

Fountain Street Church Governing Board Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2021

Board Members Present: Will Gallmeyer, Kathleen Higgins, Win Irwin, Shellie Jeffries, Geoff Kempter, Amber Kilpatrick, Kristen Loch, Kristin Mayer, Brad Miller, Katie Mitchell, Amy Preston, James Taylor, Chip Wall, George Zuiderveen, Steve De Polo

Staff Present: Rev. Christopher Roe, Melissa Hoezee, Greta Jo Seidohl

Guests: 5bbG5n, Andy DeBraber, Barb Wingard, Barbara Reihoehl, Benny J, Bettegail Snively, Betty Porter, Bev Boerman, Bill, Bob Cooper, Bonnie Baumgardner, Bruce & Carolyn Morrison, Bruce Ling, Bruce Reges, Bryan Walters, Bullo, Buzz Wynbeek, Camilla Martin, Carol Kooistra, Carole, Carolyn Heines, Cascade's ipad, Cele Bagerow, Chris and Jill Van Antwerp, Chris Creek, Clare Pollent/Carl PC, Connie Graham, Coral McCarrel, dadh, Dan Bullock, David Dorr, David Kapolka, Dean, Deborah Robinson, Denise Joseph, Dianne Carroll Burdick, Dick Happel, Dolli Lutes, Don & Laura Wheeler, Don Pearson, Dorothy & Mike Bertsch, Edgar Marty, Elizabeth, Emery Haley Emery, Evie Phillippi, Fam ipad, Gary Eberle, Gary Rowe, Georgines iphone, Happy, Heathers ipad, iphone 616780-0700, iphone Nancy, Jack Petiet, Jacquelin Poehlman, Jane Chamberlin, Janice Mann, Janice Noah, Jay Fowler & Cathy Neis, Jean Bahle, Jerene, Jessica Hemp, Jim Johnson, John Alaban, John Hunting, John Schweitzer, Jon Hartman, Jon Spaulding, Joshua Usadel, Judith's iPad, Judy Baiers, Judy Botts, Julie Hackett, June Stauby, K Robinson, Kathy & Tom Robinson, Katie Booms Assarian, KD Horns, Ken Porter, Kirsten Lundeen, Kirsten McCarrel, Knackwgs phone, Kristen Page, Lance Penny, Laurel Mason, Linda Wilkey, Lisa G, Liz Bullock, Lydia Stubbs, Marie Maher Penny, Mary Peterson & Louise Bark, Mary Peterson, Matt Elizinga, Matt Riegler, Matthew Huizinga, Maurie Houseman, Meredith Bradley, Merrily's ipad, Nessa McCCasey, Norm Tubbs, Patrick Eamon, Paul Arnold, Paula Doyle, Peggy Pierce Barbour, Peni & Jim Reed, Penny Barstow, Peter Lundeen, Rebecca Knack, Robert Dean, Robin Cornell, Rose online, Rosemary Conlin, Ruth Stein, Schwaderer, Sharon Morley, Sharon Rydzewski, Sharon's ipad, Skip Swanson, Steve Crandall, Sue Clay, Susanne's ipad, Theresa Hogerheide, Tim Creamer, Todd Fettig, Todd Johnson, Tony Kroes, Vicki Vandenberg, Wendy Kuenzel Kapolka, Wes Beck

Meeting called to order by Chip Wall. Call to community done by Chip.

Comments by Chip:

Welcome to everyone (about 140 guests). Some people who hadn't received the Governing Board email sent out yesterday had asked to be unsubscribed from church communications. Please check your spam. The GB had every intention to publish the agenda ahead of time (thank you Todd, for the suggestion) but the GB has had many things going on and was not able to finalize an agenda until late last night. Our apologies, we will publish the agenda for future meetings. Congregant comments will be moved to the New Business section of the agenda so GB business can be conducted. Please limit comments to three minutes.

Chip read the email text announcing the resignation of Rev. Mariela Perez-Simons: On February 8th, Rev. Mariela Perez-Simons formally asked the Governing Board to be released from her contract as Senior Minister of Fountain Street Church. The Board is currently working with Rev. Mariela's UUA representative to coordinate the terms of her separation.

During this transition, Rev. Mariela cannot be reached through FSC phones or email. In the meantime, your other ministers continue to be available for pastoral needs. We will do our best to keep the membership informed and updated as matters proceed.

We know that this is very unexpected and difficult news, and know that it will require our Fountain Street best to help each other through this difficult time.

Statement from the Board

Chip emphasized that Rev. Mariela and her family are okay, safe, and healthy, and acknowledged that **everyone** is grieving right now. He encouraged everyone to exercise love and compassion with each other. Chip assured everyone that Rev. Mariela was given space, listened to, we have encouraged dialog and sought any way possible to resolve issues. We gave her time for reflection and thought; we support her ultimate decision. Her decision to separate from the church was hers alone. No one from the GB wanted this. We have been blessed by her ministry, enthusiasm and wanted her to stay. No GB members tried to push her to leave. Chip had hoped until just hours before the meeting that this wouldn't happen. We tried everything we could think of, but she is resolute in her decision to leave. Chip understands everyone wants to know why; there will be communication to the congregation that is hoped will provide insight into her decision. It was her decision to share what she wants with us. Chips notes that no one really knows the complexities of another person's life and we may never fully understand the decision. We will grieve together, negotiate a fair settlement and discern our path forward together.

