**Nature Coast Unitarian Universalists, Inc.
Board of Directors’ Meeting**

**Minutes**

**Sept. 14, 2020**

**Attendees:**
**In Person**: Bree

**Zoom:** John, Connie, Shirley, Rob, Amy, Pam, Tom, Margo
**Guests via Zoom:** Rob

1. **NCUU Covenant**
John summarized the covenant, and everyone agreed to it.
2. **Approval of the Aug. 10, 2020, Minutes**Connie moved and Shirley seconded to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.
3. **Treasurer’s Report** (BVR Report attached to the agenda.) Connie and Rob verified that the expense for the Joan Burnett portrait is listed under “Other Income” after Pam asked where the item could be found. Pam said, in the past, NCUU has contributed to national emergencies by sending money to the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee. She said the hurricane victims in Louisiana, Mississippi, and possibly parts of Alabama, as well as the people in the Western states that are affected by wildfires, “need our money, need our help.” She also wondered if we should send money to the Salvation Army.

John said the Salvation Army did not help the children of same-sex parents when the World Trade Center was blown up, and for that reason, he will not send money to the Salvation Army. Connie said the Unitarian Universalist Association has a place to send emergency funds. Pam said the UUA only helps Unitarians in need, which rules out a lot of people. Amy said she wouldn’t want to send money to the Red Cross because when she volunteered to help during Hurricane Andrew, the Red Cross wanted her to pay the Red Cross to help. She said the Red Cross prevented her from helping people, so she wound up working with another group. John suggested contributing to a food bank. Pam asked how we would find relevant food banks in the areas needing the help. John suggested contacting UUs in the devastated areas to see if they could suggest appropriate food banks or charities.

Pam said the Rev. Brock Leach was in charge of UUSC several years ago, and he probably could help us decide where contributions should go. He’s going to be an NCUU Sunday speaker on Oct. 11. Pam said she’d contact him by email and see what he suggests.

Connie said she would look for a phone number on the UUA site because there is a UU Emergency Fund. If at least some of the money went to UU members in need, that would be a good thing, she said.

Rob said he hasn’t yet transferred money from the Sunday Service and the Membership committees into the Media and Technology Committee’s budget because, although there has been discussion, the transfer hasn’t been approved yet. The matter was discussed later in the meeting.

1. **President’s Report**

John said he’s probably not going to open the church until next year, especially because we do not know what will happen during flu season, and he wants to err on the side of caution. Proceeding with caution also is the recommendation of the UUA, he said, adding that he wants to keep everyone safe.

Pam said, in the past, if there has been a hurricane or natural disaster, we have encouraged people to use our building to escape because it’s on high ground. But with COVID-19, Pam said she doesn’t know how to respond. John said he’s not sure even emergency planners have a blueprint for how to respond, so it would seem we are going to have to play it by ear.

Bree said NCUU has a small emergency board. If there is an emergency, the board can get on the phone with each other and “We’ll go with that.”

Pam said NCUU’s phone tree will come in handy if an emergency arises.

1. **Standing Committees**

**Building Committee.** John said representatives met with Phoenix Imagineering about turning a window of the church into a door. Several hours after the meeting, a representative of Phoenix called and said the company is not licensed and bonded in the State of Florida. Phoenix did submit a bid for $3,500, but the estimate did not include permit fees, John said, and the project will need a permit. He suggested that in the meantime, the Grounds Committee might look at what plants need to be moved.

Bree said she already has looked at the situation and just one bush would need to be totally removed. The other vegetation along the side of the building could just be dug up.

Pam asked what would happen if a concrete apron were added outside the door.

Bree said she didn’t think an apron would be a problem unless the path from the door went straight out, rather than turning left after 6-8 feet.

Pam said there’s about a one-foot drop coming out of the door and that to meet ADA standards, there would need to be a ramp. Bree said she feels adding a step that’s level with the door, and then a gradually sloping path or stepping stones, should suffice. She said she didn’t feel there should be a major problem.

Connie asked if Phoenix Imagineering was asked about installing an apron or landing outside the door that would comply with ADA standards.

John said the discussion was just about the work that would be done inside the building, but the new door would accommodate a wheelchair. John said he would contact John Burnwood, a carpenter. Pam explained Burnwood originally looked at the door about two years ago. John said he’d check if Burnwood is licensed and bonded.

