

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees
March 11, 2021

Accepted April 8, 2021

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

Board Members Absent: Treasurer Larry Copes

Others Present: Gwen Heuss-Severance and David Stagg (Management Team) and guest speakers Sharon McBlain, Wendy Mcleod, and Tisa Wenger about the Waverly/USNH Partnership.

1. Gather

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

Nancy called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm and welcomed the Waverly guests to the meeting. Emily lit the chalice and read *A Prayer Among Friends*, by John Daniel.

We read the Board Covenant and postponed the check in until after the Waverly presentation. Changes to the agenda – the monitoring of policy 1.1 is due in April, not tonight.

2. Reports

Waverly/USNH Partnership

Our guests introduced themselves. Sharon McBlain has been involved with Waverly since the beginning, decades ago. Wendy Mcleod was the Waverly Resource Coordinator in 2003, and has continued to be a friend of the Waverly community over the years. Tisa and her daughter volunteered with the Little Learners for some time and Tisa is the liaison from the Social Justice Council to the Waverly Planning Group. Tynicha Drummonds was unable to attend.

The Waverly Planning Group (Sharon McBlain, Naomi Polanetska, Amanda Dettmer, Wendy Mcleod, Tynicha Drummonds, with participation from Tisa Wenger and Lisa Anderson) would like to revitalize the 501(c)(3), created some years ago by Wendy McLeod at the direction of the Waverly Tenant Management Board with the support of USNH agreeing to serve as a fiduciary. This non-profit would then seek funding from sources other than USNH to help support and expand programming.

The Housing Authority of New Haven (HANH), following recent direction from HUD, is focusing on “teaching residents to become self-sufficient” so that they can leave public housing. A previous emphasis on community is gone.

The Waverly Planning Group is asking for a letter of support, a memorandum of agreement, or a memorandum of understanding from the USNH Board to use in grant applications.

The Board agreed that several members will meet with the Waverly Planning Group to further clarify the nature of support being requested.

The Powerpoint presented by Wendy is appended to these minutes.
{The Waverly guests left the meeting **at 7:19.**}

The Board did a very brief life check-in.

Minister's Report

Rev. Lindasusan's report to the Board is appended to these minutes.

Management Team Reports

Budget Updates: David reported on the current year budget through January 2021. Pledge fulfillment is on track, although the collection plate is down (only 38% of budgeted income). Cuddle Time rental income is good; other rentals and fundraising are way down. Committee and member services expenses are way down (11% of the budget). Professional expenses are down, as are Music and Religious Education. Overall, expenses are at 54% of budget and income is at 58% of budget; we are \$38,000 ahead of our projection for this time of the year.

He reported on the current draft of the FY22 Budget. To meet the Board priorities, the budget includes a salary increase for Jesse, given his recent credentialing at a higher level; a 1.2% COLA for all staff; an increase to the UUA from 40% to 50% of their ask; stable funding for Waverly and CONECT; fairly modest cuts to other committee and programmatic budgets. The budget includes a transfer of approximately \$3,500 to the capital budget and a release of \$35,000 from Gifts and Donations (into which the forgiven PPP loan was placed).

Board question: Is the Finance Committee going to ask committees and task forces for any information on their programmatic goals for next year? It would be helpful to know something about their plans in order to allocate scarce funds in support of the Among Ends. David will take to the Finance Committee.

Building Reopening Advisory Group:

Gwen reported on BRAG's meeting of February 24. Her report is appended to these minutes.

Stewardship Report

Becky updated the email she sent yesterday. Her report is appended to these minutes.

Report from the *New Day Rising* Conference

Emily reported on this one-day conference sponsored by the UUA on anti-racism work and dismantling white supremacy culture. More than 1,200 people participated. Emily was

energized to hear what other congregations are doing, including congregations who have tried and failed to adopt the 8th principle. All are welcome to be part of the 8th Principle Learning Community, which is nationwide. Contact Emily or Jackie Trimble Shapiro to participate.