Motion to approve the January 2021 minutes made by Jim, and seconded by Amber. The motion passed.

Finance Committee Report

Win Irwin reported. No statements were available this week because of a change in accounting software that prevented a report from being generated. The committee is enthusiastic about the software. In general finances look positive, January received a good number of pledge income. FSC has applied to a PPP loans (\$75,000). The Committee hasn't heard back yet. FSC borrowed money from the Foundation two years ago but it wasn't included in the financials as an obligation. It will now be recorded so the progress in paying back the loan can be observed. James Taylor asked Win about expenses that are coming up on the horizon. Win noted this might be better answered by the Properties committee but mentioned the bell tower repair as an upcoming expense. We need a new estimate for the repair. Both Finance and Properties committees are working together. It's not clear how soon the tower has to be repaired. The original quote was \$250,000 but it might be double that now. They are going to get three quotes, per policy.

Oversight Committee Update

Will be providing a throughout report about plans fo the year, but need direction from the GB Does the GB want language drafted for presentation to the congregation to change the nominating committee's annual requirement for the GB election. The number of people nominated, the process. GB members should come to the March meeting prepared to discuss.

Does the GB want language drafted to address modernizing and making more efficient voting procedure pertaining to member votes. There is not a clear direction for allowing for electronic votes. It is possible to do, but need to make changes to bylaws. Again, be prepared to discuss at the March meeting. Brad Miller spoke to the simplification and modernization of the process. The bylaws require 8 people to run but sometimes it's hard to get 8 people, though often we do get over 5 people for the open seats. This means someone loses. It has been proposed to have only 5 candidates for the 5 openings; others could run through a petition process. There are ways to improve the system healthily and holistically that encourages people to run.

These ideas will be included in the Board packet for the March GB meeting.

Amy At special meeting of the officers' committee, the officers moved and approved a consent agreement with Rev. Mariela that relieved of her duties and responsibilities during the discussion pertaining to separation from FSC. GB took that action, it was a consent agreement between parties. Win made the motion to continue to relieve rev of her duties until such time as we negotiate a settlement, that is, to confirm the action taken by officers committees. agreement going forward, seconded by Kristin Loch. George asked the motion to be repeated. -- repeat: GB confirm officers decision to relieve mps of her duties. Motion passed. (25:00)

New Business

Congregant Comments (32:00)

- Jacqueline Poehlman: Can meeting minutes be added to the FSC website? Would like to see something from the GB about how was Rev. Mariela able to get out of her contract and ignore the bylaws?
- Katie Assarian: This situation is unsettling and frustrating. Thank you for your work and support of FSC. Good luck, let's pull together.
- Robert Dean: How can we hire better next time? What did we miss? Clearly there was a mismatch. Ensure that the candidate knows what our community is like and what their desires are.
- Kirsten Lundeen: Assuming that once the negotiations are finalized, the GB will inform the congregation about interim leadership plans.
- Bob Cooper: Encourages the board to look at what we have, this is an opportunity to review the current ministerial staff and work with and nurture our current young ministers, instead of seeking out someone who won't fit.
- Chris Van Antwerp: regarding the Nominating Committee comments earlier, respectfully disagree with Brad, we can find 8 people to run and accept losing; the proposal gives the Nominating Committee too much power
- Penny Barstow: What is the stipulation about further communication with Rev. Mariela?
- Norm Tubbs: You make it difficult to make decisions about Rev. Mariela. When will the GB fill the congregation in so we can make informed decisions about the direction for the church to go?
- Kirsten Lundeen: When does the GB anticipate final negotiations with Mariela will be done? 1 week, 2 weeks? When will we know the new arrangement for FSC staff?

- Paula Doyle: How will the situation be presented to the public? GB needs to be mindful about transparency and public perception, and how FSC comes across.
- Paul Arnold: Requesting a Town Hall asap, this week if possible.
- Robert Dean: Agree with Paul. Lack of information is uncomfortable, GB needs to let the congregation know what's going on.
- Bill Thompson: Last Sunday's service was of high, high quality, current staff (Christopher, Mathew, Greta Jo) did a fabulous job, we need to look closely at home.
- Bryan Walters: Thanks to everyone working to manage a challenging situation, Christopher, Greta Jo, and Matthew. Really hard stuff, the most challenging situation a church can go through, thanks for future efforts. Thanks to the GB and GB Officers, I have confidence they will lead in the best way possible for the church and Rev. Mariela.
- Sharon Morley: Echoes Bryan, encourages support of the ministers in any way possible
- George Zuiderveen: Empathizes with congregants' wish to know the answer why; GB will push forward with the process in the most fair, kind, and just way. Please bear with us.
- Linda Wilkey: Thank you so much for your hard work. Will there be a public announcement or is the GB waiting for an indication from Rev. Mariela?

Last words

From Chip: hope that we keep the FSC love at the forefront to help us all get through this, lift up Mariela and her family. Hope we have grace and understanding.

Kristin Mayer stated the Communications committee has taken notes on congregants' comments and will consider as they plan their communications.

Move to adjourn made by Kristin Mayer, seconded by Amber. Meeting adjourned at 8:04 pm.