

Minutes of the Meeting of the USNH Board of Trustees
November 14, 2024
Approved by the Board December 12, 2024

Board Members attending:
Bobbi Pace, President
Sue Trotta-Smith, Vice President
Tom Ward, Treasurer
Joan Ciano
Kathy Haskins
Kyle Manning

Absent: Alissa Chapin
Christine Shadle

Others attending: Rev. Stephen Kendrick, Minister, *ex officio*
Sunny Joy McMillan, Ministerial Intern
Libby Makela Johnson, Connections Coordinator
Patrick Korth, Connections Team
David Stagg, Management Team
Debbie Smith, Connections Team

1. President Bobbi Pace called the meeting to order at 7:03.
2. Kyle read "Pity the Nation," a 2007 Lawrence Ferlinghetti poem after writings by Kahlil Gibran in 1939. We noted it is sadly all too very relevant.
3. Bobbi posed a question: Describe your experience on this Board

Some responses: Good wise leadership; unity of purpose: teamwork supporting USNH affairs; collegial; measured representation of varied perspectives; educational experience of what is involved in management decisions (very reassuring); steady, wise and compassionate handling of the extensive turmoil around ministerial transitions.

David, from a management team perspective, says he has seen individual growth.

Sunny enjoys seeing Polity Governance theory alive in practice, exhibiting a healthy congregation having time and talent which is brought to the Board "with love and goodwill."

Stephen has seen good fellowship among the Board members: appreciation, good humor, and affection.

Bobbi spoke of her last presidency 28 years ago when there was no policy governance. She likes this current governance system, and very much appreciates the tasks taken on by the management team, so the Board is able to focus on supporting the future needs of the congregation. Bobbi likes this "visionary" Board. She supports a 2-year presidency.

4. We took turns reading the Board Covenant and then the Visions and Aspirations.
5. Bobbi asked for discussion: What does it mean to be "joyfully welcoming?" What's working? What's needed? Connections Coordinator Libby and members of the Connections Team participated. Some thoughts:

Welcoming at the door is going well. Filling out forms can be a bottleneck, taking away from time in the sanctuary. Can we streamline? e.g. shorter information forms with a follow-up call or email?

The political table can be a good introduction and invitation to join, or to go deeper into congregational life.

There must be a clear message that the *New to UU* class is informational, with no obligation to join.

Suggestion: perhaps have more newcomers' potlucks, breakfasts, other integrations?

Our future:

There may be conversation with NE UU group re:

- a. How do we get folks in the door?
- b. How do we modernize to give folks what they need today?

The Council of Chairs meeting in February will be discussing this. Libby as well as Kyle and Kathy will be in attendance.

How can we facilitate younger families to become their own group(s)?

There is lots of initial interest/joining, then drift-off. We need to build relationships.

Should we consider a mentoring system? Mentor would issue personal invitations to our events.

Thinking of the epidemic of loneliness, perhaps there is a way to create “families.”

6. Bobbi asked for approval of the minutes of our last meeting. They were approved with no changes.

7. David Stagg, Management Team Report: David had nothing to add to the report that was sent. The Memorial Garden Brick Fundraiser will be presented via eblast, handouts, and introduction from the pulpit the week before Thanksgiving.

8. Tom Ward, Treasurer, reported for 1st quarter July-Sept: all is in order and in balance.

9. Rev. Stephen Kendrick, Minister’s Report

Stephen had a very positive meeting with a candidate for a “pastoral visitor” who would provide 3 “gentle visits” per week to congregants who are unable to attend but are wanting/needing connection. This person would also meet with the Pastoral Care team once a month. Stephen has offered a position to them. They are completing an interim ministry elsewhere in CT. Both parties hope for a long-term engagement, acknowledging the position is experimental.

Stephen will be with us for a third year.

Stephen is in communication with a Yale Divinity School student who is very interested in an internship with USNH. Jonathan Deane is a psychotherapist and a musician.

Jesse Greist’s new title and job description, acknowledging his many-faceted contributions to USNH, is under discussion.

10. Sunny Joy McMillan’s Ministerial Intern Report

Sunny’s internship is adding competencies in her path to ministry: participating in the upcoming stewardship campaign; teaching Sunday morning 7-8 grade RE classes; involvement with our Waverly program; her UU Mystics course. We all appreciate all she has added to congregational life. She achieved candidate status in September and will have a career assessment in January. Sunny will be ordained here at USNH in the fall.

11. Bobbi initiated discussion of an internal complaint re lawn signage / public statements.

Several small lawn signs were placed by our UU the Vote team along the USNH driveway a week or so before the election, urging people to “Vote Yes” on expanded absentee voting. Though this is a non-partisan issue, after brief discussion, we agreed that our Management Team should draft procedures/operational rules, perhaps with some Board input, for our property and signage.

12. Sue Trotta-Smith addressed the Climate Justice Revival scheduled for March 8-9, 2025. She has reviewed website information and will do more training. The first team meeting will be in January. They will discuss what recruitment is needed. They will consult with nearby congregations that have already held a Revival. Snow date is April 19-20.

13. Ministerial Evaluation: Bobbi will send a simplified evaluation form to the Board members regarding the upcoming Ministerial Evaluation. Various groups will do evaluations. There will be a framework to work from.

14. Reminder: Congregational Meeting will be December 8, 2024, at noon. If the service is short, perhaps

It can be held shortly after the service.

15. Bobbi asked for suggestions for the next recipients of thank-you notes. UU the Vote team?

16. Process Observation notes: All felt we followed procedures successfully.

17. President Bobbi Pace moved for adjournment and all seconded. The meeting ended at 8:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Joan Ciano