3. Future Planning

Emily announced that Joanie Messner has agreed to be nominated for Vice President and Aimee Bogush has agreed to be nominated for Clerk. Becky noted that the Board will need to decide if we want Nominating to fill one of the vacant At-Large Trustee slots.

Spring Board Retreat

All present are able to attend a retreat on May 8.

{Bernice left the meeting at **7:58**.}

Topics suggested include working with the COIC Report sections on Hospitality & Inclusion and on Governance; work on the 8th principle; a recent proposal to change USNH's name; anti-racism work with a regional UUA facilitator; evaluating board effectiveness' how to make governance and leadership and congregational participation more understood and accessible to everyone; and leadership development.

Emily noted that all the 2020 GA workshops are [available online](#). She recommends one from on [Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matters to YOUR Congregation](#) and [Visioning and Governance Can Be Inclusive, Equitable, Co-Owned](#)

Emily, Tina, and Nancy agreed to be on the Planning Committee. Becky volunteered if she is needed. Nancy will reach out to Bernice, who had to leave early.

4. Closing

Consent Agenda

After Becky noted two corrections (removal of a sentence fragment and the omission of Larry Copes' attendance) the Board accepted the minutes from the February 11 Board meeting.

Process Observation

Tina noticed that we had a very full agenda, with a lot of good information shared. There was less open discussion and personal sharing (check in) than for some meetings, partly because we had a long presentation. We did not have a mid-meeting break.

Rich will be process observer in April.

{Rev. Lindasusan left the meeting at **8:08**.}

Thank-you notes

Nancy, Emily, Elizabeth, and Tina will write the thank-you note this month.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Becky Friedkin, Clerk

Attachments:

- Rev. Lindasusan's report to the Board
- BRAG update from Gwen Heuss-Severance
- Stewardship update from Becky Friedkin
- Waverly powerpoint presentation

What do you notice?

- I've been running across different places where processes and/or responsibility for the processes are unclear. A prime example is updating the USNH home page: who fields these requests? who implements them? what kinds of approvals are needed? Another example is the lack of clarity about the Treasurer's role, which we're now attending to. (I realize this came in part from the move to policy governance.) There has also been a lack of clarity around how we track the names of members who have died and whose ashes are buried at USNH. While this should go more smoothly in the future thanks to SOP-0014, it's indicative of the pattern I'm noticing. It catches my attention and makes me wonder whether there's some underlying dynamic that creates these little eddies of uncertainty and confusion.

Do you have questions?

- What would you like to accomplish as a Board in the next three months (that is, before the Board composition changes)?
- Where does the Board fit into planning the celebration of the congregation's 70th anniversary? What is your vision of the purpose of the celebration (beyond eating cake, which is definitely a worthy goal)?
- How are you feeling about the 8th Principle and its possible adoption at USNH?

What do you need?

- I wanted to let you know about some upcoming conferences I'll be attending (all of them are virtual):
 - ◆ Finding Our Way Home (for UU religious professionals of color): March 29—April 1
 - ◆ Renaissance (for spiritual directors/companions): April 20-24
 - ◆ Festival of Homiletics (for preachers): May 17-21
 - ◆ Ministry Days/General Assembly (for UU ministers/all UUs): June 21-27

I've already been working with the Worship Planning Team to make plans for the Sundays when I'll be out of the pulpit.

- As more people in our community get vaccinated (hooray!), the pressure to open the building and have in-person services will likely increase as well. Currently, the plan is to look to Water Communion in the fall as our return to the sanctuary together. If you get questions or pushback, please remind people that it's a justice issue that we remain on our current path until it's safe for all of us to gather, especially since we don't yet have the equipment to livestream services. Otherwise, we'd inadvertently create a tier of people within the congregation deemed nonessential to the community.

Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees

3/11/21

Anything else?

