

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
May 8, 2014

Accepted June 12, 2014

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

Board Members Absent: Rod Groff

Also Present: Emily Melcher

A. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm and P. Rae recorded the minutes. A quorum of Board Members was present, and the meeting proceeded with A. Cunningham presiding.

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes of 4/10/14 Board Meeting  
Acceptance of Draft Minutes of 10/20/13 and 3/30/14 Congregational Meetings

**MOTION** H. Hawkins, to approve Consent Agenda; **SECONDED** D. Jones; **PASSED** unanimously, without dissent or abstention.

Building and Grounds Committee Chairs and Charge

The Board appointed John Kennedy and John Egnal co-chairs of the Building and Grounds Committee and unanimously affirmed the charge to the Committee drafted by E. Melcher in February. The charge outlines the responsibilities of the Committee and provides a map to the Committee's tasks. A. Cunningham will notify the two of the Board's decision and send them the charge.

Minister's Report

E. Melcher distributed a calendar showing vacation dates during June and July for staff, Jesse Greist, Marion Visel, and herself. Her contract ends June 30. M. Visel is out of the country July 19 - Aug. 5, and during this time USNH will have no Minister on site (assuming an Interim starts Aug. 1). Tisha Ferguson has arranged for part-time Bookkeeper Leslie Hueffman to handle phones and general replies when she is on vacation, but this will be done only during Leslie's regular working hours.

DRE Jesse Greist and the CYRE (children's & youth's religious education) Committee have decided to eliminate the 9:15 am Sunday School session next fall. Attendance at

the early session has been low, and having just one session will make the recruitment of RE teachers simpler.

J. Greist has begun work on the USNH website and will provide a development plan next week.

Pledges for FY14-15 total \$450,131 at this point (5/8/14). This includes \$13,665 in increased or additional pledges made since the special appeal on Easter Sunday and days following. An estimated \$10,000 more in pledges is anticipated from steady donors who have not yet pledged, bringing the estimated total for this year to \$460,131. This is slightly lower than last year's pledge total of \$473,808, but about \$11,000 of the decrease is due to people having moved away during the year. Thus, although their approaches were different, the Stewardship campaigns of this year and last were about equally successful.

### Interim Progress Appraisal

Drafts of the Interim Progress Appraisals from the Board and the Interim Minister have been emailed to Board members. The reports were not discussed at tonight's meeting due to shortage of time, but it was noted that the two appraisals are in general agreement.

**ACTION** Board members to review the reports and send comments to A. Cunningham (Board's report) and to E. Melcher (Interim's report), as well as to the rest of the Board. The reports are to be filed with the UUA by June 15.

### Ministerial Search Report

The Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) notified the congregation this week that this year's search for a new settled minister ended without a match.

A. Cunningham has contacted the UUA Transitions office to activate the Interim Minister application we submitted last month, and during the next 2 weeks the Interim Task Force (A. Cunningham, D. Jones, and M. Donohue) will review packets from interested candidates and conduct Skype interviews. The date for making an offer to a candidate is May 23.

### Selection of a New Ministerial Search Committee

Three of the current MSC members are unable to continue on the search committee, and in keeping with the UUA's guidelines, a completely new committee must be formed. A. Cunningham consulted with Keith Kron of the UUA Transitions office, who said having a new MSC in place by early fall will be fine, since much of the work for preparing the search packet, website, etc. has already been done. He also said the committee may have as few as five members.

The Board agreed to the following procedure for selection of a new MSC.

- The congregation will be notified this month by letter, newsletter, and eblast of the need to select a new MSC, and the procedure will be outlined.
- USNH members will be sent or given a form to write in their nominations for three people to be on the committee and to indicate if they themselves are willing to serve; forms will be due back by mid-June (tentatively, June 15). To safeguard the process, the form must be signed by the member.
- Over the summer, the Board will review the suggested nominees, draw up a list of candidates, get bios, and publish the information. Depending on the number of nominees, the Board will decide whether the MSC will consist of 5 or 7 members.
- The congregational vote will be on the first Sunday in September (tentative). The MSC will be made up of the top vote-getters (3 for a 5-member MSC or 4 for a 7-member MSC), plus others chosen by the Board from among the candidates to assure necessary skills.

As before, only USNH members can participate in the selection of the MSC and on the committee itself.

**ACTION** M. Donohue and A. Cunningham to write the letter, eblast, and handle other communication about the procedure (e.g. at June 1 Congregational Meeting).

**ACTION** P. Rae will head up a group to suggest a procedure for updating the membership list this summer. The current policy links membership with pledging except in special cases where the minister waives the requirement, and there are many people on the membership list who have not pledged for some time. In addition to P. Rae and H. Hawkins, the group will include N. Lesh and David Cross.

### Budget for FY 2014-2015

The Board reviewed the Finance Committee's 4/26/14 report on the 2014-2015 budget and discussed at length its implications. The committee projects that income will significantly lag behind expenses next year. The report presents several alternatives for bringing the budget into balance, including increased use of reserve funds and decreases in certain expenses.

There was consensus among Board members that the congregation should be presented with a deficit budget at the June congregational meeting, with the provision that a decision be made by the congregation in December as to how to proceed for the remainder of the year. This would allow time for the congregation to enter into a deeper examination of priorities and alternatives than is possible now.

The Board reviewed the budget alternatives from Finance and agreed on several line item changes. To cut expenses further, the Board proposes that program budgets

should be reduced 15% from their FY13-14 levels; this includes Music, Member Services, dues, RE, Worship, and Social Justice.

**ACTION** Treasurer G. Seaman will meet with Finance Chair Sandy Frawley to re-work the numbers, and Board and Finance will discuss the budget on May 20, during the first part of the Board's monthly governance meeting.

#### Other business

Endowment & Legacies Committee and Probate Courts processing of Estates – At the request of Committee member Fred Morrison, the Board passed the following motion to clarify who is authorized to communicate and act on behalf of USNH in dealing with the probate court.

**MOTION** P. Rae, "The chairperson of the USNH Endowment and Legacies Committee may represent USNH and act on its behalf in all matters relating to the Probate Courts processing of estates in which USNH is a beneficiary."; **SECONDED** A. Cunningham; **PASSED** unanimously, without dissent or abstention.

USNH office staff will be instructed to pass correspondence from probate courts directly to the Endowment & Legacies Committee.

McTigue Social Justice Fund Award – Committee co-chair Sophie Tworkowski notified the Board that the Social Justice Council has approved an award of \$200 to cover some of the costs for 6-8 UNSH high school students and chaperones to participate in superstorm Sandy relief efforts on Long Island. Board President A. Cunningham added her signature to the Letter of Award, with the full support of the Board.

Right Relations Committee – B. Pace reported the June 22 Sunday service will be centered around right relations. The Committee hopes to develop a congregational covenant around right relations, employing cottage meetings, training sessions, and other means to engage the congregation.

New Board Member Orientation – A. Cunningham and M. Donohue requested Board input on what to include in orientation material for new Board members, who will take office July 1.

#### Adjournment

There being no further business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.