Unity Spiritual Center of Central Minnesota Board of Directors

# Meeting Minutes

# December 9, 2021

## Opening

The regular meeting of the Unity Spiritual Center of Central Minnesota Board of Directors was called to order at 10:00 am on December 9, 2021 on Zoom by President Carol Laudenbach. After a prayer by Rev. Jim, we read the Board Pledge.

## Present

Present were Kris Bahl, Sanda Lang, Carol Laudenbach, Rebecca Marie, Cristina Seaborn and Rev. Jim Ernstsen. Susan Holmen was absent.

**Secretary’s Report**

There was no Secretary’s report.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Sanda Lang is the new Board Member and Treasurer (see Addendum below) and gives the Treasurer’s Report. She shared a graphic of the projected 12 months of 2021 income and expenses side by side with 2020.

The projected revenue for 2021 is $86,000 (rounded up) and the deficit of expenses over income is $18,000.  We had three months (January, July, and October) of significant deficits:  January ($4500), July ($3,000) and October ($ 4,000). In 2020, our total revenue was $136,000.  Deducting the covid grant of $15,000 leaves  $121,000 from regular donors.  That is a projected reduction in revenues of $35,000.

It is very difficult to compare expenses from 2021 to 2020, because in 2020, we had a minister only for part of the year, weekly speakers fees for much of the year, and building expenses for the entire year.

In general, the level of expenses is not the problem.  We have for 2022 a $9,600 Increase in payroll for the new bookkeeper and are projecting $9,000 (10% of projected donations) and these are significant increases from 2021, but the greater issue is the decrease in donations.

There was much discussion about reasons for the changes, what to do to address the issue, and the importance of emphasizing consistent giving. More analysis can be done. It is clear that the two factors--not meeting in person due to Covid and not having our own space--are having a significant impact.

For the Annual Membership Meeting, we will address next steps to design what we need to do, how we can do it, understanding that we need to use our reason and our faith.  There is out there what we need.

We are tasked to be good stewards with what we’ve been given.  We have a fiduciary responsibility to this community.  The other side of the coin is to exercise that prosperity consciousness muscle that we have.  It starts with the Board having prosperity consciousness as well as the minister.

**Minister’s Report**

See attached.

## Preparation for Annual Meeting

The annual meeting has been set for January 30th, 2022.  Some tasks are underway and some more need to be done.  The first is the overall agenda similar to last year’s annual meeting. Carol shared a draft agenda.

Carol will draft info about the annual meeting for the January 7th newsletter. More discussion followed about:

* Roll call - it’s necessary to verify those in attendance to establish a quorum.  Rebecca Marie is volunteering to help with this.
* Sue O’Hara will do scripting of what is going on.  It’s scripted from the by-laws.  On the agenda, include the profile of those individuals who are on the ballot.
* The polling feature works really well in zoom.  Some folks don’t know to push the button to vote.
* We’re hoping to have zoom and in person for the January 30th annual meeting.  We could go back to the peace room at Bethlehem Lutheran.
* We can postpone our decision based on COVID numbers on January 1st, 2021.  Hospitalizations, deaths, and infection rates don’t look good in Minnesota.
* Accomplishments and challenges.
* Blessings and co-creations.
* Having other people from the congregation talking about it is inspiring.
* Carol brought the idea of creating a fun 3-4 minute video from the board and congregants.  We will let the idea percolate.

**New Bookkeeper**

Kathleen Kerswig joined the meeting from Hartford, Connecticut. She is the new bookkeeper. Kathleen introduced herself and the Board members introduced themselves. She knows Unity. She knows accounting.  She’s worked for a Unity church. It was opened for questions and further discussion about transitioning to ICON, having Kathleen work with Connie and Sanda to learn and maintain ICON software for the accounting system.

This position was hoped to be a blend of bookkeeping duties and other administrative assistant tasks.  Once the bookkeeping piece is settled in, she is authorized for 10 hours a week.  The Board has approved her 10-15 hours a week.  During the transition it will be a higher number.  When she comes up to speed, we establish the new system, the bookkeeping, account numbers will come down.  As her numbers come down for accounting, we can assign her things from Cheryl’s things to do.

Kathleen is drafting some written procedures for us to follow and Sanda and Carol see some of the procedures as checkpoints. For example, if somebody is counting the money, there is a cross check by somebody else.  This is invaluable for us.  We are bringing integrity to the procedures.  We can feel safe. Since it is written down, it will always happen that way.

**Proposal for Co-Ministry**

There was more discussion about the proposal for co-ministry by Rev. Jim Ernstsen and Rev. Lisa Herklotz and how to present the proposal to the community at the Annual Meeting. This is a chance to experiment, try something new, with defined parameters of what we can do financially and with joint leadership. Church is changing, is progressive.  We sold our building, and we can be creative when we build up again.  We don’t have to buy into another big building with a mortgage for the next few years.  We can utilize a lease.

