

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
June 17, 2014

*Accepted July 15, 2014*

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

Board Members Absent: Alison Cunningham

Also Present: Mary Losee, Graziela Reis

M. Donohue 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 M. Donohue presiding.

Membership Policy Vote

P. Rae presented a final draft of the updated membership policy that included the changes in policy and language the Board decided upon at its June 12 meeting. The Board made further revisions, then voted to approve the updated policy.

**MOTION** B. Jones, to approve the membership policy; **SECONDED** G. Seaman; **PASSED** unanimously, with 1 abstention.

The approved membership policy is attached to these Minutes. Also attached is an annotated version that shows the changes to the previous policy, passed in 2009-2010.

The new policy retains the requirement that members make a financial commitment during the current fiscal year in order to maintain their membership, with exceptions being allowed at the discretion of the Senior Minister. However, it states that a contribution or pledge of any amount is acceptable, and it clarifies and expands the basis for waiving the pledge requirement.

Under the new policy, members whose pledge/contribution requirement is waived for the year are termed "non-pledging members" and are not included in the official membership count submitted to the UUA at the end of January.

The timeline and procedure for updating the membership list is clarified in the new policy. Members who have not pledged or had their pledge requirement waived for the current year will be notified in September of possible loss of membership and given a reasonable amount of time to either pledge or have their pledge requirement waived, should they wish to remain members. At the end of this time, those who have not pledged or obtained a waiver will be removed from the membership list.

The new policy clarifies the role of the Congregational Administrator, Senior Minister, and Clerk in reporting membership numbers and in providing a membership list to the Stewardship committee for the canvass.

### Acceptance of Draft Minutes of the June 1, 2014 Congregational Meeting

Draft Minutes of the 6/1/14 Annual Meeting were reviewed. The language concerning the cuts to program budgets in the proposed FY14-15 budget was modified to clarify that the 15% cut refers to the amount in the budget request for the program, not to the amount in the previous (FY13-14) budget. The amended Draft was passed and will be presented to the congregation for approval at the Fall Congregational Meeting.

**MOTION** H. Hawkins, to accept the amended Draft; **SECONDED** R. Groff; **PASSED** unanimously without dissent or abstention.

### Adjournment

There being no further business to be conducted, this portion of the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm, and the Board proceeded with its monthly discussion of governance.

**USNH Membership Policy and Procedures**  
**Approved by Board of Trustees June 17, 2014**

- 1) Membership requires signature or comparable affirmation committing to:
  - a) The Society's purpose and program;
  - b) A contribution of the member's time, effort, finances, and talents to its life, organizational work, and activities.
- 2) Membership includes the right to vote on congregational matters, and is reported each year to the Unitarian Universalist Association. It determines both congregational UUA and District dues and delegate representation. Membership requires that a financial pledge or contribution to USNH be made in the current fiscal year. There shall be no minimum amount required.
- 3) In special cases, the pledge/contribution requirement may be waived without loss of membership.
  - a) In cases of financial hardship or other special considerations, individuals may request a waiver of the pledge requirement for the year from the Senior Minister.
  - b) The pledge requirement may be waived for long-term members who are no longer able to be active.
  - c) The pledge requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Senior Minister in instances of pastoral concern.

Individuals for whom the requirement is waived shall be termed "Non-pledging Members" and shall not be included in the membership count for the UUA.
- 4) In September of each year, members who have not pledged or had their pledge requirement waived for the current fiscal year shall be notified of impending loss of membership. The notification shall be by letter signed by the Clerk, and shall indicate a reasonable period of time during which the member may request continuation of membership. If such request is not made, membership shall terminate at the end of the period indicated in the letter.
- 5) The Congregational Administrator, in consultation with the Clerk of USNH and the Senior Minister, shall provide the USNH membership census to the UUA at the required time. The USNH membership number submitted to the UUA each year shall be finalized on Jan. 1 of the year of submission. This calculation shall be based on the definition of membership set forth here, the related updating of the membership list as of Oct. 15 of each year, and modification of this list to incorporate individual changes as of Oct. 15 to Dec. 31.
- 6) The Congregational Administrator, in consultation with the Senior Minister, shall provide the membership list to be available for Canvassing purposes. This list shall exclude non-pledging members for whom the pledge requirement is to be waived.
- 7) Non-members who are in sympathy with USNH's purpose and program and who maintain a connection with USNH through their activity and/or financial contributions shall be included in the category "Friends". Friends can participate in services, activities, and non-elected committees but do not have voting privileges.

