends. She is having people wear their name tags and has starter activities to help with getting to know new people. Genia really appreciates the financing from BUF that allows her to attend professional development conferences.

### III. Other Work since January 2022:

- A. Due to the fact that Paul was on sabbatical and we had lost 3 committee members at the end of 2021 we did not meet again until September 2022. This was not a real problem since we had no staff changes or issues that needed to be addressed.

By the summer of 2022 Daria and Nancy had joined the committee and we met in September. This meeting was mainly to have Paul give a review of his sabbatical and his return in April 2022. The rest of the meeting was mainly to discuss the workings of the HR Committee with Daria and Nancy and to go over the Personnel Manual, the different job descriptions.

We then met in person and via Zoom on Dec. 13th to discuss the proposed staff budget for the next fiscal year. Murray Bennett has produced a document that shows the costs of raises for the staff of different percentage increases ranging from 1.2% to 5.3%. I will be sending that document along in the same email as this report.

Based on the realities of the budget as determined by the Finance Team we would like to recommend that every staff member be given the same percentage increase in compensation. The one exception to this comparable compensation increase would be Melanie Rieck. We would like to recommend that she get an additional increase or 1-2%. Given that her compensation is a very small part of the personnel costs that would not be untenable. The eventual determination of the overall percentage of the increase would be determined by the finance team and the BOT. Since the staff did not receive any increase last year we feel that it is extremely important, in this time of high inflation, that increased compensation for our hard working staff be a high priority in this upcoming budget process.

- B. *Other Budget Considerations:*

We feel that it is important to consider hiring a second A-V Tech to help with Sunday services. This would allow there to be some flexibility if someone is sick or needs time away from BUF on a Sunday. When Murray created the salaries possibilities for the 2022-2023 fiscal year he had already essentially doubled the hours for the A-V tech people. So this change is already shown in the chart showing the costs of the various possible raises. And given the fact that Walt might be gone before the end of summer 2023 we need to have someone else trained before his possible departure.

And in a related sense, Kathy is planning on retiring in June 2024. It is especially important that we have overlap with the new Administrator and Kathy for a period of weeks, if not months, so that the new person can learn as many of the details of this multi-faceted job as possible before taking over sole responsibility. This will require a substantial line item in the budget for 2023-2024 to allow for this to occur.