

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Lawrence  
 Executive Board Agenda  
 September 18, 2025 DRAFT

ZOOM ONLY Meeting!

Our Mission is to **love** inclusively, **nurture** spiritual growth and connection,  
 freely **explore** life's big questions, and **act** for justice.

Goals for 2025-2026

	Chalice Lighting- Mary Holm Board Member Check-In - What is on your heart/mind?	
	Congregational Comments: (3 minutes per person)	
	Approval of Consent March <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• August Minutes</li> <li>• Treasurer's Report and Financial Reports</li> </ul>	
<b>Information Items/Reports</b>		
	Board Member UUCL Updates Retreat Schedule Minister RE Report Update on Flourishing Fund (?) Refresh and Renew Mid America Update (attached) July/August Follow up review	
<b>Discussion/Action Items:</b>		
	Strategic Plan Prep Activity (Mary) Google Form (15 mins) <a href="https://forms.gle/qpGT5NLSbHTiEa6o6">https://forms.gle/qpGT5NLSbHTiEa6o6</a>  DISC assessment and discussion about how our individual styles can create a stronger team (30 mins) <a href="https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/">https://www.123test.com/disc-personality-test/</a>  Google Groups update (Mary)	

	Approval of Equipment Purchase Policy Update on transition from debit card to credit card	
	Process review, follow up and Board Member Closing Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Is there anyone you would like to give appreciation to for tonight's meeting?</i></li> <li>• <i>Is there anything you would like to repair/resolve from tonight's meeting?</i></li> </ul>	
Next Board Meeting: Topics/Agenda		

## Minutes

### Board Operations and Administration

The board progressed on streamlining document management and operational workflows to reduce costs and improve efficiency.

- Brian Vancil highlighted that uploading Docx files counts against allotted space on the board drive, while converting documents to Google Docs format avoids fees.
  - Changing upload settings to auto-convert documents can reduce long-term storage costs.
  - This approach supports tighter budget controls and operational savings.
  - Board members were encouraged to adopt this practice for future uploads.
  - The adjustment reflects a practical move to optimize existing technology use.
- The board approved the equipment purchasing policy, balancing oversight with operational flexibility to prevent budget surprises without slowing down necessary acquisitions.
  - The policy defines equipment as tangible items with expected useful life over one year used by multiple groups
  - Items normally covered under committee budgets, like sheet music or subscriptions, are exempt from the policy to avoid unnecessary approvals
  - Purchases over \$100 require committee approval and those over \$350 require board approval, with supervisors playing a key role where no committee exists
  - The policy will be stored on the shared Google Drive and communicated to committee chairs for consistent application
  - The board acknowledged that the policy would evolve over time based on practical experience and feedback

- The board discussed the need for clear building closing procedures, suggesting simple walkthrough checklists and delegation to responsible persons to ensure security and accountability after events
  - Existing checklists from prior policies may be updated and digitized for ease of use.
  - The practice aims to prevent oversights and improve building security.
  - Delegation allows flexibility while maintaining accountability.
  - These steps support smoother operations and risk mitigation.

## **Financial Management and Budget Oversight**

The finance committee reported active efforts to improve financial controls and explore better banking options for the organization

- Brad and Rilie Kafer researched replacing the current debit card with a credit card from a local bank or credit union
  - The committee found credit unions often have poor multi-account management features unsuitable for business control needs.
  - Input from UUA's Matthew Johnson confirmed the challenges of credit union products for their purposes.
  - The committee plans further phone calls to clarify interest processes before bringing a recommendation to the board next month
  - The goal is to improve financial oversight and purchasing controls while maintaining ease of use.
- Mary Holm emphasized the critical importance of the in transit funds as a large financial gift with limited likelihood of similar future support, urging caution on budget messaging
  - She expressed concern about inadvertently conveying a negative financial outlook.
  - The board recognized the need for a consistent verbal strategy to communicate financial realities with abundance and gratitude.
  - This strategy will be discussed further during the upcoming planning retreat
  - Clear, unified messaging is expected to strengthen stakeholder confidence and engagement.
- The board reviewed the Flourishing Fund and its usage for operating expenses, with a plan to evaluate income and expenditures carefully to stay fiscally responsible
  - This review aims to maintain fund integrity and avoid overspending.
  - Future budgets will consider phased drawing from the fund over a planned three-year horizon.
  - The Refresh and Renew committee will incorporate these insights into their recommendations.
  - This oversight protects the organization's long-term financial health.

