

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the September 12, 2024 Board Meeting

Approved by the Board October 10, 2024

Board Members:

Bobbi Pace, President (Absent)  
Sue Trotta-Smith, Vice-President  
Tom Ward, Treasurer  
Clerk – *vacant position*

Joan Ciano  
Alissa Chapin  
Kathy Haskins  
Kyle Manning  
Christine Shadle

Also present:

David Stagg, Management Team  
Rev. Stephen Kendrick, ex officio  
Sunny Joy McMillan, Ministerial Intern  
Becky Friedkin, Management Team (brick discussion only)

1. In Bobbi Pace’s absence, Vice President Sue Trotta-Smith led the meeting, which was conducted via Zoom. The meeting was called to order at 7:03.
2. Sue Trotta-Smith lit the chalice and read the poem, “Hope,” by Kay Ryan. She also read our shared covenant.
3. David Stagg read the USNH Visions and Aspirations.
4. The minutes from the August meeting were approved.
5. David Stagg reviewed the MT report – 1.8 “Communication and Support to the Board” and then gave a brief update of discussions from the Management Team’s August 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.
6. There was some discussion about finding a replacement for Jackie Trimble-Shapiro, who was the sole member serving on the music committee. In the past, the music committee was made up of several members, rather than only one; multiple members are felt to be a better way to go.
7. Becky Friedkin spoke about the **Memorial Garden Renovation and Engraved Brick Fundraiser**, an initiative to refurbish the memorial garden and patio and incorporate memorial bricks into the patio. Pamela Weil, who is a master

gardener, is heading the initiative. Memorial bricks will come in two sizes: 4” x 8” and “8 x 8”. The Building and Grounds Committee recommended a price of \$125 (as a donation) for a small brick; they have not yet agreed upon a price for a large brick, but a range of \$200-275 was suggested.

The board was asked to consider:

a) Who can be honored with a memorial brick? (The patio has room for many bricks.) Since it is a memorial garden, the Management Team recommends limiting honorees to former members or friends who have died, as well as to former staff and ministers (who may still be living). Board members who were present agreed with the Management Team’s recommendation, but after some discussion felt that individual congregants should also be given the opportunity to purchase their own brick, which could be stored until the time of their death.

b) The Management Team thinks the founders should be honored with large bricks, as should former staff and ministers; but should large bricks also be available to everyone? Small bricks have room for only three lines of text (18 characters including spaces, on each line). Board members who were present felt there should be no restrictions placed on the size of anyone’s brick.

c) What should the donation price be for the larger bricks? Though \$200-\$275 had been suggested, the Management Team would like to have a scholarship fund made available so that everyone who wants to purchase a brick, small or large, may do so. This scholarship would be funded by donations and would be held in a Temporarily Restricted Fund. After some discussion, it was put forth that it might be easier to have a “suggested donation,” (but be willing to accept less), rather than folks having to request a “scholarship” if needed. If we decide to go with a “suggested donation,” there was some discussion that \$250 might be a good price for the large brick.

8. Minister’s Report: Stephen reported that the summer services were very well attended this year, and he feels there is much enthusiasm within the congregation. He thinks there are over 500 people (made up of a combination of members and friends) who currently attend our services, and he highlighted that we recently held a dedication ceremony for five children. Stephen also shared that our Connections Coordinator, Libby Makela-Johnson, has invited approximately 26 people (frequent visitors) to attend the upcoming New Member class in early October.

Sunny is back with us for her last year. She mentioned to Stephen that there is someone in the incoming class at Yale Divinity School who is thinking about Unitarian Universalist ministry and several people who are interested in looking into Unitarian Universalism. Stephen feels it is important to maintain a relationship with Yale Divinity School. Sunny shared that she will be teaching a class, "UU Mystics," as part of Small Group Ministry this fall.

The Climate Revival has been delayed until March 8th and 9th of next year.

9. Treasurer's Report: Tom did not have anything specific to report but said the books have been closed for the previous fiscal year, and things are going well.

10. The board retreat will be held on Saturday morning, September 21, 2024, from 9:00 to 12:00. Arrival time and continental breakfast will take place between 9:00 and 9:30.

11. Regarding the ministerial evaluation, Sue shared that Bobbi said the model will be ready by the October board meeting, and we will need to discuss putting policies in place. It was suggested that the UUA could be a resource for us.

