

UUFBR Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

This is a voting meeting

March 25, 2026

Present:

Trustees: Copresidents Rajeev Arora and Claire Smith, Secretary Judy Keiser, VP/Facilities Patrick Larson, Treasurer Howard Prentice, Trustees at large Carole Stephens, Bill Jensen, Lynn Smith

Guests: Mitch Major, Celia Hirsch, Marina Machado

Gathering: Chalice Lighting/Opening Words (Carole), Check-in (Bill): Vibe-checker (Claire); Time-minder (Patrick)

After a heart-felt tribute presented by Claire to Bill and Carole, expressing our gratitude for their service, at 7:17 the meeting was called to order, a quorum was established, and guests and visitors were welcomed.

The 02/25/26 Board of Trustees Meeting minutes were approved with one correction as to amount spent in recent years on outreach.

The 03/08/26 Congregational Meeting minutes were approved without objection.

Reports:

1. Administrative Reports

a. Treasurer – Howard P. sent written report. Good shape re: pledges, \$134,726 received to date (we still need more). Sharex income is significant: \$53,784 year to date. Income and expenses are evenly matched after 11 months due to Malussis gift and no minister – we will end this fiscal year in surplus.

b. VP Facilities – Patrick L. sent written report.

Item 1: illegal digging by construction co. Sent a demand letter, no response and no further payment due notices. No phone contact yet. Unknown cost of restoration of electric service to parking lot. Need multiple bids. Hiring lawyer would cost more. Discussion: They signed for demand letter, so we know they received it. Patrick will call the company, and ask to record the call.

Item 2: fire closet: April 20 is scheduled start of construction, won't take long.

Discussion: will cost around \$26k more, for a total of \$45/50k. We still have \$30k available.

c. Music Director: Arts Alive event went well, it's a good event for springtime: 2 hours of continuous music in Sanctuary along with Osias art show. 2 choir members joined PEACE choir at Nehemiah Action. Easter will feature a French horn duo.

Old Business

1. Stewardship-tabled

2. Staff reviews (Claire)- tabled

3. Bylaws project: report by endowment consultant and guest Lauren Furst: experienced UU financial consultant (Shelter Rock and North Palm Beach). She is a CFP, chaired Endowment, was on board of Meadville Lombard. When she joined Endowment Committee at NPB there were no policies or procedures, she helped set things up better. At SR they rewrote spending policy, moving decisionmaking from people to algorithm.

Review of UUFBR situation, asked to give her ideas on how to handle all our funds. She notes that our concerns are universal.

Challenges:

UUFBR Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

This is a voting meeting

- Anxiety (more than the natural anxiety around money) and lack of trust about money wastes volunteer time and steals energy.
- We have old rules, we twist to comply instead of update. Our investment policy statement dates to 2003 – needs yearly evaluation.
- We need to control the demands on our endowment.
- We need transparent policies which will help counteract conflict.
- We have restricted funds controlled by past donors. Our donors are directive with money, they resist letting go of gifts. Written directions are needed for guidance and clarity.

Goals:

- Increase transparency and communication. Won't necessarily arrive at agreement but can at least create a common understanding.
- Simplify processes, use more democratic procedures, to ease understanding and make better use of volunteer time.
- Reduce volunteer time managing money.
- Take the temp of conversations down.

Concrete steps:

- EC revises and BD approves investment policy, and then actions are governed by policy, not ad hoc decisionmaking by volunteers.
- Bylaws too much detail right now – keep framework, supplemented by robust investment policy statement.
- Disbursement of money also covered by policy, not membership on committee. All distributions should go through budget, with no more shadow distributions. Put grants into budget to be seen and voted on by congregation.
- Outside advisor to manage investments and avoid current conflict between bylaws and policy in terms of investments. Avoid governing by conservative/liberal tendencies of committee members.
- Goals of funds dictate how money is invested. Eg: Policy to keep 60% in stocks; short term funds should be in liquid assets. Combine funds per purpose, not donor, have one group oversee both funds.
- Goals: to support current budget (4% drawdown), sustain longterm growth of congregation (no frittering), and provide for future growth if possible (exceeds 7% growth rate estimated) by using principal as seed money.
- Mission-related discussion useful and helped drive actions. Communicate more – 5 min at congreg meeting, etc.
- Develop gifting policy. Want unrestricted gifts, not always possible. Insurance: we are self-insured for hurricanes (our endowment has emergency fund for hurricanes).
- North Palm Beach calls their Endowment a “Permanent Fund” and they draw on it yearly. Component funds (identify current and create new ones in future) create flexibility: capital expenses, scholarships, social justice grants for students, ministerial support fund (help candidates know we're serious about paying them). Every distribution goes through the budget.

UUFBR Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

This is a voting meeting

- UUFBR funds under umbrella of endowment could include hurricane fund, cap reserve fund, etc.
- Discussion:
 - community efforts: In NPB, JAMinistry, plate collection and fundraising for specific projects and purposes like quarterly service projects (sandwiches, period packing, etc.) raised \$50k last year.
 - How can we succeed? Trust in policies not people. Division of congregation makes small donations unfeasible. Important to create dependable distribution in one fluid system to facilitate project planning by Patrick. We have 3 capital expenditure funds. Maybe combine, and approve capital expenses once every year.
 - Are we obligated to honor donors wishes? How were wishes communicated? Need to look at goals of funds. Proactively, Stewardship committee can work with donors on both testamentary and living gifts.
 - Must specific restriction last in perpetuity? We need unique arrangements that fit our situation. Bill to talk with Lauren about parameters, costs: it's possible to spend less than 1% on professional consultant.
 - Outstanding question about apportioning between bylaws and policies, and deciding whether investment policy is up to the congregation to vote on.

Breath Break

New Business

1. Election of Officers: Raj proposed that we retain the current officers in place for another year. **Motion** made by Bill, seconded by Lynn, to renew the terms of the current officers for another year. **Motion passed.** We also teased Carole, who had missed the vote, by telling her she had been elected to do everything.
2. Executive Session to discuss status of ministerial search.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Keiser, Secretary