The community may have ideas we haven’t thought of yet.  We want a pulse of where our community is as a whole. When we were interviewing Reverend Jim, the board set up for him to spend a weekend with us by presenting a message and a class, followed by a town hall.  The written evaluations from the community were tabulated before the final decision was made.  The community was given the opportunity to experience Rev. Jim coming on board with us.  There could be a similar but mini version of this at our annual meeting or later, as we’ve already experienced Rev. Jim and Rev. Lisa.

We could then set a date or time to come back together to review what we heard from the community. Then the board could meet this spring to take a look at this and make decisions.

**Addendum**

The following motions were made to fill the vacant position of Board Member and Treasurer Phil Limerick. The second is contingent on passing of the first motion. Both motions were passed by unanimous vote of the six voting members of the Board through email, finalized on 11/18/21.

* Motion One:  That Sanda Lang be appointed to the Board of Directors to complete the term vacated by the resignation of Phil Limerick; that term to begin on Tuesday, November 23 and to expire at the Annual Meeting in January of 2023.
* Motion Two:  With Sanda Lang’s appointment to the Board of Directors effective November 23, 2021, to accept Sanda Lang’s offer to serve in the office of Treasurer effective that date.

## Next Meeting

The next Board meeting is on Thursday, January 13 at 10 am on Zoom.

## Adjournment

Carol adjourned the meeting with a prayer by Rebecca.

| Minutes respectfully submitted by: | Susan G Holmen and Cristina Seaborn |
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| Approved by: | Board |

**Board of Director’s Meeting**

**Minister’s Report – Rev. Jim Ernstsen**

**December 9, 2021**

* **Completed**
  + Spiritual Center Task Force – Phase I complete
* **Ongoing**
  + We have a Bookkeeper, Kathleen Kerswig, who is working with Sanda and Connie (Icon) to transition us into a new accounting system with new procedures & processes
    - We envision the transition to be complete early in the new year
    - We see less of a need for the Icon Accounting piece as we move through this transition, ultimately dropping their monthly services (and those costs)
    - As Treasurer, Sanda will be working with the banks to grant Kathleen access
  + Winter Book Series, “The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success”, continues on Sunday & Wednesday
  + Spiritual Center Task Force continues into Phase II
    - We encourage members to hold in daily prayer our Calling Statement & Affirmation
  + Website development continues. We have received the new wireframe from OneEach Tech
    - Sara is moving content into the off-line website, through the end of December
    - A new URL will be used: UnityOfCM.org
    - We will transition to new email addresses in the future ABC@unityofcm.org
  + The “Open Projects” list exists in the UCM Sandbox
    - Carol, Rebecca Marie, & Rev. Jim will make a rough draft pass at prioritizing the list
    - We are suggesting that the full board review the list offline and give feedback
    - The new 2022 board will utilize the list to determine focus on strategic items
* **New**
  + A “Year End Gift” special newsletter is in the planning stages
  + Kathleen Kerswig (Bookkeeper) will introduce herself at our 12/9/21 Board meeting
  + The Sunday “Affirmation Statement” graphic is being created and placed on Facebook each week
  + Advent Reading videos are being recorded and placed on our Facebook page each day
  + Metaphysical Christmas series began. Week 1 last night. Two more Tuesdays planned.
  + “Mindful Thursday” group meditation practice starting this week
  + “Spiritual Economics” (prosperity) book study begins Jan 4th
  + Spiritual Center Task Force – Phase II has started as Allen, Carol, and Rev. Jim reach out to a commercial real estate agent (Wendy)
  + Annual Membership meeting scheduled for Sunday Jan 30th
  + Banking: removal of Phil and addition of Sanda on the Bremer & Great River accounts has begun
  + Membership Policy will not be written for 2021 Annual meeting
    - Recommending all individuals on our membership list be considered “voting members”
    - Recommending a Task Force in 2022 to define membership requirements each year
  + SSAM leadership changes: Michelle will move out of co-leadership & Terri will move into that role
  + UCM is joining the new UWM “visual” online directory (photo included)
  + New hardware (mic & speaker) has been purchased to aid in future “hybrid” board meeting
  + **Ministries reporting to the Minister**
    - **Adult Enrichment** – Carol
    - **Prayer Chaplain** – Cheryl
    - **Marketing & Media** – Sara
    - **Sacred Service** – Rebecca Marie
    - **Board Leadership** – Carol & Rebecca Marie
    - **Accounting** – Kathleen
    - **Greeters** – Monique
    - **Spiritual Social Action** – Susan & Terri
    - **Sunday Service & Technology** – Cheryl

**Minnesota State COVID numbers**

* + Summary: new cases, hospitalizations, & deaths continue to rise
  + MN is 4/50 in infection rates (behind NH, MI, RI) with 84 per 100k population
    - The CDC considers 10 per 100k population a safe level

Map

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