

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees
June 12, 2014

Accepted July 15, 2014

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

Board Members Absent: David Jones, Mary Donohue

Also Present: Emily Melcher

A. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:05 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 5/8/14 Board Meeting

MOTION B. Pace, to approve; **SECONDED** N. Lesh; **PASSED** unanimously without dissent or abstention.

Financial Report

G. Seaman presented a proposal from the Finance Committee to use certain restricted funds for over-budget expenses incurred this fiscal year (FY13-14) to reduce the deficit, which is projected at this time to be about \$28,000. The restricted funds and the expenses to which they would be applied are the Wolff Fund (sanctuary sound system expenses and sanctuary roof repairs), the Board-designated Capital Fund (compressor), and the Landscaping Fund (brush removal). The total amount of restricted funds to be used would be \$13,063. The Board approved the proposal.

MOTION S. Miller, to approve the use of restricted funds as proposed by the Finance Committee; **SECONDED** R. Groff; **PASSED** unanimously without dissent or abstention.

G. Seaman recommended that the Social Justice Council be given charge of the Robert O'Neal Bowles and Gay Civil Rights Funds. The Board agreed unanimously.

E. Melcher submitted a revised 2014 Clergy Housing Allowance estimate June 9. The Board accepted her revision.

Budget Meetings

A. Cunningham suggested that dates be set now for cottage meetings about the FY14-15 deficit budget. The Board decided to postpone scheduling until Interim Fritz Hudson has been consulted but agreed that the July newsletter should contain an article about the budget and the importance of the congregation's involvement in finding solutions.

B. Pace suggested that holding preliminary meetings with focus groups could be helpful.
H. Hawkins suggested it might be useful to have an umbrella group including Finance, Endowment, the Board, Stewardship, and Fundraising.

Minister's Report

E. Melcher reported on preparations for the summer, her departure, and other matters, including the website update. The following is the text of her report.

Minister's Report
Emily Melcher, Interim Minister
6/12/2014

Jesse Greist has been working with Mike Sanger on the new website. You can view progress at ww2.usnh.org

Marion Visel has arranged for members of the lay ministry team to be on-call during her absences this summer. She has communicated with all staff, and left the coverage schedule on her door. Tisha and Leslie are prepared to direct people to the on-call lay minister.

Tisha has published the summer newsletter schedule with deadlines, along with, along with the summer office schedule and her time off. She has identified Order of Service deadlines and publishing dates. These have been communicated to the Worship Committee and staff.

I will leave my office after the farewell party on Sunday, but will likely need to return on June 30 to finish up a few final details. I'll arrange with Fritz to hand off keys to him, most likely through Tisha. Alison has a key to my office, which should appropriately be handed off to Mary at the turn of the FY.

I talked with Fritz, and am very excited for USNH. He's personable and comfortable, and has experience in exactly the areas the Board has identified for focus next year. I think you're in for a great year.

And finally, I want to thank you all for an extraordinary year of work together.

Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) Selection Process

The Board agreed that a new 5-member MSC will be installed in September, following a vote by USNH members on Sept. 14. (Absentee voting will be available ahead of time, as it was for the first MSC election). The top 3 vote-getters will be elected to the MSC, and the Board will appoint 2 others from the remaining candidates.

A letter will be sent out July 1 to USNH members only, to explain the process and solicit nominations. A nomination form will be enclosed, and people will be asked to suggest up to 3 nominees and to indicate whether or not they would serve on the committee. The nomination forms (signed) are to be returned by August 1. Alternatively, the nominations may be sent by email to governance@usnh.org.

During the month of August, the Board will review the nominations, talk with prospective candidates, finalize the candidate list, and get bios and statements. The candidate list will be published in the August 30 newsletter.

Votes will be tallied immediately after the Sept. 14 vote, and the Board will finalize the 5-member MSC at its meeting Sept. 16. The new MSC will be installed Sunday, Sept. 21.

A. Cunningham and P. Rae agreed to draft the July 1 letter, using as a guide the letter that was sent out to members when the first MSC was formed. They will also write an explanatory article for the June 19 newsletter.

