

**KEWEENAW UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP
BOARD MEETING
Date: July 27, 2025**

Present: Lora Repp, Elen Maurer, Trista Gersie, Lori Swanson, Melissa Williamson, John Gale, Julie Badel, Cindy Enderby, Rosemary LeVeque

Guests: Elaine Eikenberry, Bill Leder, Craig Wadell, Shane (last name?)

Preamble

1. Chalice Lighting
2. Agenda
 - Revised agenda distributed; no additional items added.
 - Welcome extended to new board members.
 - Usual order was adjusted so the discussion on hiring a contract minister could occur before Reverend Bruce joined the meeting

Strategic Work part 1

Ministerial Search:

- Extensive work has been done by the search and contract committees to prepare an offer for Rev. Bruce Johnson as a quarter-time contract minister.
- Three topics for discussion and votes:
 1. Approval to hire.
 2. Approval of the contract.
 3. Approval of housing allowance for IRS purposes.

Housing Allowance & Compensation

- Proposed salary: \$17,000, with \$15,000 designated as housing allowance (provides tax benefits to the minister; not taxable as income but subject to self-employment tax).
- Housing allowance is for Rev. Johnson's permanent home, not local lodging while in the Keweenaw.
- Congregation previously approved \$30,000 for this hiring. Projected total cost of ministry (including travel and professional expenses) remains under budget, with a 10% leeway built in.

Local Lodging for Visits

- Rev. Johnson and his wife will visit 10 times per year for four-night stays.
- Some lodging will be provided by congregation members (Pete & Carol, Lora, others may volunteer), reducing costs.
- Commercial lodging estimated at ~\$500 per visit if needed; Airbnb or VRBO options reviewed.

Budget & Travel

- Mileage reimbursement estimated at \$4,500/year (IRS rate \$0.70/mile), plus \$2,000 for professional expenses, totaling ~\$6,500 in expenses beyond salary.
- Discussion about how mileage and lodging reimbursements should be treated for tax purposes; questions raised about whether these should be considered taxable income for the minister. Cindy will verify IRS rules and UUA guidance.

Contract Approval Concerns

- Some uncertainty remains around wording and tax treatment of mileage and lodging in the contract.
- Decision: vote immediately on hiring and housing allowance; delay contract approval until tax language is finalized and the revised draft is sent to the board for review (possibly via email vote).

Enderby/Badel motion to offer a contract to Rev. Johnson approved unanimously

Gale/LeVeque motion to approve the application of \$15,000 ministerial compensation towards Rev. Johnson's housing costs unanimously approved

Two areas of the contract require further review and research. Board will vote on the final contract via e-mail in coming days.

Board participated in a virtual meet and greet Rev. Bruce.

Fiduciary and Regular Business

Minutes:

Minutes of the May14 meeting approved on an Enderby/Repp motion. 6 yays. 3 abstentions.

Treasurer's Report:

- Lori and Cindy presented the Treasurer's Report for the month.
- Income and expenses remain in line with the approved budget; pledge and donation revenue is arriving as expected.
- Updates to checking accounts authorized signers needed and discussion was held regarding past practice and proposed changes.

Enderby/Badel motion to update the signers on the General Checking, Main Savings, Boyce Scholarship, Hooker Checking, Bridge Street Checking to Lora Repp, Elen Maurer, Trista Gersie, and Lori Swanson, and on the Minister's Discretionary Fund to Heidi Bresnahan, Lora Repp, and Linda Rullison with all prior signers to be deleted was unanimously approved.

