

Minutes – Thursday, September 5, 2013

Live Oak Board of Trustees Meeting

David & Lisa Fry's apartment

Board Members Present: Kathryn Duke, Kate Hand, Darlene Pagano, Jay Roller

Board Member Absent: Kris Arrington

Guests Present: David Fry, Lisa Fry, Michelle Mueller, Nanci Armstrong-Temple

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m., with a quorum of four members, plus four guests. Kathryn did an opening reading.

- 1. Approve/Modify Agenda:** Kathryn requested adding time to discuss contract development questions relating to worship and music committee relationships. She also requested a brief time to present a matter falling under the board's conflict of interest policies: payments by Live Oak to her daughter Elena for assisting Sunday School teachers, and sometimes also helping with dishwashing after the potluck. Jay asked to add a discussion of adjusting the Music Committee's budget categories. The agenda was revised to add these three items, and the new version was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved.
- 2. Treasurer's and Finance Officer's Report:** David reported that we are now into the third month of our fiscal year. Budget at this point was expected to be \$1497 in deficit, but is actually \$4427 in the black due to some early pledging and lower than expected spending to date. This underspending will end when we start having three worship services per month.
- 3. Adult Religious Exploration Process & Coordinating Team Needed.** Darlene reported that Tom Wilson has come forward to volunteer to join her and Richard Stromer on the ARE Committee. She would like to find one more person if possible. She may be asking us to phone people to ask for help with ARE. Michelle said she'd be interested in being involved in ARE in some way. Also, we're invited to join Berkeley Fellowship of UU's weekly ARE potluck plus program called Tuesdays Together.
- 4. Pastoral Care update.** There is still outreach being done to find one or more ministers to provide pastoral care if needed by a Live Oak member. Jay left a message for Dan Kane, but he is quite busy right now and has not responded. Kris also called someone, but received no response.
- 5. Organizational Structure of Live Oak committees.** Based on the recent board discussion of Live Oak's operating structure, Lisa has posted a chart on the website that provides an overview of that structure.
- 6. Job Descriptions for two positions.** As followup to the previous item, there was discussion about giving Lisa a title that appropriately reflects her extensive administrative support for Live Oak. Such a description would help other members know to contact her with questions or suggestions regarding this administrative work, in the same way that members know to contact board members with policy-related inquiries. It would also be useful whenever someone else takes on at least some of Lisa's current activities.

Kathryn suggested the board create an ex officio board member position for one former board member, which could be voting or non-voting, and then consider Lisa for that position. Lisa said she thinks it best to be a non-voting board member, and is happy to serve in that capacity. Darlene suggested that we formalize the position of Live Oak UU Fellowship Administrator, whose duties would include many of the administrative duties Lisa has been carrying out and also attending board

meetings to contribute to and support the work of voting board members. As the Administrator, Lisa could serve as a liaison to the board regarding issues that arise in her administrative role.

Action Item: The board agreed to formalize with a title the work Lisa has already been doing as Fellowship Administrator. It was also agreed that a job description should exist for this position, regardless of whether the person doing it is a paid staff member or an unpaid volunteer. Lisa offered to write the first draft of a job description.

In addition, it was noted that David has been working as a volunteer to do the accounting and budget presentation work that is an important part of every board meeting and of Live Oak's ongoing operations.

Action Item: The board agreed to formalize with a title the work David has been doing. David will work with Jay, who is Treasurer, to develop a job description for the Finance Officer/Bookkeeper position that David has been filling.

7. Policy Development: Child Safety. Michelle spoke about her past work on child safety policies at other congregations. She made some overview comments that most policies involve the "two adults present" rule, plus background check requirements for people working directly with children and youth. And they also address protection from sex offenders. Sometimes they also require that volunteers who work with children have already been involved in the church for a time.

Nanci spoke about how different congregations handle these issues, and how written policies can sometimes get in the way of a congregation's larger goals. For example, the two adult rule can sometimes be more protection for adults than for youth who want to create a relationship with one adult advisor or mentor. We at Live Oak want to be a place where people know they will be called out for inappropriate behavior with children whether or not there's a specific policy on that particular action.

Action Item: Darlene moved that we create a Safe Congregations Committee as a Committee of the Board, which will consider all policies that the UUA recommends be addressed, and also look elsewhere for ideas and model policies relevant to Live Oak. This committee's immediate priority will be to encourage and support the CRE committee volunteers and staff to look at child safety issues within our particular congregation, at the sites our children and youth use, and in the kinds of activities they engage in. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. This new committee will be the fourth Committee of the Board whose activities are reported on and, if needed, discussed, at every board meeting.

8. Conflict of interest policy; disclosure of a board member's financial interest. Lisa described the Conflict of Interest document that Live Oak board members must sign every year indicating that we follow that policy. A copy of this document had been previously emailed to the Board for our review.

Action item: After brief discussion, the Conflict of Interest document was signed by each of the four board members present.

Disclosure of a financial interest. Kathryn reminded the Board that she has previously disclosed her financial interest as a board member, pursuant to Live Oak's Conflict of Interest Policy. This interest is that her daughter Elena is sometimes paid by Live Oak as a children's class helper and also dishwasher. There are other children of Live Oak members who sometimes do this same work and receive similar payment, but they are not family of a board member.