12. Tom Ward shared his thoughts and led the discussion on Article II's implications for USNH, including the importance of maintaining the 8 Principles and Sources. Stephen reassured everyone that we are not obliged to abandon them and that we should leave our printed copy of the Principles in the foyer where they are currently displayed. We concluded that the change to Article II doesn't mean that we need to throw out the old, but rather that we incorporate the new with the old. Stephen suggested we put the new logo on the back of our Order of Service, and from time to time we can include the 8 Principles, as well. Sunny created a condensed definition of Article II that could be incorporated into the new logo. We talked about the role of the anti-racism task force and the importance of continuing the mission of anti-racism. Tom talked about the excerpt from Article II that states the "UUA will actively engage its members in the transformation of the world through liberating love." We agreed that this was a serious statement and something that needed ongoing discussion.

13. Fat Liberation Study: The board briefly discussed the outline of the study and the request for USNH to be a sponsor. The board agreed to invite Jamie Johnson to our October 10<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss her proposal in detail.

14. Tom proposed talking at our next meeting about the section of Visions and Aspirations that begin with “Joyfully welcome...” Stephen suggested that members of the Connections Team (other than Kathy and Kyle) may wish to join the discussion, as they are the first people that visitors usually encounter.

15. It was suggested that thank-you notes be sent to: the folks responsible for putting together the Labor Day Retreat (Sue), Christopher, for procuring the piano (Bobbi), the USNH General Assembly representatives (Bobbi), Jackie Trimble-Shapiro (Joan)

16. Process observation: The board felt the meeting went smoothly, especially for a Zoom meeting.

17. The meeting adjourned at 9:03. The next meeting is scheduled for October 10, 2024, at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kyle Manning

Attachments:

Monitoring Report Policy 1.8 Communication and Support to the Board  
Fat Liberation Study Action proposal for GA, from Jamie Johnson

## MT monitoring of Policy Governance Section 1.8

(MT responses in red)

(The Management Team last reported on this section on September 14<sup>th</sup> 2023)

We note that the MT interpretations of each of the following sections says:

MT Interpretation: No interpretation required

### **1.8 Communication and Support to the Board**

The Management Team shall not permit the Board to be uninformed, misinformed, or unsupported in its work.

Accordingly, the Management Team may not:

- a. Fail to inform the Board in a timely manner of relevant trends, public policy initiatives, public events of the organization, material external and internal changes.

The Management Team (MT) has attended all the regular monthly meetings of the Board. We have provided reports on financial matters (see c. below) and the other Monitoring Reports required by the Board according to their schedule.

In October 2023 we reported to the Board on the discontinuation of our demographics database "ChurchDB" and the need to transition to a new system. We described our evaluation of the "Breeze" database and our plans for converting to this software program. In November 2023 we reported on the creation of a security working group led by MT member Mark Bauer. The group will review all aspects of security including information security and the physical building security including window film installation and improvement to door locks.

In January 2024, at the request of the Board we began sending a summary of our regular bi-monthly MT meetings to the Board and to our DLRE and Congregational Administrator. These are presented in time for any questions or clarification to be raised at the following monthly Board meetings.

In March 2024 we asked for Board priorities for the upcoming budget. Board members stressed need for emphasis on pastoral care, USNH continuing its level of support to UUA, and staff COLA increases. We also requested and received authorization to meet possible deficits with funds from Gifts & Donations, unallocated cash, and Capital Funds. We also received approval to reduce the Operating Reserve from 15% to 10% of the projected expenses excluding any contribution to the Capital Fund.

In May 2024 we presented our proposed budget for fiscal 2024-25 for discussion and approval. We also sought approval from the Board for a sole-source contract for replacement of the roof section above the kitchen and front lobby (Section A) by Seal-Tite, our preferred roofing contractor.

In July 2024 we presented our efforts to implement a solar energy plan via a renewed application the state solar lottery and our negotiations on the new "Over the Rainbow" daycare lease agreement.

## MT monitoring of Policy Governance Section 1.8

- b. Fail to report to the Board, in a timely manner any significant information it requires including anticipated media coverage, threatened or impending legal issues, claims, or lawsuits.

There have been no incidents of the type described in the policy since our last report

- c. Fail to submit the monitoring data required by the Board policy "3.5 Monitoring Management Team Performance" in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion, and which includes the Management Team's interpretations of the policy.

