

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board
of Trustees August 13, 2015

Accepted September 10, 2015

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Board Members Present: Mary Donohue, Daniel Gelperin, Russ Heinrich, Merrily Kaplan, Mary Losee, John Manning, Bernice Marie-Daily, Pamela Miller, Suzanne Miller, Bobbi Pace

Board Members Absent: Holly Hawkins

Also Present: Sandra Frawley, Georgia Jennings, Megan Lloyd Joiner, David Jones

D. Gelperin called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm and P. Miller recorded the minutes. A quorum of Board Members was present, and the meeting proceeded with D. Gelperin presiding.

Chalice lighting with Reading: One Wish by Lisa Friedman

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Minutes from 7/9/15 Board Meeting

MOTION Russ Heinrich, to approve Minutes; **SECONDED** Mary Donohue; **PASSED:** 10 approved, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions

7:15 pm Megan left the room for discussion of Minister's contract.

Addendum to Minister's contract:

Russ and Sandy presented:

Addendum Part 1 to cover insurance from non-USNH source. It has no effect on taxes for either party. UA did not have a single best practice to recommend. It was suggested that this arrangement be made available to all employees who are benefit eligible. Management Team should bring this to Personnel to create a new personnel policy. The addendum to the Minister's contract part 1, is expected to save slightly over \$6K. The total saving in insurance costs is a bit over \$9K, but the reimbursement for the family's out-of-pocket premium costs for their alternative insurance will be up to 30% of our savings.

Addendum Part 2 proposes that professional expenses to be increased up to 10% of salary to cover the UA recommended coach for the minister's

first year. The difference is small given that it is prorated for 11/12 of the annual amount. Discussion points included objections to changing negotiated amount, setting limits on negotiating in the future, the board's responsibility to negotiate the package, and the measure of good will in light of the money saved on health care insurance.

MOTION Mary Donohue to split the vote on the addendum into individual votes on each item to approve the addendum to Minister's contract;

SECONDED Merrily Kaplan;

PASSED: 9 approved with 0 opposed, 1 abstention

MOTION Mary Donohue, to accept addendum 1 as provided with the change that a personnel policy will be written to allow this to be applied to all benefit eligible staff;

SECONDED Bernice Marie-Daily;

PASSED: unanimous approval

MOTION Bobbi Pace, to accept addendum 2 as written; **SECONDED** Suzanne Miller;

PASSED: 7 approved, with 3 opposed, 0 abstentions

7:36 pm Megan returned to the meeting.

Board meeting schedules:

Traditionally the board met on the 2nd Thursday of the month. That can be changed if necessary. No reason to make a change was presented by board members.

The Fall Congregational Meeting is 1 tentatively scheduled for November 1.

Management team report:

David presented the report.

Progress toward USNH Ends:

Relationships Within - Megan prepared the report and would like feedback on it. Megan raised the question of 2 services. It had been discussed with Fritz, Linda, and Bill. There is a large amount of change as she comes on board. The worship committee is considering the number of services and there will be a conversation with the congregation over the fall. Megan needs time to listen to people to determine what will be the new normal. There will not be a full RE program at the 9:15 service, instead there will be a modified multiage program.

Relationships Among - Right Relations Committee will hang posters of their covenant throughout the building. MT will adopt their own covenant. Work will be done with individual committees to create their own covenants. Lay ministry leadership will meet with Megan. ARE will host a discussion of a

Wall St Journal article, "The Return of Anti-Semitism." We are moving ahead on pledges and the full budget which was discussed at the last congregational meeting.

Relationships Beyond - Mary D. is leading the planning of a Cluster Gathering (i.e. a Mini GA) on 4/9/16. All congregations in CT within 50 miles of USNH will be invited. It may be expanded if people like it. This is an opportunity to make connections and build on synergies. Invitations have not yet been sent because they are waiting to finalize plans for the day. They are looking for feedback on what people would like to do at the gathering.

Not on the MT report - Megan already made a visit to the Whitney Ave congregation. This was facilitated by Fritz. It was positive meeting. We are looking for ways to strengthen them by collaborating with them.

Organizational Operation within MT Limitations:

Compensation and Benefits – MT is working with Jean and Greg S. to establishing 125 FSA program which should produce tax savings for staff. This was already in the personnel manual but had not been used. MT is interviewing candidates and hopes to make an offer by end of next week.

Capital budget - Most of the budget for the year has been spent. MT is determining new capital needs and will present a capital budget in the fall.

Financial condition and activities – MT will be adding one more room to the day care rental contract for additional monthly rent. This room was used by green sanctuary to stage re-gifting. We will need to find a solution for this and for space to store cleaning supplies. Megan raised the need to find space for Linda to have a desk as music director. Closets need to be cleaned out and supplies purchased last year cannot be found. There is no obvious group to cover this. MT will start by asking for help at the council of chairs meeting. Megan proposed asking the new administrator to help facilitate this type of work.

