

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees
August 13, 2020

Accepted September 10, 2020

Board Members Present: President Nancy Apfel, Vice President Emily McCave, Clerk Becky Friedkin, Treasurer Michele DeMuisis, Past President Al Bosch; Trustees at Large, Craig Machado, Bernice Marie-Daly, Rich Stockton; Youth Trustee Elizabeth S.; Rev. Lindasusan Ulrich, ex officio

Board Members Absent: Christina Allen and Tina Santoni

Others Present: David Stagg (Management Team)

1. Gather

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board met online via Zoom.

Nancy called the meeting to order at 6:35.

Bernice lit the chalice and read *The Peace of Wild Things* by Wendell Berry .

The Board read the FY20 Board Covenant.

We followed with brief introductions to Rev. Lindasusan.

2. There were no changes to the agenda.

3. Assess the Past

Minister's Report

There was no expectation of a minister's report, although Rev. Lindasusan reported that she will soon be presenting her salary and housing allowance allocation for Board approval.

We adopted the practice, suggested by a UUA Congregational Life Consultant at our spring 2020 Board Retreat, of offering time for reflection on several questions for Rev. Lindasusan. What do you notice? Do you have questions? What do you need?

USNH Budget

David reported that both income and expenses were down last year and as of June 30, Finance projected a \$10,000 deficit. However, we are accepting pledge payments for FY20 through August. Since June 30, we have received more than \$8,000 in FY20 pledges, so we will end our fiscal year with little or no deficit.

Board connections with congregants and reporting

Nancy noted that, in response to Elizabeth's suggestion, she made it clear in her newsletter column how to contact the entire Board, Nancy, and Emily. We are also trying to identify ourselves as Board or MT members whenever we are in breakout rooms and other committee

or group meetings. Becky reminded people of the Google Doc in which Board and Management Team members should record feedback they hear from Congregants.

We discussed the issue of anonymous feedback and agreed that, for accountability, we will only consider and share identifiable comments and feedback.

4. Create the Future & Learning

Arranging a Policy Governance Review session

Becky explained that we are having difficulty scheduling this session, but are working on it and will be in touch as soon as we can.

Report from the Building Reopening Advisory Group (BRAG)

Rich reported that there was a suggestion made to Jesse for some kids' activities, e.g., croquet, that could be physically distanced at the August 15 community drive-Thru event. The committee decided we are not ready for that at this point.

The group is in discussion with our other school tenant about how to safely bring them back, should they be ready to meet in person.

There is concern about how fresh air is being brought into the building. The bathrooms do have exhaust fans that pull air in. The BRAG team will explore this further.

Committee to Study Future of Electronic Media

David reported that the Management Team will be reviewing recommendations from this committee and using them to amend internet usage policy. The amended policy will be shared with the Board for information and feedback. (Note that this committee was created at the request of the FY20 Board.)

Covenants

We discussed the **Board Covenant** from FY20 and several suggestions were made. Becky will draft a revision and send around for review.

Nancy noted that we formed a **covenant with Rev. Marsh**. Usually at the end of an interim ministry there is a recognition of the ending of those ties, which we were not able to have with Rev. Marsh.

Rev. Lindasusan uses the language of releasing the covenant, letting that relationship go, with love. The September water communion service is a natural transition point in the life of the congregation, a hand-over from one minister to another. Leaving space between ministries is part of helping the new ministry take root, so that people aren't so engaged with the past that they can't be engaged with the new ministry.

Rev. Marsh and Rev. Lindasusan will also form a covenant about their relationship.

Rev. Lindasusan's covenant with the congregation will happen at her installation, hopefully in the spring.

5. Consent agenda

The minutes of the Board meeting of July 13, 2020 were accepted without changes, as was the letter of support of an application for a \$500 grant from the UU Funding Program towards our UU the Vote effort.

6. Meeting evaluation/process observers

Nancy noted that she would like to have a process observer for each meeting. If there is something about the meeting that is really good, mention it. If some people didn't get a chance to speak, or were not recognized, or a topic didn't seem to get the attention it deserved, mention it. Emily volunteered to be the process observer in September. This will rotate.

7. Thank you notes

We discussed the importance of widespread gratitude.

8. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Friedkin, Clerk

Attachments:
FY20 Board Covenant
Letter in support of UU the Vote grant

2019-2020 USNH Board Covenant
Approved: September 7, 2019

1. Come Prepared
2. Respect the agenda
3. Assume good intentions and take responsibility for unintended consequences
4. Be as fully present as possible
5. If needed, remind others to hold to the covenant
6. Speak your truth and listen openly and actively to others' truths
7. Respect ambiguity and encourage multiple viewpoints
8. Allow for moments of contemplation and opportunities to seek clarification
9. Commit to personal growth by risking vulnerability and imperfection
10. Respect confidential matters and speak with one voice outside meetings



Unitarian Society of New Haven

Rev. Lindasusan V. Ulrich, Minister
Jesse Greist, Director of Lifespan Religious Education
Jeffrey Douma & Erika Schroth, Directors of Music
Nancy Apfel, President, Board of Trustees

August 14, 2020

Unitarian Universalist Funding Program
P.O. Box 301149
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Dear UU Funding Program,

The Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Society of New Haven (USNH) enthusiastically supports the grant request for the **USNH UU the Vote** project. If awarded the grant, we will assume the role of fiscal agent for the funding of this project.

More than one-fifth of our congregation is participating in our UU the Vote effort, but we need additional funds to cover postage for those congregants who wish to write cards but are not able to afford the cost. We believe it is essential that this project be inclusive regardless of financial status.

We appreciate the opportunity to apply for this grant to further strengthen our social justice ministry, especially during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Nancy Apfel
President, Unitarian Society of New Haven