**Bylaws Committee.** Amy said one thing to consider, in addition to the committee’s submitted report, is that the Bylaws Committee members feel there is an overuse of Robert’s Rules of Order in committee and board meetings. She said using Robert’s Rules is strict and requires a parliamentarian for the rules to be used effectively. Rob said if everyone uses common courtesy, things should work out. Amy said that is what the committee was alluding to. Bree said she supports what Rob and Amy said. Tom said he agreed.

Amy said Robert’s Rules does map out ways to deal with arguments, but she pointed out that at board meetings, the first thing we do is read the covenant. Then, if we have arguments, John is to help us find our way. The covenant requires we respect each other. No one disagreed, and Amy thanked everyone for the support.

**Council of Committees**. Connie reviewed the committee’s report, including the procedure for renting the fellowship building for a memorial service. She mentioned that the committee discussed the Calling Tree, which also was enclosed with the report. The committee also included a list of the members of committees. Connie said Linda Myers should be added as a member of the Sunday Service Committee.

Amy said that in the existing Policy and Procedures, there is a mention of a refundable deposit when renting the building. John said there should be a $25 nonrefundable deposit. Everyone agreed. John said these procedures will be revised and voted upon later.

**Denominational Affairs.** Bree said she doesn’t have a report yet on a proposal to combine some activities with Unity Church of Citrus County. Bree and John, did, however, attend a meeting with other area churches. Some of the discussion at that meeting was about how churches are communicating with their congregations during the virus. Bree said some churches are recording their services in advance and then just having the congregation watch the service. She said NCUU is a hands-on congregation with no minister and what we do seems to work for us. However, she said it was good to hear what others are doing. John said he’d talk with the Unity Church to see if participating with them in some activities might be a good fit or not.

Connie said two things we are considering is partnering with them for a Christmas Eve service and also inviting them to participate in our Social Justice Kitchen Table forums. Connie said she thought we might start doing the forums again if we used ZOOM. John said the forums would have to originate with the Social Justice Committee. John said a Christmas Eve service would have to be on ZOOM, not at the church. Connie said it would be on ZOOM. John said someone should get in touch with NCUU’s cleaning company and have it clean the church once a month. Pam said she would get in touch with the company.

**Finance Committee.** Shirley said the committee had problems hooking up with ZOOM for its last meeting, but four members met at the church. She said the committee discussed the situation with Amy and will be meeting solely on ZOOM from now on.

Shirley said the committee is concerned because NCUU had budgeted receipts from offering plate collections at $6,600 for the year. Since we’re not meeting at the church, committee members don’t know how this income will be made up. Jean McCauley has taken over the position of Purchasing Agent from Karen Fournier.

Jean has raised concern about using the church’s debit card and fears that someone could get hold of the account numbers and drain the checking account, Shirley said.

John asked Rob how much is in the checking account. Rob said there is $23,000. John asked Rob to
put $20,000 into the savings account. John said we have about $200,000 in the savings account. Even though CD rates are negligible, the Finance Committee needs to figure out a way to have the money work for us, John said. Shirley said her committee could take this matter up Sept. 26, when it meets.

**Grounds.** Bree said two people showed up this past week to help with grounds and the committee is in a holding pattern. She said she probably won’t be putting in any flowering plants until they’re needed. Bree has had to use some herbicide and will be submitting a bill for that. Committee members have done some hand-pulling of weeds and some trimming. Rob said he’s noticed some bees building a nest us in the eaves by the front entrance. Bree said she’d take a look.

**Long-Range Planning.** John said Bob Madeiros has returned home, so Bob will be contacted to see what’s going on.

**Media and Technology.** Amy said the Sunday Service Committee will be giving the Media and Technology Committee $1,000 and the Membership Committee will be giving Media and Technology $1,378. That money is to pay for advertising in the Citrus County Chronicle, Amy said. Previously, when the Media and Technology Committee projected a budget, it had said it needed $2,381, Amy said. But after learning the Media and Technology Committee will have to pay for the newspaper ads, the committee now finds itself with budget costs of $3,759. Rob pointed out the committee still has some some money in its budget. Nevertheless, the committee will face a budget shortfall and will need some money from the General Fund, according to Amy. Some other one-time costs include a PC, which Gordon will be buying. However, there is a scarcity of PCs at the moment because of students needing them for school, Amy said.