- The Hooker Endowment currently has approximately \$70,000 invested in cash and CDs that are split into two accounts for easier management.
- One CD was recently cashed in; three others remain active. Lori will obtain updated balances and maturity information before the next Board meeting.
- CDs were originally laddered, with varying maturity dates. Rates were generally based on the best available "deal of the week" at renewal.
- Signers for both CDs and endowment need review and updating.
- A \$1,500 donation was received, intended to cover Service Pro cleaning of carpets. Clarification was sought on how to track such designated gifts: general fund vs. building fund. Cindy noted the funds were placed in the general account, since building maintenance expenses are paid from there.
- It was agreed that, for clearer tracking, designated gifts should be noted in sub-accounts so donors can be assured funds are used as intended.
- A \$1,000 donation was received for exterior building work. Since the donor specified building use, members suggested depositing this directly into the building account. If deposited into the general account, Treasurer can transfer funds online into the building account to match donor intent.
- Discussion also noted occasional delays between donations being made and the collector depositing them. Treasurer will follow up to ensure timely and accurate deposits.

Enderby/Gale motion to accept the Treasurer's report unanimously approved

Strategic Work part two

Building Business:

- Roof/Drainage work completed for \$12,800, now watertight, no leaks observed during the recent heavy rains.
- Attention now turned to the other side of the roof, where some minor issues remain to be addressed.
- Discussion of the June 21 flooding of the building and the report from Bill Leder and team was held.
- During the storm, there was heavy runoff at the southwest corner, resembling a waterfall. This was traced to a blocked trench/drain system, which has since been cleared, improving flow.
- Discussion followed about the possibility of a buried drainage system dating from the 1970s. Suggestions included:
 - Reviewing historic building plans.
 - Consulting with the town building inspector.
 - Exploring ground-penetrating radar as a way to locate underground drains.
- It was agreed that the west-side trench must be kept clear to direct water away from the building, and that further assessment of drainage pathways is needed before considering extending lines downslope.
- A temporary solution is in place for hillside erosion, but a retaining wall or window-well structure was suggested to keep soil from washing back into the trench.
- Tree pruning needed and John has already trimmed some branches with an electric pole saw.
- Contact was made with the county zoning officer, who clarified that pruning is permitted up to the property line, but pruning trees further would require permission from the rental property's owner.

- An attempt was made to obtain reports from the 2018 County Emergency Task Force, but records had been discarded.
- Two neighbors were spoken with, and while they did not recall specific flood issues, they expressed appreciation that the Fellowship had purchased the building and was maintaining it much better than the prior church owners.
- Leadership expressed gratitude to the ad hoc committee for gathering and presenting detailed information, noting the quality of photos, links, and thorough documentation. They were commended for their impressive and helpful work.
- The group discussed whether to undertake exploratory trenching before winter to better understand drainage patterns, but opinions differed about whether to disturb what seems to be working naturally.
- It was suggested that those with expertise meet together to clarify what should or should not be done this season.
- A shed to store snowblowers, lawnmower, and garden tools was discussed; cost is expected to be about \$1,000. Craig has made a \$1000 donation that could be applied to this purchase
- It was emphasized that drainage must be addressed first, before placing the shed, to avoid disrupting natural water flow or needing to move the shed later. if possible, the shed should be installed before winter, though not essential.
- Currently, the small wooden fence near the trash bins is being used as a makeshift shed, which has caused clutter and accessibility problems.
- The Board discussed the plan for this winter's snow removal.
- It was noted that there is no binding agreement with the current contractor, but communication is needed to clarify whether he intends to continue.
- John, as the main contact with the contractor, was asked to follow up.
- Concerns were raised about the parking lot becoming progressively smaller last winter, despite additional funds allocated in the budget for snow removal.
- Tony previously connected the Fellowship with another provider who was used once; the Board agreed to confirm whether that option remains available for future use.

- The Board agreed that decisions regarding the snow removal provider should be made soon, in case the current contractor is no longer interested in the work.
- A proposal was shared from new member Betsy Hellman, an artist who has offered to create a mural for the long white wall in the sanctuary. Betsy's work was described as including natural elements such as birch trees and greenery, with the goal of creating a soothing and expansive piece.
- The mural would be created on panels rather than directly on the wall, allowing for relocation if needed.
- The Board clarified that Betsy would not have complete creative freedom; she will provide two to three sketches for review before final approval.
- Melissa volunteered to serve as the contact person to work with Betsy and coordinate the process.
- The Board expressed enthusiasm for the project and agreed to move forward with Betsy providing sketches.

