

**Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**  
**Annual Meeting**  
**June 8, 2025 - DRAFT**

Governing Board Member at Large Beth De Stasio announced that quorum has been established at 11:15.

Rev. Christina Leone-Tracy led the chalice lighting.

Governing Board President Justin Fisher welcomed everyone to the in person and virtual annual meeting, thanked everyone for attending, and called the meeting to order at 11:20 AM. Justin reminded everyone to focus comments and questions on the motion on the floor and noted Terry Dawson will serve as parliamentarian to assist with process.

John Duffin from the Healthy Congregation team read Principles for a Healthy Congregation.

Sam Zinth, Governing Board Vice-President, explained the procedure for discussion topics and the process for discussion during motions. After a topic is presented, we will ask for a motion. Participants online can use the raised hand feature and chat for discussion. Discussion will not be limited. Please keep questions and remarks on topic. Amendments may be proposed. When the discussion is finished, Sam will submit the current motion for inclusion on the ballot. Any proposed amendments A link to the Survey Monkey ballots will be emailed to all members in attendance after the meeting. The ballot link will close on Wednesday June 11 at 1:00 PM. The results will be published in the newsletter on Thursday June 12<sup>th</sup>.

Sam Zinth presented the minutes from the 2024 Annual Meeting were presented.

Christiana Coakley moved to approve the 2024 Annual Meeting minutes as written, Willow Gallagher seconded. There was no discussion. Sam submitted the motion for inclusion on the ballot.

Sam Zinth presented the minutes from the 2024 November 17 Special Call Meeting.

Helene Iverson moved to approve the November 17 Call Vote meeting minutes as written, Ben Zinth seconded. There was no discussion. Sam submitted the motion for inclusion on the ballot.

Justin Fisher presented the *Faithful Steward Award* to Mary Gerlach, the 2025 recipient. This award is given by the Governing Board in gratitude for many years of service to the Fellowship. Thank you and congratulations to Mary Gerlach!

Justin Fisher invited everyone to review the Governing Board Report in the written Annual Report and noted that questions for the Governing Board can be emailed to [fvuufboard@fvuuf.org](mailto:fvuufboard@fvuuf.org).

In 2024-2025 the Governing Board focused on stewardship, connection, and long-term vitality in service of meeting strategic goals that align with our Mission and Values. The Board released

funds to complete a comprehensive building maintenance assessment, launched a new strategic monitoring tool, improved our HR and personnel processes, completed a comprehensive Triennial Ministerial Evaluation, and partnered with the Generosity and Engagement team to support donor outreach efforts.

The Governing Board formed a Long-Range Financial Planning Workgroup to explore sustainable strategies for the future of the Fellowship.

Justin expressed appreciation for and thanked Board members who have served the congregation over the past year. Board members asked tough questions, considered how to be hopeful and supported this beloved congregation through transition and transformation. Justin also thanked Fellowship members for their support.

Rev. Hannah thanked the Governing Board for their tremendous work holding difficult things gently.

This year we undertook a large leadership transition which began with Rev. Hannah's call as co-minister with Rev. Christina in November and then the transition of that work. The Executive team pursued a reserve study, an in-depth analysis of our building and infrastructure, to plan for future capital and repair needs.

We piloted several opportunities to engage people in congregational life, including middle hour for adults and fun and friends for children between services on Sunday mornings and two multi age camps.

We spent time trying to understand the giving patterns and capacity of our congregation. We worked with a development consultant in the fall to assist us in understanding our financial picture and fundraising processes.

The Executive Team is looking at how to engage the congregation more deeply in stewarding the Fellowship, not just in giving but also how we live our lives together as a congregation.

Treasurer Pat Mitchell thanked the Fellowship staff for creating a warm and welcoming place and recognized Phyllis Schmitt for all her behind-the-scenes work. Pat recognized the Audit Committee for their work to ensure that donations are accounted for and spent appropriately.

The 2024-2025 fiscal year continued with financial peaks and valleys. This year there were more valleys. Please see the Treasure's Report in the Annual Report for details.

A few highlights include a new HVAC unit in the office wing, a reserve study on our building and grounds, continued transition to a new church management software called Empower and data migration of our on-premises server to Microsoft 365.

The Fellowship is on an unstable path. Giving is trending down this fiscal year and we are projecting to finish this fiscal year with a \$75,000 to \$85,000 deficit. This has been an ongoing issue for the past few years. The primary reasons for the financial challenges include more

unbudgeted building expenses, we have exhausted the payroll protection dollars from the government, and members are not contributing as much as prior years.

The audit committee is in transition. We want to recognize audit team members David Powling and Dale Lewellyn, who left the team at the end of last fiscal year, and welcome Grant Wainio and Jim Snyder to the team.

The Audit Committee completed 3 quarterly audits and the books are in order. It continues to be the Audit committee's opinion that the Fellowship's financial reports accurately and fairly represent the financial condition of the Fellowship, and that existing controls are adhered to by all responsible parties.

