

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees
January 28, 2021

Accepted February 11, 2021

Board Members Present: President Nancy Apfel, Vice President Emily McCave, Clerk Becky Friedkin, Treasurer Larry Copes, Past President Al Bosch; Trustees at Large Rich Stockton, Tina Santoni; Youth Trustee Elizabeth S.; Rev. Lindasusan Ulrich, ex officio

Board Members Absent: Trustee at Large Bernice Marie-Daly

Others Present: David Stagg (Management Team)

1. Gather

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board met online via Zoom.
Nancy lit a chalice and read the poem *Allegiances* by William Stafford.

Nancy reiterated the purpose of this special meeting, namely that the Finance Committee has asked the Board for our priorities for the FY22 budget. We are in tough and uncertain times, but our job is to vision and think deeply about what we want to spend our money on.

Comments include:

Some things that have come up in the last few years:

- A part time minister (possibly to help with pastoral care)
- Technology to stream our services and make them available to those unable to attend in person. Buildings & Grounds had gotten a proposal (~ \$25,000) to put an A/V system in the sanctuary, including projection. Since then we have had a digital projector donated, but it is not state of the art.

Expressed support for a COLA for staff, especially given their extraordinary work during COVID. Also noted that the UUA has offered so much support to USNH; our contribution should be more robust.

The Personnel Committee is working on recommendations on COLAs. Most of our salaries are pretty close to the midpoint of the UUA recommendations for a Midsize II congregation. Jesse is reaching his next level of credentialing, which is associated with higher salary recommendations.

Rev. Lindasusan noted that fair compensation is a matter of justice and that the UUA is providing a lot of support around the pandemic.

If we are exploring the 8th principle, which fits squarely in our Among Ends, perhaps we could use an outside consultant to help with this.

Would additional funding support Rev. Lindasusan and the pastoral care team?

Rev. Lindasusan responded that they will be working on some structural retooling next year. Possibly a coordinator could help with logistics.

Support for staff salaries, first of all for Jesse's increase; also the UUA; and support for the 8th principle

We should look at our Ends Statements. Our priorities should affect programmatic funding. The revised first bullet suggests some support and training around our Covenant.

Supports our community work – Waverly, CONECT, Columbus House (We are not paying the full amount of CONECT's request for our dues)

Do we need some training for leadership development, including recruiting and retaining people from diverse backgrounds in leadership (back to our Ends statement)

Could we have speakers or people of different religions leading services or programs – we tend to stress being open to different religions but it feels odd to have one person talking about different religions and traditions who might not share those traditions.

Rich will take to the Worship Committee; outside speakers require stipend and travel expenses

Important to stress support for our current social justice funding, not just for new items.

Thinking about post-Covid period, we have benefitted from getting some less mobile and more geographically far-flung people attending our services. It will be critical to get equipment needed to livestream services post-covid

Are there any issues in terms of the physical plant that have gone unaddressed?

David stated that we may need more than \$100,000 to fix the problems with our roof and stucco (Dryvit). Planning for a capital campaign is something we should be thinking about.

Rev. Lindasusan asked if there is a line item set aside for capital expenses?

David stated that, in the last few years, we have transferred any small excesses in the Operating budget into the capital budget.

How can we make this more sustainable?

Becky will send summary to officers, then to the full Board before forwarding to Finance and the Management Team.

Nancy reminded people of the January 31 discussion on *Widening the Circle of Concern*, the report from the UUA Commission on Institutional Change.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Becky Friedkin, Clerk

Attachment: Email of February 2, 2021 from Nancy to the Finance Committee and Management Team on Board Priorities for FY22

Email from Nancy Apfel to the Finance Committee and Management Team
Regarding Board Priorities for the FY21-22 Budget

Dear Finance Committee and Management Team,

The Board held a special meeting on January 28 to discuss priorities for the FY21-22 budget. We appreciate the many uncertainties we face and how difficult a budget this will be to construct, and we appreciate the diligent work of both the Finance Committee and the Management Team toward this end.

The Board agreed upon the following priorities for the FY21-22 budget:

Staff compensation: We affirm that all of our current staff are valuable contributors to a superb team and that fair compensation is a justice issue. We especially lift up a salary increase for DLRE Jesse Greist, commensurate with his completion of professional development at the “Credentialed” level for religious educators.

UUA Annual Program Fund (APF): The Board recognizes the degree to which our congregation has and continues to benefit from resources provided by the UUA. In just the last two years, these include support and resources for:

- Megan Lloyd Joiner’s departure
- searching for an Interim Minister
- John Marsh’s illness
- our ministerial search
- facilitating a Board retreat
- various professional development resources, including religious educator credentialing
- worship resources
- UU the Vote
- pandemic-related resources

We strongly support an increase in our APF contribution. Although we did not set a target, we intend that we increase not only the dollar amount of our contribution but also the percentage of the full ask that we contribute (at ~40% for FY21).

We affirm this congregation’s strong commitment to social justice work, which involves a large portion of our adult congregants and our children and youth. We want to continue to support our membership in CONECT, the long-standing relationship with the Waverly Townhouses, now directed by a Waverly resident who is paid by USNH, and Columbus House.

In terms of allocation of other programmatic funds, we see a critical need for outside training and education around a number of issues, including leadership development, the proposed 8th principle of Unitarian Universalism and other anti-oppression work, and living our congregational covenant. We also ask that strong programmatic initiatives aligned with the Board’s priority on strengthening our Relationships Among receive funding priority.

We also note the need for:

- Equipment to allow us to livestream services once we are back in the sanctuary
- Funds for the celebratory installation of Rev. Lindasusan
- Physical plant upgrades, perhaps to be funded largely by a capital campaign

Email from Nancy Apfel to the Finance Committee and Management Team
Regarding Board Priorities for the FY21-22 Budget

We recognize the formidable task we have outlined above. We appreciate your consideration of these priorities and look forward to working together to achieve a budget through which we can live our values most effectively.

Warm regards,
Nancy Apfel