MT has provided reports as required by 3.5.2 a) according to the schedule determined by the Board. These reports have included statements confirming compliance or non-compliance in accordance with MT interpretations previously determined. We have routinely evaluated the interpretations but no changes have been proposed since our last report. We reported on financial sections 1.5 and 1.6 in March of 2024 and the report was audited and approved by the Treasurer.

- d. Fail to advise the Board if, in the Management Team's opinion, the Board is not in compliance with its own policies on Governance Process and Board-Management Team Delegation.

There has been no occasion where MT has formed any such opinion since our last report

- e. Fail to report in a timely manner, any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any Ends or Executive Limitations policies of the Board regardless of the Board's monitoring schedule.

MT is not aware of any such actual or anticipated noncompliance since our last report

- f. Fail to recommend changes in Board policies, when the need becomes known to them.

In December 2023 the security working group recommended posting a statement that USNH is a "firearms free community" on the property. After much difficult and protracted discussions over the next months with staff and others it was decided to postpone any action for the time being.

- g. Fail to gather and consider as many staff and external points of view, issues, and options as needed, for fully informed Board choices.

MT has consistently sought the opinion of staff, committee members and others before bringing recommendations to the Board. MT has attended monthly Board meetings with the intention of keeping the Board informed of any matters requiring Board attention

- h. Fail to provide a mechanism for official Board, officer, or committee communications.

MT has worked closely with our congregational administrator to facilitate all forms of communication on behalf of the Board

- i. Fail to deal with the Board as a whole except when (a) fulfilling individual requests for information or (b) responding to officers or committees duly charged by the Board.

## **MT monitoring of Policy Governance Section 1.8**

Formal discussions between the MT and the Board have taken place at monthly in-person Board meetings. Some matters have been discussed beforehand by email or phone with the President or by email with the whole Board before being brought to a Board meeting.

- j. Fail to limit public statements about the official position of the congregation or Board on controversial social, political, and/or congregational issues to what the congregation or Board has formally and explicitly adopted as positions of record. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to infringe upon the fundamental principle of freedom of the pulpit.

MT has made no public statements about matters described in this section.

***Section 1.8 of the Policy governance Handbook was approved by the Board: March 12, 2015***

***Changes to MT interpretation were approved by the Board: September 12, 2019***

We report compliance with sections a. through j. above  
MT 9/12/2024

## Fat Liberation Study Action Proposal

**D R A F T**

**COVER SHEET**

**Fat Liberation: Making Space for Acceptance and Inclusion of Larger Bodies (working title)**

Congregational Study Action Issue for 2025

**Submitted by:** Rev. Ian W. Riddell, [revianwriddell@gmail.com](mailto:revianwriddell@gmail.com), 608-772-0957

**General Assembly Contact(s):** Jamie Johnson, [jamijohnsoncpe@gmail.com](mailto:jamijohnsoncpe@gmail.com), 203-450-3877

**This CSAI is sponsored by:**

**Congregation Name:** Unitarian Society of New Haven???

**Contact person:** Jamie Johnson, [jamijohnsoncpe@gmail.com](mailto:jamijohnsoncpe@gmail.com), 203-450-3877

*This may be repeated if there is more than one congregation.*

**INITIAL PROPOSAL**

**Fat Liberation: Making Space for Acceptance and Inclusion of Larger Bodies (working title)**

**Issue**

*Fat people are discriminated against in healthcare, employment, and housing and stigmatized in all areas of life. Fat liberation seeks to end this injustice, which exists at the intersection of racism, sexism, ableism, and capitalism. By studying weight bias, Unitarian Universalists can advocate for the acceptance of all bodies.*

**Need**

*The study of weight bias by Unitarian Universalists will emphasize justice and love in the face of stigmatization and discrimination; correct harm done in our denomination and society; and further the cause of bodily acceptance. Despite being a growing conversation in our society, we have not formally studied this topic.*

**FINAL DOCUMENT**

**Grounding in Unitarian Universalism**

*Unitarian Universalists have long advocated for justice in our interconnected world, particularly around anti-racist and feminist issues. Engagement in fat liberation would expand our denomination's commitment to equality and love, and signal to all people that "there is no wrong way to have a body."*

**Topics for Congregational Study**

1. *What is fat liberation? What is anti-fat bias?*
2. *How is fat liberation a justice issue?*
3. *Why isn't body positivity or even body neutrality enough?*
4. *How does fat liberation intersect with anti-racism work?*



## Fat Liberation Study Action Proposal

5. *How does anti-fat bias tie into capitalism?*
6. *How does anti-fat bias relate to healthism and ableism?*
7. *How does anti-fat bias negatively affect children?*
8. *Aren't UUs already inclusive?*
9. *Why is this important now?*

