

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County
Special Meeting of May 21, 2017

Chris Higgins, President of the Board of Trustees of the UUCLC, called the meeting to order at approximately 12:15pm.

In the absence of the Secretary of the Board, Chris asked for a volunteer to take minutes and Laini Panuska stepped forward to take minutes, with our thanks.

The formal question to voted upon was read to the Congregation: Do you “ authorize the Board of Trustees to promulgate a Member Loan Program of up to \$50,000, in multiples of \$1,000 for a term of three years, with interest payable at up to five percent (5%) per annum, to help fund the completion of the building? Chris went on to provide the Congregation background and context, as summarized below.

General Background about UUCLC Bylaws and voting

Important questions are brought to the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County voting members for consideration and decision.

Such questions are decided by formal vote, which require appropriate 1) notice, 2) attendance (quorum) and 3) approval majority.

Notice – requires posting on the congregation bulletin board and website and reading from the pulpit at least two (2) consecutive Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.

Announcements of this meeting has been read from the pulpit and posted on the bulletin board on the two consecutive Sundays prior to the May 21st meeting (on May 7 and May 14, 2017). In addition, meeting notice and description were posted on the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lake County (UUCLC) website (lakecountyuu.net) on or about May 7 and voting members received copies of the announcement via email on or about May 7, 2017. In addition, an article providing a “Building Project Budget Update” was printed in the May issue of the Newsletter, the Communicator, which was emailed to all members at the end of April and posted on the website:
www.lakecountyuu.net.

Quorum – Per Bylaws at Section VI, Congregational Matters, D, Quorum, “Twenty-five (25) percent of Voting Members of the congregation shall constitute a quorum” for matters such as the one before us today.

Because we will be considering a question related to indebteding the Congregation, the following section of the Bylaws apply: Section X, Fiscal Matters, C, “The Congregation shall not become indebted unless said indebtedness is approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Voting Members present at a duly called meeting, at which a quorum of the Voting Members of the Congregation are present.”

Since we currently have 86 voting members, we need 22 voting members to participate in a vote and 2/3 of the number who vote must vote, Yes, in order for the Member Loan Program to pass.

Absentee Voting: The Board of Trustees has determined that absentee voting will be accepted. An email blast was sent to all UUCLC members to advise them of the upcoming vote.

Discussion

Chris indicated that some comments had been received about this proposal via email, most particularly regarding the question of interest to be paid to lenders.

She opened the floor for discussion. One suggestion was to have break-even interest rate tied to inflation. Or the same rate of interest as a CD (2%?). There was an expression of discomfort about profiting from the church, which was countered that anyone would be free to donate their interest back if they wanted to. Stephanie McCants suggested we talk to a CPA or lawyer as to whether paying interest to members could jeopardize our non-profit status. Someone answered that our type of corporation has no problem that way. Some advocated for zero interest. Some wondered whether enough people would be attracted to that deal, but others said that of those who had expressed interest in loaning money so far, none had seemed concerned about earning interest, but are more interested in building the congregation.

It was then suggested that the lenders should set the rate. The final decision will rest with the Board but will be informed by this discussion, as the wording of the question to be voted upon includes the following language “ interest payable at up to five percent (5%) per annum”.

There were questions and discussion (and some concern) around other ways to raise the money, and how the loans would eventually be repaid. There are several ideas: (grants, partnering, elder housing), Chris said, but no fundraising program is yet in place. We got \$45,000/acre from the land that was sold. Sale of more land is an option for repaying the loans but a more immediate solution to our current need to pay our final bills to our construction contractor, within the next 60 days or so. Carl Skiles has advised that there are too many complications involved in getting a line of credit or mortgage.

A concern about the possibility of influence peddling was mentioned, but promptly allayed.

Our total FY 2018 operating budget is \$82, 000.00. At this time we are short by about \$10,000.00 from pledges for 2018, but more are expected to come in. So far we are underspending our 2017 budget, but there are many unknowns in projecting upcoming expenses in our new building . Loans will be accepted until June 4th.

Dallas Spears has an audio recording of the discussion on her phone, if anyone wants to hear more.

The vote was taken by show of hands and the proposal passed with 38 "YES", plus 10 Absentee "YES" for a total of 48 "YES", 1 "NO" and 1 abstention. Two of the absentee votes stipulated a condition that the Board must be willing to sell land if need be to repay lenders.

Chris closed the meeting by saying that the board really does want to be open to input, reminding the Congregation that all Board meeting times are announced in the Sunday Service Orders of Service and are posted on the Calendar on our website, as are minutes of the meetings. Board meeting summaries appear in the monthly newsletter, the Communicator. Lastly, all meetings are open to attendance of Congregation members and if folks can't attend, they can send an email or speak to a Board member to get an issue heard.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1:15pm.