Membership Policy Proposal

P. Rae presented a proposed revision of USNH membership policy and procedures, as a follow-up to the discussion the Board began at its February 12, 2014 meeting. At that meeting, the Board indicated it was in general agreement with the existing membership policies passed in 2009-2010, but thought some modification was needed. The proposed revision incorporates suggested modifications.

Board members fine-tuned the proposal during discussion. P. Rae will type up a final draft of the proposal for passage at the June 17 Board meeting.

Membership List Status

P. Rae distributed a summary of USNH membership changes June 2013-June 2014. (see Membership List Status – June 11, 2014, attached to these Minutes).

At this time last year, the official number of members was 395. Since then, 9 new members have been added to the list, and 54 members have been removed. (About half of those removed had not been active for 2 years or more and normally would have been removed prior to this time last year).

The current membership total as of June 11 is 351. With the departure of E. Melcher and her husband, who are both members, the number will drop below 350, the UUA's threshold for a Mid-Size III congregation. Further drops are anticipated when members who have not pledged for some time are removed, and if some of the 65 members who have not yet pledged for FY14-15 discontinue their membership.

The current number of members who have pledged for FY14-15 is 274. To encourage members who haven't pledged to do so, a reminder will be included in the July 1 letter about Search Committee nominations. Under the current and proposed membership policies, a financial contribution in the current fiscal year is required to maintain membership unless the Senior Minister waives the requirement. Since only members will be permitted to vote for the Search Committee, it is important to let people know of this requirement now.

TransitionTeam Process

M. Donohue will confer with incoming Interim F. Hudson to determine if he would like the Board to set up a Transition Team before his arrival or if he would prefer to be involved in setting one up after he arrives. Board members were encouraged to think about who would be a good person to have on the Team and to let M. Donohue or P. Rae know their suggestions.

Orientation of new Board members

New Board members will begin their terms July 1. M. Donohue plans to set up an orientation meeting with new members, and it was suggested that Congregational Administrator Tisha Ferguson be invited to come to the meeting. P. Rae will give the new members access to the Board website prior to July 1 so that they can begin to become familiar with what's on the site. E. Melcher reported that as of July 1, F. Hudson will receive emails sent to the interim@usnh.org address and have access to the board website.

Other

Newsletter articles on these topics are needed at the following times:

1. MSC selection, in June 19 newsletter (*P. Rae/A. Cunningham*)
2. Budget meetings etc, in July 10 newsletter (*July 8 submission deadline*)

June 17 Board meeting on governance will be preceded by a brief business meeting to cover these items:

- Approval of Membership Policy and Procedures
- Acceptance of Draft Minutes of the June 1, 2014 Congregational Meeting

Adjournment

There being no further business at hand, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Membership List Status – June 11, 2014
(prepared for the Board by Peggy Rae)

		# mbrs
Number of members last year at this time, according to the list provided by Tansy in April 2013 for the Ministerial Search Committee vote (includes 5 people who pledged at time of vote and were added back to list)		395
Number of new members added to the list, June 2013-June 2014		+ 9
Members removed from the list, June 2013-June 2014 because of:		
Deaths	10	
Moves	10	
Resignations/other	7	
Removed for non-pledging (no pledge/contribution made FY11-12 to present)	27	
Total number removed from list, June 2013-June 2014		-54
Membership as of June 11, 2014		351
<i>Pending changes in July</i>		
Moves (Emily and Anders)	2	
Removals for past non-pledging (last pledge/contribution made FY12-13)*	10	
Projected membership for August, 2014		339
<i>Number who have not yet pledged as of June 11, 2014</i> <i>(includes many active members)</i>		<i>65</i>

*People whose last pledge/contribution was in FY12-13 will be sent a letter in June notifying them of impending loss of membership and giving them the option of retaining their membership by filling out a pledge form [or by contacting Marion Visel, if pledging difficult], becoming a Friend, or resigning. I propose that if they don't reply by Aug. 1, they will be assumed to have resigned. The particular people to whom this letter will be sent have not been attending services for some time, so this seems an appropriate default. See sample letter on next page.