### Possible Congregational/Regional Actions

1. *Educate congregation on fat liberation, including presenting a lay service on fat liberation or showing films about fat liberation, such as My Fat Friend*
2. *Discuss how moralizing food is harmful to both adults and children of all sizes.*
3. *Create resources list for equipment, films, etc.*
4. *Become an accessible and welcoming physical space (seating, pulpit and chancel, doorways, bathroom stalls, clothing)*
5. *Become fat liberationist in documents, programs, and worship (by-laws, worship, Religious Education, potlucks and coffee hour, leadership)*
6. *Become vocal in support of fat liberation by spreading the word beyond the congregation (advertise, partner, advocate, integrate)*
7. *Present a fat liberation workshop at district meetings.*
8. *Advocate for legislative positions that foster fat liberation, including non-discrimination clauses in city and state ordinances*
9. *Create interfaith networks and committees.*

### Related Prior Social Witness Statements

None of these should exactly mirror your issue, but there may be prior social witness statements (Actions of Immediate Witness, Statements of Conscience, previous CSAs) that are related. If so, list them here. See <https://www.uua.org/action/statements/search>.

Related UUA, Regional or State Action network initiatives, along with previous actions and statements on related issues, with dates (if applicable)

- *Undoing Systemic White Supremacy: A Call to Prophetic Action 2021 Statement of Conscience* (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/undoing-systemic-white-supremacy>)
- *Organizing for Health Equity Action of Immediate Witness 2023* (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/2023-uua-action-immediate-witness-health-equity>)
- *Ethical Eating: Food & Environmental Justice 2011 Statement of Conscience* (<https://www.uua.org/action/statements/ethical-eating-food-environmental-justice>)
- *Statement on Fat Liberation: UUA Board, September 11, 2023* ([https://www.uua.org/files/2024-01/bot\\_min\\_09112023.pdf](https://www.uua.org/files/2024-01/bot_min_09112023.pdf))

### UU and/or Other Organizations Addressing This Issue:

Please note if there are already connections built between these organizations and UU leaders or congregations

- EqUUal Access (table sharing at GA)

## Fat Liberation Study Action Proposal

- TRUUST
- National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance (Tigress Osborn spoke at GA)

### Resource List

List what resources can congregations use for further study. These lists can be collapsed or broken out into groups. At the end you can link to other longer lists. This is meant to be a start, not an exhaustive list.

### Online Resources:

Lindley Ashline, "Body Liberation with Lindley on Instagram"

<https://www.instagram.com/bodyliberationwithlindley/>

Minna Bromberg, "Fat Torah" <https://www.fattorah.com/>

Ragen Chastain, "Dances With Fat" <https://danceswithfat.org/>

Aubrey Gordon, "Your Fat Friend: Essays on Life as a Very Fat Person"

<https://www.yourfatfriend.com/>

Aubrey Gordon and Michael Hobbes, "Maintenance Phase" <http://maintenancephase.com/>

Hilary Kinavey and Dana Sturtevant, "Be Nourished" <https://benourished.org/>

Sonya Renee Taylor, "The Body Is Not an Apology"

<https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/>

### Bibliography:

#### Books, other print resources

Lindo Bacon, *Health At Every Size: The Surprising Truth About Your Weight* (BenBella Books, 2010)

Lindo Bacon & Lucy Aphramor, *Body Respect: What Conventional Health Books Get Wrong, Leave Out, and Just Plain Fail to Understand about Weight* (BenBella Books, 2014)

Aubrey Gordon, *What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About Fat* (Beacon Press, 2020)

Anastasia Kidd, *Fat Church: Claiming a Gospel of Fat Liberation* (Pilgrim Press, 2023)

Sabrina Strings, *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia* (NYU Press, 2020)

Sonya Renee Taylor, *The Body Is Not an Apology: The Power of Radical Self-Love* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Second Edition: 2021) and *Your Body Is Not an Apology Workbook: Tools for Living Radical Self-Love* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Workbook Edition: 2021)

## Fat Liberation Study Action Proposal

### Films, Videos and online media:

*My Fat Friend*

### Other Endorsing Organizations & Individuals

- Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt?
- Fat Liberation Steering Committee
- UU Fat Liberation on FB?
- Tigress Osborn, NAAFA?
- Anastasia Kidd, author?