

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of  
Trustees September 20, 2015

*Accepted October 8, 2015*

Board Members Present: Mary Donohue, Daniel Gelperin, Holly Hawkins, Russell Heinrich, Mary Losee, Pamela Miller, Bobbi Pace

Board Members Absent: Merrily Kaplan, John Manning, Bernice Marie-Daily, Suzanne Miller,

Also Present: Sandra Frawley, Georgia Jennings, David Jones

Holly called the meeting to order at 9:15am and Pam recorded the minutes. A quorum of Board Members was present, and the meeting proceeded with Holly presiding.

Pam read the covenant.

Proposal to move unrestricted funds into the operating budget for 2015-16 staffing:

David presented the MT proposal that the necessary funds for hiring proposed staff be moved from unrestricted funds into the operating budget for 2015-16. An evaluation of the office done prior to hiring the most recent office staff recommended that there be 2 full time staff members for the office. Current candidates were very well qualified. MT decided to change the open position to 2 part-time positions which add up to more than 1 full time position. The Office Manager position would be .8 time and the Operations Manager .6 time. The Operations Manager is a term position. Insurance fees are dependent on demographic data and are prorated based on percent of time worked.

Outcomes will be defined in the near term, probably next month. MT knows the topics but not approach to take measure outcomes. Basic job description for positions are required and will be crucial to define steps for monitoring. The Operations Manager will help with managing building. This is necessary since there are no volunteers. MT is aware of the need to provide evidence of effectiveness. MT is convinced they have best team. They need time to determine where and how they can get the most for their efforts.

There is concern that a full time office position was not enough. Sandy noted that neither candidate was exactly right for the original 1 person job. Required tasks were grouped by role as the original job description was reworked. MT sees this as an opportunity to redesign things, allowing for potential restructuring and clarification of roles. Board members asked about hiring staff without clear expectations. MT noted

that they have talked to each candidate about expectations. They have been made aware their roles will evolve.

Board members asked whether we are certain that we have enough funds not to violate the 25% reserve requirement. How was measurement done to determine that sufficient funds are available? We have enough for this year but will need to determine whether the expense can be maintained in the future. That is why one of the positions is a 12 month term position.

Board members asked how the capital budget would be funded if unrestricted funds are allocated for staff. MT responded that less money is likely to be needed for capital expenses. The expectation is that the Connecticut Green Bank funding will provide savings that had not been anticipated when capital budget planning was first raised. We do need to create a capital budget to be in compliance with policy. Last year the board said we would have budgeted a capital budget for the upcoming Congregational Meeting. The congregation has expressed concern about taking care of property. MT sees that as happening. The Operations Manager will help with this need. MT understands that we are to help set priorities around ends. Board members want to be sure the congregation is represented. We will have to be ready to respond to congregation about budget questions. MT reiterated that the unrestricted funds were to be used for an annualized cost.

The board asked about the possibility of adding a membership coordinator. MT responded that it is something under consideration. It could be done at low expense for the rest of year. Some of the duties could be taken up by others.

MT was asked which position would be filled if USNH were to hire if only one? What activities wouldn't get done? MT replied that nobody can do everything in the job description. To do everything in the original job description would require more than 40 hours per week. To find a single person with all necessary skills would require more than we are willing to pay for the position. We are asking a lot of MT. This is not a sustainable situation. The Board asked MT what will we do after one year. MT thinks that strategic things will happen in 1 year. With 1 FTE we would go back to limping. The two part time positions give us an opportunity to think creatively for 1 year on key questions. We have a way out by saying one is a 12 month contract. Is this more important than any other experiment we would want to do? MT says yes, this is the opportunity, seize the moment. The Operations Manager will evaluate everything in the office with an eye to how to improve it. Membership alone is a big job. Specific hours have not been set. There will be some Sunday hours but more evening hours. The expense would be significant if we continued it next year. Something would need to increase to allow it to continue.

Board members asked about Board/MT roles? Are policies working appropriately? Do they need to be revised? How should we look at this decision to approach it the right way through policy governance? Exactly what does the Board need to know to make

decisions without micromanaging? Megan has been pulled into administrative activities because of staff limitations. This will help get her out of it to focus on the pulpit.

Some discomfort was expressed regarding the level of detail in the proposal. It would be better to have more detail with a longer term assessment of finances. MT stated that we have normally gone in at low end of UUA recommendations. That was not enough to find one person who had all of the skills needed. One person who had the skills thought that 40 hours was not enough to handle the work.

**MOTION** Mary D., To approve spending up to \$25K this year from unrestricted funds to be put into the operating budget for additional personnel costs.

**SECONDED** Dan;

**PASSED:** 5 approved, 2 opposed, 0 abstentions

Adjournment:

**MOTION**, Mary D., to adjourn; **SECONDED** Mary L;

**PASSED:** 7 approved, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 am.