Amy said the committee also wants to find out how useful the Chronicle ad is, and one way we might measure that is by counting how many emails we receive from our ad that asks people to email the church if they’d like to join our Sunday virtual service. Amy said she feels we are spending a lot of money on the newspaper ads, and more people may be learning about the church via the website.

Amy also said Margo will be writing an article about voting that will appear on the NCUU website under “Community Connections.” Margo said she was drafted.

John asked if the money spent on the Chronicle ad also includes the Chronicle’s website and Amy said it does.

Amy said we also should remind people about ZOOM etiquette; for example, making sure everyone gets a chance to talk who wants to talk.

**Membership.** Connie said the Membership Committee’s report says that several members of the committee have been staying in contact with members who have health problems. However, it’s the Caring Committee that does this, Connie said. She said she and others also have been in touch with members who can’t do ZOOM or don’t choose to use ZOOM. She said she wishes there were a way to help those who might be a bit technologically challenged, without making them sick by coming to their homes to “help” them. She also said some newer members aren’t using ZOOM, so they should be called.

Judy Siegal, who spoke at the Oct. 13 NCUU service, mentioned that because of the virus and not being able to connect with people, her synagogue seems to be somewhat falling apart. Amy suggested inviting Judy to participate in our service and sending her the ZOOM link.

**Religious Education.** There is no chair, so there is no report.

**Social Activities.** John said the committee has started a Wednesday evening get-together on ZOOM. He said if anyone has any ideas, the person should send an email to him, Pam, or Matt and put “Social Activities” in the subject line.

**Social Justice.** The committee submitted a report and a message that was sent out with the board meeting agenda.

**Sunday Service.** Pam said the report her committee submitted says speakers are scheduled through November. In fact, speakers are scheduled through December and there’s even one, Nancy Kennedy, for Jan. 31, 2021, Pam said. John asked if the committee is having trouble finding people of color to speak. Pam said Bing Futch, an African American, is speaking Nov. 8. Amy suggested two speakers, including Lucille Tompkins-Davis. Lucille had been scheduled to speak, but her husband passed away. John asked if we could send Lucille a card. John said he wants to include as many ethnic and racial groups as possible. Putting information about our diverse speakers on the website might help attract a more diverse group, John said.

Connie asked if there would be a way to include a link on the website to see more of the recorded Sunday service, rather than just the Sunday speaker, as is now the case. Amy said it takes too long to upload the entire service to YouTube. The last time, to upload just the speaker’s portion of the service, took three hours, she said. John asked if Connie would like to have some of the service prerecorded. Connie said she’d like to have more than just the speaker be accessible from the website. Amy said her Internet doesn’t really support the time it takes to upload a video to YouTube. Connie said she thinks Gordon might face the same issues. Margo volunteered to try recording the service and uploading the video.

Amy said she also wanted to stress it is not a good idea to encourage people to use the fellowship building if they have computer/Internet issues because gathering in person is risky. The Sunday Service Committee’s report suggests that ZOOM hosts might use the building if the hosts have poor broadband at home. Amy said her husband has tested positive for COVID and if she were to go to the fellowship building to help out, she might infect others.

John said we might want to consider prerecording some of the Sunday service and said he could put Media and Technology committee members in touch with UU congregations who do this.

Bree suggested maybe the talk could be prerecorded and then the Sunday service would be basically a coffee hour to discuss the video. Amy pointed out that to show the video during a ZOOM session doesn’t seem to work out because of bandwidth issues. The possibility was raised that the video could be uploaded and viewed earlier, and then the Sunday service basically would be a discussion of the video. John said he’d contact other UU congregations to see what they are doing.

**Old Business**

Rob said we’ve collected $510 to pay for the portrait of Joan Burnett and need a total of $650 ($140 more). Connie said she spoke with the artist and the portrait is coming along. Connie said the artist has a sketch and is now working on the painting. The artist prefers not to send a photo of her work-in-progress, according to Connie.

Rob proposed transferring to the Media and Technology Committee $469 budgeted for social activities and $400 budgeted for supplies ($869), which is the amount of the budget shortfall that Media and Technology faces if it receives $1,000 from the Sunday Service Committee and $1,378 from the Membership Committee. Rob said if the $869 worth of transfers were made, the board wouldn’t have to tap the General Fund to help out Media and Technology. Rob said there is $1,000 that’s been set aside for social activities, and we won’t be spending that money.