## USNH Membership Policy and Procedures

Approved by Board of Trustees June 17, 2014 -- Annotated

*Modifications of the 2009-2010 Membership Policy are shown in italics.*

*Summary of the changes to the 2009-2010 Membership Policy, the 2009-2010 Membership Policy itself, and relevant Bylaws sections are attached for reference.*

- 1) Membership requires signature or comparable affirmation committing to:
  - a) The Society's purpose and program;
  - b) A contribution of the member's time, effort, finances, and talents to its life, organizational work, and activities.
- 2) Membership includes the right to vote on congregational matters, and is reported each year to the Unitarian Universalist Association. It determines both congregational UUA and District dues and delegate representation. Membership requires that a financial pledge *or contribution* to USNH be made in the current fiscal year. *There shall be no minimum amount required.*
- 3) *In special cases, the pledge/contribution requirement may be waived without loss of membership.*
  - a) *In cases of financial hardship or other special considerations, individuals may request a waiver of the pledge requirement for the year from the Senior Minister.*
  - b) *The pledge requirement may be waived for long-term members who are no longer able to be active.*
  - c) *The pledge requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Senior Minister in instances of pastoral concern.*

*Individuals for whom the requirement is waived shall be termed "Non-pledging Members" and shall not be included in the membership count for the UUA.*
- 4) *In September of each year, members who have not pledged or had their pledge requirement waived for the current fiscal year shall be notified of impending loss of membership. The notification shall be by letter signed by the Clerk, and shall indicate a reasonable period of time during which the member may request continuation of membership. If such request is not made, membership shall terminate at the end of the period indicated in the letter.*
- 5) The *Congregational Administrator*, in consultation with the *Clerk* of USNH and the Senior Minister, shall provide the USNH membership census to the UUA at the required time. The USNH membership number submitted to the UUA each year *shall* be finalized on Jan. 1 of the year of submission. This calculation *shall* be based on the definition of membership set forth here, the related updating of the membership list as of Oct. 15 of each year, and modification of this list to incorporate individual changes as of Oct. 15 to Dec. 31.
- 6) *The Congregational Administrator, in consultation with the Senior Minister, shall provide the membership list to be available for Canvassing purposes. This list shall exclude non-pledging members for whom the pledge requirement is to be waived.*
- 7) *Non-members who are in sympathy with USNH's purpose and program and who maintain a connection with USNH through their activity and/or financial contributions shall be included in the category "Friends". Friends can participate in services, activities, and non-elected committees but do not have voting privileges.*

Summary of the changes to the 2009-2010 Membership Policy

(prepared by P. Rae, Clerk, 6/18/14)

Sec. 2: Clarifies that financial support may be in the form of a non-pledged contribution, and states that the contribution/pledge does not have to exceed a certain amount in order to count.

Sec. 3: Clarifies and expands the basis for waiving the pledge requirement, and stipulates that members for whom the requirement is waived are excluded from the official membership count submitted to the UUA.

Sec. 4: Clarifies the timeline and procedure for notice of possible membership loss due to non-pledging, and states that a member has the opportunity to request continuation of membership (a USNH Bylaw requirement).

Sec. 5: Assigns the Congregational Administrator the job of reporting the USNH membership number to the UUA, and clarifies that the Clerk and Senior Minister will be involved. The October date for updating the membership list is changed to Oct. 15.

Sec. 6: Specifies that the membership list for canvassing will be provided by the Congregational Administrator after consultation with the Senior Minister, and that it will exclude the names of members for whom the pledge requirement is to be waived.

Sec. 7: Clarifies basis for inclusion in the "Friends" category.