Other – Sandy explained work that is being done by Leland Torrence, who serves as an owner's rep for nonprofits in building projects. He will identify life cycle issues for multi-year projects and made initial recommendations. He will be back for roof inspection. A move from oil to gas is being considered. Mary D suggested that we check with UI, who has given money to another non-profit for energy related work. Shed cleanout will be done by Gil. David S. has been acting B&G chair since January. We need to find someone else fill this role.

Safety - We need to secure the building by locking front door during work hours. We will get a 2nd bid on a buzzer system with camera and intercoms. This work may include a keypad installation. David S. installed a louder door bell. The playscape is being fixed by the RE committee. Fencing is to meet state requirements for playgrounds. MT is working on a short staff approach to the month, the office is closed on Tuesdays.

Discussion of the report format focused on these questions: Does MT need board to provide priorities on what to focus on? Where does the board want to focus and where does it want others to focus on? How can the MT provide a sense of progress in the report? Is the report too much, not enough, about right? Under policy governance the board provides priorities. Megan stated that metrics rather than activity show progress. We need to think about whose role is what and what do we want to see from MT at certain parts of year?

Treasurer's Report

Mary L. presented the Treasurer's report. FY15 report is not finalized. It will be ready by November. MT sent letters to those who did not fulfill pledges. Pledges paid after June 30th for FY15 will be moved to last year's budget. Additional Stewardship campaign brought in \$5275. Tag sale raised \$1700. The Balance Sheet shows Liquid Assets = \$290,226. The FY16 budget is \$634,635. The mortgage balance is \$583,747. The roof loan is \$40,000.

MT left at 8:35 pm. Megan remained for the rest of the meeting.

Policy Governance education & monitoring

Dan stated that we need to plan what we want to discuss at the board retreat. Regarding policy governance monitoring we need to know what success looks like and how to recognize failure. What metrics do we want? When do we want to know what? There are many ways to go forward monitoring success. We can discuss tactics such as use of a survey. What would a survey look like?

Discussion focused on metrics and gathering information. Megan suggested that the board work with MT on metrics that will help. When does it make sense to look at different areas, for example finance each month and staff and volunteer treatment at end of year? Mary D. defined "report" as from the MT while "direct inspection" is done by the board. Megan mentioned a post on a minister's chat about how this is done elsewhere. There were few responses; some do ends reporting twice a year.

How should the board communicate with USNH people? BoT must

understand the needs of the congregation. According to the policy governance list serve at UUA, monitoring is hardest part of governance. We have to keep doing it and need to find lots of ways to gather information. One method won't solve the problem. Different subsets respond to different things. The congregation is new to thinking about this. Megan asked what ends feel most important this year? We may have to revise ends from time to time. As examples, look at worship schedule and how to keep it on trajectory. How many services should we have? Are the sermons exciting? Should the board have a table at coffee hour to discuss it? Some previous surveys have backfired because they were seen as intrusive, asking for too much information. We should consider other methods.

How do we structure the conversation? Should it be big part of the BoT retreat? Are there ideas on homework? We should come to retreat with thoughts on ways to get information and on how to engage people. Mary D suggested that members come prepared with #1 item. Bernice proposed that members prepare 3 ends to address and 3 ways to engage (i.e. get information). Can we tier by which big buckets to focus on: last year was within, should there be more focus on among, within or beyond? Dan quoted "what we've learned is that this failed to find serious problems in one of our programs...", so how do we know if something isn't working?

John said we should set goals and use metrics to determine success, that every committee should have goals that are doable. Examples of possible metrics for Membership include – How many visitors? How many visitors joined? How many become involved in a committee? How many join small group ministry? How many talk to the minister? Other committees would have different metrics. Metrics can help to tell committee whether it needs to rethink things. A committee might not be able to meet metric goals. This can give direction to committees.

BoT retreat- Sept 19th, 2015

Holly's suggestions for the retreat include what have we tried that didn't work and how can we learn from it? What are the goals for the year for the board? We can have email conversation on this. A big subject will be monitoring coming from priorities. John asked when the meeting date was decided. In future he request that we give 2 months' notice for important meetings. Others have a conflict with Sept. 19th. Location of the retreat is also an issue since it is hard to find open spaces in the fall on short notice. Dan will ask Holly to work on an alternate date.

Discussion of board's covenant

Due to lack of time, we may do this at the retreat or at the next meeting.

Thank you's

MT have been working full time this week. We know it is too much to ask of them.

Lesley has been helping in office.

Process Observations

The following comments were made by BoT members:

There was a difference in the energy level when the MT was reporting. It dropped when they left.

We need to figure out our direction. We need to find balance between interacting with the MT and other activities that we need to do.

Setting goals will give us something concrete to work toward.

Adjournment

MOTION Mary Donohue, to adjourn; **SECONDED** Russ Heinrich;
PASSED: unanimous approval

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.