## **Leadership Development and Team Dynamics**

The board engaged in an activity to better understand the team's personalities to improve collaboration and effectiveness

- Facilitated by Rilie Kafer, the group completed a DISC personality assessment revealing a team profile with high assertiveness and a balance of task- and people-oriented styles
  - Most board members showed strong dominance and influence or steadiness traits, indicating a team capable of decisiveness and collaboration.
  - Recognition of diverse styles helps anticipate potential tension and improves empathy during discussions.
  - Team members shared how their personalities contribute unique strengths, from decisiveness and problem-solving to relationship-building and stability.
  - This exercise fosters self-awareness and prepares the board to navigate interpersonal dynamics proactively.
- The retreat series will continue with discussions on board norms and covenant setting, followed by an action planning meeting at a later time aiming to align working styles with strategic priorities
  - The personality insights will inform how the board sets expectations for communication and decision-making.
  - This phased approach supports sustained team cohesion and operational excellence.
  - The final session is designed to produce actionable plans reflecting shared understanding.
  - Leadership development is positioned as a foundation for long-term organizational success.

## Program and Facility Planning

Efforts to support congregational programs and facility improvements were reviewed, including upcoming requests for playground funding and building maintenance.

- The Refresh and Renew committee is actively working on recommendations for playground purchases, with a possible board approval request at next month's meeting.
  - Mary Holm committed to sharing images and details of planned improvements to inform board decisions.
  - The committee aims for a three-year phased funding plan, aligning with overall budget stability.
  - Coordination with relevant staff and committees will ensure integrated planning.
  - This reflects a strategic investment in community engagement and facility enhancement.
- The board acknowledged ongoing maintenance challenges, such as ground holes and HVAC issues, relying on the Buildings and Grounds (B&G) committee to manage these operational matters
  - Informal handling of large repairs has been effective so far, with flexibility for urgent needs.
  - The decentralized committee structure allows responsive decision-making.
  - Board members emphasized the importance of communication and oversight without micromanagement.
  - This approach balances operational agility with accountability.

- Committee chairs like Sara Vancil received positive recognition for managing multiple responsibilities effectively, underscoring leadership capacity across church functions
  - This highlights the need to support chairs with clear policies and resources.
  - Ongoing committee engagement is vital for smooth program delivery.
  - Board members plan follow-up meetings to strengthen chair support.
  - Empowered committees contribute to a healthy organizational culture.

## Communication and Information Sharing

- Rev Nori reported that six non-board volunteers have committed to serving as Sunday greeters, lowering the frequency of individual duties to less than once per month.
  - A 30-minute Zoom training session is planned for all greeters and board members to align expectations.
  - The Sunday summary document now includes greeter sign-up and Religious Education (RE) attendance tabs to facilitate coordination.
  - This system supports volunteer engagement and smoother Sunday operations.
  - Clear communication channels reduce confusion and enhance participation.
- The board discussed improving Google Groups usage for committee communications, with plans to promote its adoption among chairs to centralize information sharing
  - This aims to reduce email overload and streamline messaging.
  - Committee chairs will receive training and resources to adopt this tool effectively.
  - Improved digital communication supports operational transparency.
  - This aligns with efforts to modernize internal workflows.
- Access issues with a Google Form for retreat homework were quickly identified and corrected, demonstrating responsiveness to technical challenges
  - Ensuring all members can contribute to shared documents is critical for engagement.
  - This incident highlights the importance of clear instructions and access controls.
  - Quick resolution maintains momentum for retreat activities.
  - Effective tech support underpins successful board collaboration.

## Membership and Congregational Engagement

Board members underscored the importance of tracking and reporting on membership and Religious Education participation to maintain congregational vitality.

- Bill Hagel suggested adding membership metrics to the minister's report, including new members, losses, and membership class activities.
  - Rev Nori confirmed that such data is regularly included and publicly available.
  - Similarly, RE attendance is tracked weekly by Clay and reported in the Sunday summary.
  - These data points help the board monitor growth and engagement trends.
  - Keeping focus on these metrics supports strategic planning and community health.
- The choir's active participation with approximately 12 members demonstrates a strong cultural and community aspect within the congregation.
  - This participation is viewed as a positive sign for congregational strength.
  - The board expressed optimism for future growth scaling these activities.

- Engagement in music and arts is integral to member retention and attraction.
- These successes reinforce the need for ongoing support of creative ministries.

## **Action items**

### **Mary Holm**

- Continue meeting with committee chairs; follow up on Google Groups usage and improvement for communication; prepare playground purchase visuals for board review; ensure policy documents are uploaded and accessible to committee chairs

### **Rilie Kafer**

- Finalize and update equipment purchasing policy to include supervisory approval wording; add adoption date footer; upload to policy drive; refine credit card vendor research and report back at next meeting; lead facilitation and distribution of personality test results

### **Rev Nori**

- Schedule and conduct greeter training Zoom session; coordinate follow-up with Refresh and Renew committee; share attendance and Sunday summary access; oversee staff purchase approvals and coordination with committees; provide input on building closing procedures delegation

### **Kristen**

- Develop committee chair Google Drive folder for easy access to relevant documents including policies

### **Board Members**

- Complete personality DISC assessments; review equipment purchasing policy and provide feedback if necessary; prepare for retreat sessions

### **Refresh and Renew Committee**

- Meet to discuss playground plans and budget impact; prepare recommendations for board by end of calendar year