Personnel Committee

Childcare Staff

- The current childcare provider was a no-show again, making this the third occurrence.
- While he is excellent with the children and easy to work with when present, his unreliability creates challenges on Sunday mornings.
- Trista and Elen are considering how to proceed. The plan is to wait and see if he reaches out this time, which may influence their decision on next steps.
- The Fellowship may need to revert to seeking two volunteer childcare providers each Sunday in the near future.

Tech Support

- Juxta shared that their outside work is expanding, which sometimes requires them to be away on Sundays (subs covered two services in July).
- In their vision, they would step back from weekly Sunday service responsibilities and instead serve as a tech consultant on a contract basis when needed.

- They will help the Fellowship identify and train a new regular Sunday tech person, likely from their pool of junior understudies.
- This means the face at the AV/tech table may change, but Juxta would remain available for specialized support.
- The committee emphasized that Juxta is not resigning but transitioning roles as their business grows.

Employee Check-ins/Performance Reviews

- The committee has been conducting annual reviews with employees and Sunday service presenters (with a few exceptions due to travel).
- Feedback has been positive with staff sharing thoughtful suggestions for improvement.
- Overall, employee relationships and performance are going well, apart from the ongoing childcare reliability issue.

Cooperative Campus Ministry

- Cooperative Campus Ministry (CCM) is a group at Michigan Tech made up of local faith communities and campus-based religious groups.
- They meet only a few times a year (sometimes just two or three meetings total).
- Their main effort is organizing the annual Faith Fair/Faith Walk each September, where local congregations set up tables on campus to share information and connect with students.
- Jane Bodi previously served as the Fellowship's representative but has stepped down.
- A new representative is needed; Elen expressed willingness to attend the next meeting but not to serve as the long-term representative, due to childcare responsibilities and scheduling. She will attend the Sept 10th meeting, which is likely the only meeting before the Faith Fair.
- Volunteers will be asked to help with the Faith Fair following further information from Elen post Sept 10th meeting.

MUUSJN

- Paul previously served as KUUF’s representative; after he stepped down, Horst took over.
- Traditionally, KUUF has maintained membership and supported MUUSJN financially.
- The usual contribution is \$200 for membership, plus an additional \$200 donation, totaling \$400 annually.

Enderby/Badel Motion to continue this contribution was unanimously approved.

- Horst plans to step back gradually as he now lives in Arizona full-time. His role includes receiving updates on social justice issues, attending occasional online meetings, and reporting back to KUUF for potential actions.
- The board discussed identifying a replacement, potentially from the Social Justice Committee or another member interested in social justice advocacy.
- Posting an announcement in the fellowship bulletin was suggested to solicit volunteers.

Thank you note recommendations

- Committee is disbanding
- Moving forward the Board will brainstorm at meetings and accept volunteers for writing thank-you notes. Current assignments:
 - Melissa--Team dealing with water issue needs cards Bill, Craig, Dave, David Watkins
 - Trista—Elaine, for her time handling “thank you cards”
 - Lora—Vicki and Craig for landscaping and donations

Sunday Services Committee

- Finalized name change. The previous “Worship Committee” name being linked to deity-focused terminology, which does not reflect all congregants. Agreed to change the name to Sunday Services Committee to align with KUUF operations and inclusive language.

- Outdoor service scheduled for August 17th at East Houghton Park (skateboard park). Details will be included in the newsletter.
- Jane and Laura will discuss Land Acknowledgements with Ana next Sunday. Plan is to simplify and shorten acknowledgements; full details and resources will continue to be shared via the Digest newsletter.
- Observations that discussions after services have varied in length. Recognized need for flexibility depending on community events, number of participants, and childcare considerations. Consensus: time limits should be managed thoughtfully, but flexibility is acceptable.

Next Meeting Date – 8/20/25, 12:30 offsite