John said he’d like to take the $869 from the General Fund. He said as a board member, he wants to look at the budget and see what was budgeted and what was spent and learn why expenditures are either over budget or under budget in each budget category. Preparing next year’s budget depends on how much was spent in each category in the existing year. John also said he doesn’t have the time to tell each committee, “You’d better spend your money.” He said it’s up to the head of each committee to know how much is in the committee’s budget and how much has been spent.

Rob said he is concerned about changing the budget without the congregation’s approval.

John directed Margo to send a letter to the congregation stating that as of Sept. 14, the board has tentatively approved transferring $1,000 from the Sunday Service Committee, $1,378 from the Membership Committee, and $869 from the General Fund to the Media and Technology Committee for the sole purpose of paying for the Chronicle advertising. The congregation would vote “Yes” or “No” to approve the transfer. Margo is to ask Rob for reimbursement for supplies. The letter to the congregation is to go out by Sept, 18, with a due date of Oct. 9.

Amy asked why we have to use “snail mail.” John said not everyone has access to email. Connie said there are only a few people who don’t have email. John said he doesn’t want people to say they weren’t contacted. Tom said post-office-delivered mail seems more reliable. Tom said he doesn’t get a lot of his email. Pam asked if the members of the Sunday Service Committee and the Membership Committee need to approve taking the money from each respective committee’s budget before the congregation votes on the matter. John said technically, the committee members would be approving the transfer since they also are members of the congregation who will receive the letter.

Connie asked if, under our bylaws, we are prevented from transferring money from one item to another. Rob said if it’s under $500, money can be transferred from one budgeted item to another, which is why he was proposing transferring $469 from social activities and $400 from supplies (a total of $869). John said he wants to transfer the $869 from the General Fund.

**Unfinished Business**The board agenda for the Sept. 14 meeting had listed the memorial service costs at the building as an item for discussion, but John said the board already had discussed the matter earlier. (Under the Council of Committees report).

 **New Business**The agenda also had listed “Proposed closing of the fellowship building until April,” which John said the board already had talked about earlier. He said the board also had discussed conducting the Christmas Eve service by ZOOM with Unity Church of Lecanto.

 Amy explained that another item listed under “New Business” is to address the problems of hearing multiple people talking when they are sharing just one ZOOM link. For example, it’s difficult for someone at home on ZOOM to hear what the multiple people are saying who are sharing one computer and one ZOOM link at the fellowship building. Amy also pointed out that when multiple people share a computer at the fellowship, they aren’t wearing masks, which is not safe. John said we won’t be having multiple people sharing one computer at the fellowship building anymore.

Tom said four members meet in a Meditation Group at the church every Friday at 4 p.m. John said he didn’t want to risk having anyone in the congregation becoming ill. Tom said the group probably would meet at someone’s home if it can’t meet at the fellowship building, and the group members might find themselves in a less safe environment. John asked if the group could do a ZOOM meeting. Tom said that wouldn’t work well. Margo said she’s in a group doing meditation via ZOOM that works fairly well. Amy suggested meditating outdoors. John said if we’re going to close the church, then we should close the church.

Bree and Pam suggested using the Memorial Garden, and Bree suggested using The Grove.

In other new business, Bree said the security light closest to Highway 41 is not working properly.

Pam asked who is on the Emergency Committee besides herself. John said he is, Connie said she is, and several said Margo is. Pam said the group needs to discuss hurricane preparations and the possibility of opening the fellowship building in the event of an emergency.

Pam said she’d also like to add that for the Christmas Eve service with the Unity church, Sally Smith-Adams and Annie Bumgarner are working on the service.

Connie said she wanted to remind people we do have a shade sail, but she didn’t know if we wanted to wait to put it up until after the fellowship building reopens. John said we should wait. Connie said people might meet under the sail after the weather cools off and hurricane season passes. Tom said it’s a longstanding tradition that the Meditation Group meets at 4 p.m. on Fridays. He said he imagined the group could change the time and meet in the morning, but it’s always raining at 4 p.m. on Fridays.

John said the peak for hurricane season was Sept. 10. He said if anyone needs anything, the person should get in touch and he will help as well as he can.

**The next board meeting is Oct. 12 at 10:30 a.m. via ZOOM.**

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