

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees
October 10, 2013

Accepted November 14, 2013

Board Members Present: Holly Hawkins, Nancy Lesh, Suzanne Miller, Mary Donohue, David Jones, Rod Groff, Alison Cunningham, Bobbi Pace, Greg Seaman, Peggy Rae

Board Members Absent: None

Also Present: Emily Melcher, Gregg Burton, Lisa Anderson, David Stagg

A. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and P. Rae recorded the minutes. A quorum of Board Members was present, and the meeting proceeded with A. Cunningham presiding.

Report from the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC)

G. Burton, co-chair of the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC), reported the self study phase of the search process has gone very well and is almost finished. More than half the congregation (250 of 379 members) responded to the on-line survey, and cottage meetings have been both very well attended and well-received by participants, providing good feedback and instructive input. The MSC has also interviewed staff one-on-one and will hold cottage meetings with committee chairs Oct. 20 and with the Board at a mutually convenient time before the end of October. The MSC plans to send out a note in the next few weeks to give the congregation an idea of what it's been hearing.

The MSC will use the self study information to construct a Congregational Record, a portrait of USNH that will be part of the information packet posted at the end of November on a special password-protected website accessible to ministers seeking positions. Ministers interested in exploring USNH further will contact the MSC, and further exchange of information will take place subsequently.

E. Melcher suggested the MSC share the packet with the Board before it is posted on-line.

The importance of communication between the Board and MSC was discussed. G. Burton said it will be helpful to the MSC to know where the Board is in the governance reform process, as well as what other concerns the Board has; both of these areas can be addressed at the cottage meeting with the Board.

B. Pace noted the need for ongoing conversations between the Board and MSC as each proceeds in its activities with the congregation. She stressed it was important to avoid having two separate communication streams and mentioned in particular the need to merge information gleaned from the Board's values workshops last spring with that

obtained in the MSC's meetings. G. Burton noted the MSC based its cottage meeting questions in part on the values workshops summaries, which he, as a former Board member, was able to share with other committee members. All agreed it will be important to maintain good communication in the future for consistency of message.

The positive response to the cottage meetings was noted by G. Burton. Many participants commented on how much they enjoyed being with people outside their usual USNH circle and hoped there would be more frequent opportunities for similar mixing in the future. Board members agreed to take this on.

MSC Negotiating Team Report

L. Anderson reported on the draft contract and compensation figures proposed by the negotiating team (L. Anderson, A. Cunningham, and D. Stagg). Before going into the details, she cautioned the Board that governance really needs to be addressed to make clear the line of authority of the minister and to clarify the relationship of the associate minister.

L. Anderson distributed a handout showing proposed salary and benefits and explained the basis of the figures. The salary range (\$73,100 to \$83,100) meets UUA guidelines for a congregation of USNH's size and geographic location, but is in the lower part of the UUA's recommended range; benefits are in accord with UUA guidelines. In arriving at these figures, a central concern of the negotiating team was that, in addition to meeting UUA guidelines, the compensation package must be something USNH could realistically afford. For the purpose of calculation, the team assumed a scenario of high health insurance premiums (coverage for a 60-year old minister with family).

In discussion of the proposed compensation, deviations from current USNH personnel policies were noted by P. Rae (USNH provides a dental insurance benefit for minister and Director of Religious Education) and E. Melcher (USNH's health insurance benefit for other staff is based on a low-deductible plan). The negotiating team will revise its package to include these changes and will provide a new set of figures for approval at the October 15 Board meeting. To offset some of the increased cost, it was agreed to set the professional expense maximum reimbursement at a fixed amount (\$7,000) rather than 10% of salary.

The Board reviewed the negotiating team's draft Letter of Call and Ministry Agreement, which was based on the UUA's model agreement with modifications. L. Anderson explained this draft contract will be the starting point for negotiations and will be posted, together with the Congregational Record, on the special password-protected website in November. The Board approved the draft with three changes (noted in italics): (1) in Sec. 2.10. Evaluation of the Ministry, indicate an assessment of the work of the Minister will be conducted *at least* every three to five years; (2) in Sec. 3.2.4 Insurance premiums, add *dental insurance for the minister* (at level indicated in USNH personnel policy); and (3) in Sec. 3.2.5 Professional and out-of-pocket expenses, indicate reimbursable up to *\$7,000*.

A. Cunningham thanked G. Burton, L. Anderson, and D. Stagg for their reports, and the three departed at 8:20 pm.

The Board turned to the remainder of business before it.

Letter to the Board from the MSC re Ministerial Candidate Compensation

The Board discussed the October 9 letter from the MSC indicating its concern with the low compensation range to be offered to candidates. Despite sympathy with the MSC's position, the Board is in agreement with the negotiating team's proposal. S. Miller will draft a letter of reply for review at the October 15 Board meeting.

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of Minutes of 9/12/13 Board of Trustees Meeting

MOTION M. Donohue to approve the Minutes; **SECONDED** S. Miller; **PASSED** without dissent or abstention.

2. Authorization of Frank Sirianni as Endowment Fund representative.

MOTION B. Pace to name Frank Sirianni authorized representative for the Endowment Fund; **SECONDED** S. Miller; **PASSED** without dissent or abstention.

Treasurer's Report

G. Seaman reported that USNH's current cash position is very good. He noted income figures in the Year End Report for July 2012 through June 2013 are unclear as to source; the report will be re-structured in the future to give a better picture of income from operations vs. investments.

Interim Progress Appraisal

The mid-term report to the UUA on the interim period is due. A. Cunningham explained the Board and Interim Minister separately fill out reports, then share them before sending them to the UUA. It was agreed that the reports would be discussed at the October 15 Board meeting.

E. Melcher departed at 8:40 pm.

The Board addressed the questions on the UUA report form, with M. Donohue recording comments. M. Donohue will draft the Board's report for review by Board members before the October 15 meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 pm.