## **2009-2010 BOARD MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

*(Explanatory notes provided by P. Rae 6/12/14)*

In the fall of 2009, the Board undertook the task of clarifying the connection between membership and pledging and, with Kathleen, came up the statement shown below. The policy was implemented in 2009-2010 and has been the modus operandi through 2012. You'll note that pledging is required for membership. This is actually not a new idea - the Board has linked membership and pledging several times over the past 20 years. The following is the statement and draft presented to the Board, showing the policy the Board passed Nov. 12, 2009.

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### **For November 2009 Board meeting**

In the September Board meeting, following discussion with last year's Canvass Committee, the Board asked the Exec Comm to draft a policy regarding the relationship between financial commitment and Membership. This can be done without any change in Bylaws.

Existing Bylaws contain the relevant section in ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP.

*SECTION 1. Membership in this Society constitutes both benefits and obligations for the member and also for the Society. By joining it, each member indicates a willingness to contribute of his or her time, effort, finances, and talents to its life and work. Organizational work, and activities.*

Below is policy language intended to describe the rationale and the process by which USNH Membership will be defined and updated.

### **Draft 11/12/09 (amended to show the language actually passed by the Board 11/12/09).**

1. Membership requires signature or comparable affirmation committing to
  - The Society's purpose and program;
  - A contribution of the member's time, effort, finances, and talents to its life, organizational work, and activities.
2. Membership includes the right to vote on congregational matters, and is reported each year to the Unitarian Universalist Association. It determines both congregational UUA and District dues and delegate representation. Membership requires that a financial pledge to USNH be made in the ~~concurrent~~ *current* fiscal year.
3. Each year the Senior Minister shall provide to the President a list of members for whom there are special considerations ("pastoral concerns") that may be the basis for waiving pledge participation.
4. The President shall define the membership list to be available for Canvassing purposes.
5. The President of USNH, in consultation with the Membership Committee and the Senior Minister, shall provide the USNH membership census to the UUA at the required time.
6. Individuals or families who may contribute financially to USNH, but are not Members, shall be included in the category "Friends". Friends ~~may~~ *can* participate in services, ~~committees and~~ activities, *and non-elected committees* but do not have voting privileges.

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In March, 2010, the Board further clarified that the membership list, as far as UUA was concerned, would be finalized by Jan. 1. (Report to UUA is due by the end of January).

**Motion:** That the USNH membership number submitted to the UUA each year be finalized on Jan. 1 of the year of submission. This calculation will be based on USNH's definition of membership, the related updating of the membership list as of Oct. 1 of each year, and modification of this list to incorporate individual changes as of Oct. 1 to Dec. 31 (**3-11-10**, passed unanimously).

The subsequent protocol has been to send out letters in the fall to members who have not pledged for the current fiscal year, to remind them of the policy and to ascertain if they wish to remain members. Apparently people were moved to "friend" status if they did not reply. This was last done in the fall of 2012. (Not done in fall 2013, due to switches in administrator and database).

## **BYLAWS & MEMBERSHIP**

Excerpts from BYLAWS OF THE UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN (June 10, 2012)

### **ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP**

SECTION 1. Membership in this Society constitutes both benefits and obligations for the member and also for the Society. By joining it, each member indicates a willingness to contribute of his or her time, effort, finances, and talents to its life and work.

The Society offers members the inspiration of its services and participation in its fellowship, organizational work, and activities. Participation is of direct and mutual benefit to both the member and the Society.

SECTION 2. Only members may vote at meetings of the Society. Only members age 18 or older may be officers or trustees.

SECTION 3. Membership shall be open to all who, having attained the age of 14 years, and/or having completed the Society's Affirmation Program, are in sympathy with the Society's purpose and program and in agreement with the statement on members' entitlement and obligations expressed in Section 1 above.

Membership shall be effective upon receipt of the membership application form by the clerk of the Society.

SECTION 4. Any member may terminate membership in the Society by written resignation to the clerk of the Society.

Membership may also be terminated by action of the Membership Committee in circumstances of non-participation, and with due notice of anticipated action to the member, with an opportunity for the member to retain membership by request.