

Sunday, January Nominations:

In attendance: 68 (quorum 39)

Chris introduced a motion to nominate Bridget Evans as teller, seconded by Gerry Evans

Passed unanimously

Chris introduced a motion to nominate Maria Testa as teller, seconded by Liz Parke

Passed unanimously

Chris introduced a motion to nominate Liz Parke as parliamentarian, seconded by Julie Taylor

Passed unanimously

Motion to nominate Beth White as moderator, seconded by xx

Interim Minister Search Process Update from Maria Testa

Maria Testa gave an overview of the interim minister search process, noted the committee is down to 3 top candidates. Calling references, watching their sermons. Within 24 hours, received enthusiastic yeses to come visit Buffalo. Will be attending February and March to visit for the weekend. Will make offer to candidate in first week of April. On May 4th, all members will be able to vote, generally unanimous.

Capital Campaign Update from Phil Nicolai

In 2023, awarded NFSP grant of \$250,000K, fixed assets has been working very hard to develop needs for this scope. Feasibility study conducted in spring 2024 by Barry Finkelstein, suggested goal of \$1.25 million as goal. To date, \$1,184,331 in pledges. Received \$491,498 to date. Expect to raise \$700,000. Molly Q has applied for two additional grants from local funders. Expect to see work starting in the next month or two.

Paul Zanolli with Financial Update

Notes cost of living has increased in the past year

New accompanist costs more than budgeted

Only \$2K short our UUA pledge

Without a bookkeeper currently; do have a new bookkeeper lined up

Budgeted \$30K for ministerial search

Lowered 2024 pledge goal based on actual received in 2023

Martha gave pledge update – more than 50% raised pledges; 30% stayed the same. Should be proud of pledges and pledge amount.

Approved 2025 budget versus modified 2025 budget

Suggesting doubling endowment draw from 4% to 8%.

Questions:

Maria Testa – what does it mean to be running a deficit budget? Where does that money come from??

Paul Z. – from previous year's surplus. Also we have a lot of money from the capital campaign. Also not all budget lines are spent.

Paul noted that the endowment draws are phased, not all at once. So it would

Leslie Bolt: describe more what is happening with the food ministry budget. I do not understand how it moved and what happened?

Paul notes that he was showing unrestricted budgets. Other categories, like women's society, capital campaign, food ministry, now a restricted fund. Also noted that some costs could be pulled from restricted funds, but operational funds cannot be pulled from restricted.

Chris notes that restricted funds allow it better to be funded.

Elise Sikes: are we paying enough for the food ministry? There's no suggested donation.

Paul: seems to be enough. Don't have enough information, good question for nate.

Question from Andrea Burke Harris: number of total pledging units, has that changed from last year?

Martha: hard number to give, some people are not members. Working with a total of 175 donating units. 3 years ago, 214 units. That was not a realistic number. Realistically,

around 160 pledging units. That might decrease as folks age out or move. Count on 150 realistically.

(someone asked) Does getting more members increase pledge units?

Yes, it increases pledge units but we're also losing pledges to moving, death, etc. Need to build pledging into language of membership, and remember it takes time.

Active members has increased throughout the last year, but those numbers also need to be culled each year.

Chris introduces a motion to amend the budget per the Board Treasurer's recommendations, including increasing the endowment draw to 8%.

Seconded by Charlene Montgomery.

60 approved, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions

The motion passes.

Beth White – Board Nominations

4 vacancies for board seats; nominating has been able to find 3 candidates

Kate Belle-Schwede filling 1-year term.

Ken Mernitz – 3-year term

Susan Man Dolce – 3-year term

Jeff Lowery, running for nominating

Motion put forth to accept the board candidates, Martha first, Tom Petrocelli seconded.

Count: 64 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions

Motion to accept Jeff Lowery to nominating committee, first by Liz Parke, seconded by Charlene Montgomery.

Count: 64 in favor; no opposed, no abstentions

Kate motions to close the meeting, Simon seconds. The meeting closed at 1:15 pm.