Justin Fisher reviewed the bylaws updates. Proposed changes include revised language related to giving requirements, removing language related to the ends and replacing that with strategic planning and goals, and adding language related to co-ministry.

Bradly Shipps moved to approve the bylaws changes as presented, Christiana Coakley seconded.

There were requests for clarification on what is meant about fiscal year giving and contributing to the budget in each fiscal year. The fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. Contributions to the offering basket on Sunday need to specify that is it for the operating budget.

Jen Anderson moved to amend the bylaws motion to change the language in Article 4 Section 3 from "for the fiscal year" to "for the prior fiscal year", and Article 4 Section 5 from "annual fiscal year" to "prior fiscal year", John Duffin seconded. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed.

Suzanne Marnocha moved to approve the bylaws changes as amended, Dean Spoehr seconded. Sam submitted the motion, with the amendment above to approve the bylaws changes as presented to the online ballot.

Helene Iverson, leadership development committee member, introduced and presented the slate of candidates for Governing Board and the Leadership Development Committee. Governing Board candidates pass confidential background checks as part of the governance policy.

## **Governing Board**

Governing Board President – Two-Year Term, 2025-2027, Justin Fisher

Governing Board Vice President – One-Year Term, 2025-2026, Gary Crevier

Governing Board Treasurer – Two-Year Term, 2025-2027, Beth De Stasio

Governing Board Member-at-Large – Two-Year Term, 2025-2027, Jerry Behrendt

Governing Board Member-at-Large – Two-Year Term, 2025-2027, Ligia Rivera

## **Leadership Development Committee**

Leadership Development Committee Member – Two-Year Term, 2025-2027, Constance Harrington

Leadership Development Committee Member – Two-Year Term, 2025-2027, Ben Hendrickson

Leadership Development Committee Member – Two-Year Term, 2025-2027, Helene Iverson

Leadership Development Committee Member – One-Year Term, 2025-2026, Bradley Shipp

There were no other nominations.

Helene thanked all the candidates and everyone currently serving in leadership roles.

Justin Fisher asked for a motion to approve the candidates for the Governing board.

Margaret Alexander moved to approve the candidates for Governing Board as presented by the Leadership Development Committee, Brianna Gallagher seconded.

There were no questions or discussion.

Justin submitted the slate of candidates for the Governing Board for inclusion on the ballot.

Justin Fisher asked for a motion to approve the candidates for the Leadership Development committee.

Mary Gerlach moved to approve the candidates for the Leadership Development Committee as presented by the Leadership Development Committee, Jerry Iverson seconded.

There were no questions or discussion.

Justin submitted the slate of candidates for the Leadership Development Committee for inclusion on the ballot.

Sam Zinth gave a strategic plan update. In 2025-2026 we will focus on key improvements to our infrastructure, things like maintaining and improving our building and making further upgrades to our technology. We are also rolling out a new lay leader structure called the hub and spoke model. We believe this model will help us share leadership more effectively, inviting broader participation and deepening impact. We will focus on programs that deepen spiritual growth and belonging. Our three-year strategic plan calls on us to strengthen adult programs, explore creative ways to support children and youth, and offer more opportunities for multi-generational connection. On the justice side we will continue to invest in community partnerships and organizing particularly with efforts like Rising Together. We are finalizing a generosity and sustainability plan to address our revenue. We have sharpened our priorities to focus on what's most achievable and impactful, making sure our available resources are aligned with what matters most.

Director of Finance and Operations, Phyllis Schmitt, presented the proposed 2025-2026 budget.

Phyllis noted that this has been a particularly tough budget year. The proposed budget is a deficit budget. Contributions have been trending down, especially this last quarter. For the 2025-2026 fiscal year, we are projecting contribution revenue of just under \$660,000 based on giving intention forms and other information provided to us. This budget includes a projected income of roughly \$707,000 that includes RE fees, fundraising efforts like auctions and rummage sales, and miscellaneous income that includes a contract with the Green Bay UU Fellowship for the ministers to provide support for them in offering services once per month and support for their governing board.

The expense side required cuts including cutting the music position to quarter time and the director of religious education position to three quarter time. There is also a cut to the UUA dues. Building and grounds expenses are climbing. Our mortgage interest rate will increase with a refinance due October 1. We are looking to re-amortize the loan from its remaining 8.25 year amortization to a 15 year amortization and take additional money on the loan of approximately \$100,000. This requires a full appraisal which we will seek this year. We will be replenishing our operating reserves for funds used for capital improvements the past few years and to start a capital reserve for future building improvements and maintenance.

Deb Andrews moved to approve the 2025-2026 budget as presented, Tam Masters seconded.

During the discussion, many questions and concerns were addressed. We are reducing the music position from half time to quarter time. We are following UUA recommendations for aligning program size with staff time and don't anticipate a large change to the programs our children and youth receive. Endowment donations can be made at any time. Undesignated giving over \$5,000 goes to the endowment fund.

Sam submitted the motion for inclusion on the ballot.

Justin thanked everyone for their presence and participation and adjourned the meeting.

Rev. Hannah Roberts Villnave lead the chalice extinguishing.