

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees
January 9, 2020

Accepted February 13, 2020

Board Members Present: President Al Bosch, Vice President Nancy Apfel, Clerk Becky Friedkin, Treasurer Linda Mehta; Trustees at Large Jeanette Faber, Craig Machado, Bernice Marie-Daly, Emily McCave, Pat Trotta; Rev. John Marsh (ex-officio)

Board Members Absent: Past President Peggy Myers

Others Present: Gwen Heuss-Severance and David Stagg (Management Team)

1. Gather

Al called the meeting to order at 6:33.

The Board read the Board Covenant. Nancy lit the chalice and read Breathing Peace Into Being from Kathleen McTigue's meditation book *Shine and Shadow*. We followed with a life events and guided check in (How do you plan to be kind to yourself this year?).

Al is scheduled for the chalice lighting and check-in question for February 6, 2020.

2. There were no changes to the agenda

3. Assess the Past

Minister's Report: The Management Team has been spending quite a bit of time on the FY21 budget. There is agreement as of last night, when MT met with Finance and Stewardship, on a visionary budget, which will require a \$50K increase in pledges from \$450,000 to \$500,000. We have quite a bit to appreciate at USNH and we hope to help people understand that this is a necessary increase. The Board should be able to well understand the financial situation and budget and we should speak with one voice when we speak with members and friends to support this plan and encourage generosity.

Budget Update: David guided the Board through the current year (FY20) budget. The Management Team now projects that we will need approximately \$22,000 from unrestricted net assets. This was originally budgeted at \$10,000. We have used our temporary restricted funds and unrestricted net assets to cover operating costs for the last several years. This year we have exhausted the Emily Emerson Fund, dedicated to religious education. We have also used our "Gifts and Donations" to bridge the remaining gap in funding for our Kitchen project and for relocation expenses for our Interim Minister. There will be almost no unrestricted net assets or other suitable restricted funds to absorb a deficit budget for FY21. The Finance Committee and the Management Team have been working on several possible FY21 budgets and are hopeful that we will be able to arrive at a balanced budget and attract and compensate an excellent minister.

4. Create the Future & Learning

Wednesday Meetings:

a) *January 15:* The Board will discuss the November Listening Circle about intergenerational communications and relationships. Nancy asked members to read the Summary and consider, in advance, the following questions:

- What comments and themes stand out to you as worthy of attention and follow up and what ideas do you have for such follow-up?
- Do we need to gather more information? If so, how would we do so?
- How should we share the results of the Circle with the congregation?
- How to share Board follow-up actions with the congregation?

ACTION:

- To help facilitate the meeting, please send comments and themes (from above) to Becky, no later than Tuesday afternoon.
- Please also view a series of five short videos (total of ~25 minutes) from the Commission on Institutional Change on [Working Effectively Across Generations](#). The context is different but some of the ideas are relevant.

b) *Remaining Wednesday dates:* The June 17 meeting will welcome new Board members, leaving four potential meeting dates in this congregational year. Al invited Becky and Bobbi Pace to conduct some anti-racism work on February 19 and March 18, subject to Board approval.

Becky explained that the goals of this engagement would seek to establish a common vocabulary and set of assumptions about anti-racism and white supremacy culture, and then focus on identifying white supremacy culture at USNH, particularly in leadership, and in the denomination.

Some reading in advance of the meetings will support the work. People who not familiar with the book *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*, are strongly encouraged to watch author [Robin DiAngelo's talk](#) about the book at the Seattle Public Library (1 hour, 20 minutes) as soon as possible.

The Board expressed support for proceeding with these sessions.

Remaining sessions are April 15 and May 2.

Board/MT Reps for the rest of January and February are:

1/12	Linda
1/19	Al
1/26	Emily
2/2	David
2/9	Pat
2/16	Craig
2/23	Gwen

Possible Board Retreat Topic:

AI spoke to UUA New England Region Congregational Consultant Joe Sullivan about the possibility of doing some strategic planning, pursuant to Liz Coit's stewardship report. The UUA no longer recommends strategic planning, but advocates a way of thinking about planning, emphasizing a clear sense of purpose and moving forward toward that purpose. If "faithful risk-taking" isn't part of the plan, then the plan will not work. Budgets are reflections of our values and should have some risk-taking. If we are too conservative, we don't go anywhere.

Joe suggested two topics for a retreat. Part 1 would focus on strategic thinking and planning, incorporating the lens of faithful risk-taking. Part 2 would focus on the Board's role in bringing a new minister into the congregation.

Best dates for a Saturday Board retreat are March 28, April 18, and March 21. AI will follow up with Joe to set a date. Becky and Emily tentatively agreed to collaborate on retreat planning with the UUA consultants. AI will send more information about what this will entail to the full Board.

FYI, the UUA New England Region is offering a new, full-day workshop on *Faithful Risk-Taking: A Practice of Spiritual Leadership*, in North Andover, MA (2 hour, 15 minute drive from Hamden in good traffic) on Saturday, April 4 from 9 am to 3 pm. Registration ends March 24 or when the workshop is full. Becky will send the [link](#).

5. Consent agenda: Pat Trotta's name was inadvertently omitted from the minutes of the 12/12/19 Board meeting. With that correction, the minutes are accepted.

6. Adjournment

MOTION: Nancy moved to adjourn; Craig seconded; motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30.

Submitted by Becky Friedkin

Attachments: None