Action item: After deliberation made without Kathryn’s participation, the other three board members reviewed the relevant facts of Elena’s compensation, her duties, and the challenges experienced in recruiting outsiders within the needed time frame for the compensated work. It was agreed by Darlene, Kate and Jay that an arrangement more advantageous to Live Oak is not reasonably possible, and it is in Live Oak’s best interest, and it is fair and reasonable, to pay Elena when her assistance is requested.

9. Developing policy on paying members for limited time jobs. The board reviewed printed copies of a draft policy that was developed based on two different situations involving paying a member.

Background. Kathryn and Kate summarized the two specific situations that prompted development of this draft of a Live Oak policy. Kathryn referred to the situation described above of paying a board member’s daughter. Kate’s presentation reminded the board of our conversation at the June meeting about July 4 parade preparation plans, which included her working with a professional graphic designer member to develop within a tight time frame a new logo/design for Live Oak, to be used on printed materials for that parade and on a sign outside the door every time there is a Live Oak service. This member had volunteered to work at no charge when he had slow time at work, but needed to be paid for work done with quick turnaround time needs. It was fair and reasonable to pay him \$250 for his “urgent time frame” professional work because an arrangement more advantageous to Live Oak was not reasonably possible, and it was in Live Oak’s best interest to proceed promptly to complete work needed for the parade.

Comments. Kathryn commented that she put a lot of time and thought into developing an initial draft policy on hiring members for limited time jobs. She also noted that earlier in this meeting was an example of looking to Live Oak’s existing conflict of interest policy relating to the decision to hire a member’s child. Once we have a written policy, it is very important to follow it. We must take special care to follow written documents approved by the Board as Live Oak policy.

After some reflection, she believes it is not the best use of Live Oak leadership’s time to develop its own library of detailed policies that seek to anticipate and address a large range of specific problems that might arise. Instead, we should recognize that we’re a congregation of small numbers and notable cohesion. Our young congregation has had from the start a strong emphasis on transparency; we proactively welcome all interested people to observe and participate in decisionmaking discussions by Live Oak leadership. If we become significantly larger and more diverse in people’s length of time and type of experiences with Live Oak, then we may want to revisit the idea of anticipating problems and developing a more extensive library of Live Oak policies.

Nanci spoke of her experience with different UU congregations. She noted that congregations often talk about developing policy because a member has been hurt, or might be hurt. She offered her strongly held view that Live Oak should craft policies based not on fear but on how we want to be as a congregation. For example, whether or not we pay a member for a job should not be a separate policy. Instead, this should be part of the discussion that happens when Live Oak decides to pay for help with programming and operations. She further suggested that Live Oak should have a general policy that “when we can, we hire members.” This has obvious benefits, and some potential messiness. So we should focus generally on how we want to deal with messiness when it arises.

David commented there could be difficult issues that arise if we have to choose which member’s child to pay for jobs that can easily be done by many others. Lisa suggested that paying children of Live Oak members feels different than paying adult members.

After lively discussion involving all of the members present, Darlene suggested that Nanci, Kate and Kathryn collaborate to put into writing main points of the discussion. This should give special attention to principles that would be the touchstones for Live Oak decisionmaking in situations covering a wide range of facts and issues. These principles would include transparency of actions, acknowledging consequences of different decision possibilities, balancing competing interests, and tailoring decisions to specific facts of the situation at hand.

Action Item. The board decided not to pursue development of a written policy of hiring members. This topic will continue to be partially addressed by Live Oak's existing Conflict of Interest policy.

Action item: The Board's Secretary will work with Kate Hand and Nanci Armstrong- Temple to develop a written record of the main points of the discussion. This document will then guide Live Oak's decisionmaking relating to hiring of members, safety of children and adults while participating in Live Oak activities, and other Live Oak activities. The document will be distributed to all of Live Oak's leadership for further discussion, with the intention of developing a final version of guidelines for all Live Oak members involved in making decisions affecting Live Oak UU Fellowship.

10. September Congregational Gathering. Do we have any topic? Jay suggested a picnic. Nanci suggested we see if any Welcoming Congregation work remains. Maybe show a film? All board members present reported they will be out of town or otherwise engaged that afternoon. It was decided to not have a formal meeting. Michelle suggested people be invited to BFUU for her sermon and potluck following. She'll get back to Lisa on that.

11. Growth Committee update. Darlene said there has been no official response, but she has heard through the grapevine that the Growth Committee met and decided we're not getting the \$5000 originally granted with contingencies. She will be looking into what is happening with this process that has been continuing for many months.

12. Board Committee reports:

- Every Sunday Programming: Darlene reported that the Worship Team is meeting all day on Saturday, Sept. 7. Richard has made great strides in putting together fourth Sunday programming, which will start in October.
- Welcoming Congregation: Lisa reported they are working on wording for the Order of Service, and will get also put together some gatherings to watch films related to the WC issues and goals.
- Alameda Point Collaborative: Kathryn reported that a good-sized, multi-age group of Live Oak members and friends met on Aug. 14 to assemble school supplies into backpacks as part of a community effort to help low-income children from APC and other neighborhoods start the school year. Photos of the group are posted on Live Oak's Facebook page. She also reminded people that Live Oak will be helping again with the children's carnival section of APC's Harvest Festival: Saturday, October 19, 11am – 3pm.

13. Music-Worship committee interactions. Darlene will talk with Jay & Kathryn to get background on this issue so it can be discussed at the Sept 7. Worship committee retreat.

Kathryn gave our closing reading at 9:20 p.m.

--Respectfully submitted by Kathryn Sáenz Duke, Secretary of the Board