- I'm collaborating with a team of people through the UU Ministers Association on reimagining one of the key worship services at Ministry Days (Celebration of Ministry, also known as the "25/50 service") and creating a new liturgy for it. I'm very excited about the direction we're going and its potential to serve the needs of both those who believe it's time to release the old format and those who want it to remain the same.

**Building Re-Opening Advisory Committee
Report to the Board, 3/11/21**

1. BRAG met on Wednesday, Feb. 24 to receive reports from Jamie and Jesse re. use of the building and grounds since December 2020, review rental requests for the coming 2-3 months, and to discuss whether USNH should have a vaccination policy.
2. In determining to continue our current building-use policies we reviewed:
 - a. the UUA Guidance for gatherings,
 - b. the 5 metrics (daily new cases, infection rate, positivity rate, tracers hired, and ICU headroom) used by the Reston, VA UU Congregation,
 - c. and the daily Connecticut COVID-19 stats,
 - d. Gov. Lamont's Executive Orders re Religious Gatherings.
3. We published an Update on Building Reopening When COVID Subsides:

USNH will continue our online Sunday services through the summer. We will return to indoor services in the fall, if safety indicators and scientific criteria allow. We hope we can all come together in the sanctuary for the Water Communion service on September 12. With current COVID-19 statistics and under state guidelines, we are now able to accommodate larger outdoor gatherings. You must schedule any use of the grounds, and masks and six-foot social distancing are required. Members of scheduled gatherings will be able to enter the building to use the restrooms by following building-use protocols. Please contact Jamie Ross at office@usnh.org to schedule any gathering and to get more information on capacity limits and protocols for bathroom use. *From the Building Reopening Advisory Group (BRAG). Please contact management.team@usnh.org if you have additional questions.*
4. On March 7, 2021, Governor Lamont's office announced that limits on churches for in-person gatherings will end on March 19, 2021 but that mask-wearing and social distancing requirements are to remain in place.
 - a. Connecticut's recent positivity rate:

Feb. 22	2.22%
Mar. 4	1.86
Mar. 8	2.63
Mar. 9	3.56
 - b. There is an increase in the numbers of the new and more contagious variants of the infections.

Therefore a wait-and-see attitude is the wiser course, and it is shared by several of our neighboring congregations. So we will continue with the policies that we have in place and look forward to being together in the fall.

Gwen Heuss-Severance,
Management Team

Stewardship Update to the Board, 3/11/21

Laura Patey and Cindy Chelcun are chairing the Stewardship committee. Other members are Al Bosch, Jerry Clupper, Sally Connolly, Ethan Loewi, and me.

The campaign theme is **Living Our Values Every Day** - we are all **LOVED**. As we come together in **shared stewardship** this year, our focus and theme of **LOVED** guides us back to the strong foundation of our congregation, and the promise to be here for each other and the greater community.

The campaign goal is an ambitious \$490,000, only \$10,000 less than last year's goal. March 21 is the Sunday kick-off stewardship service and email invitations to pledge went out to leadership (all members of the Board, Management Team, finance-related committees, and the Social Justice Council, as well as chairs of committees and social justice task forces) last Wednesday and a reminder is going out today. We would like a strong total leadership pledge total to announce during the March 21 service and in our general pledge invitation.

As of this evening, we have received 29 leadership pledges, including 10 from Board and MT members, totaling \$133,400. If you have not yet made a pledge, please do so by Monday, March 15. If you are able, please consider increasing your pledge, to help us reach our ambitious, but necessary, goal. You can [pledge online here](#). If you have any questions, please contact me or email stewardship@usnh.org.

Finally, Stewardship communications will be sent by email this year, with paper mailings to those who need them. This will benefit both the planet and our operating budget.

~ Becky Friedkin, for the Stewardship Committee



S.E.W.

Securing the Essentials for Waverly

RELIABILITY VERSUS POVERTY

What's Next for the Waverly USNH/Partnership



S.E.W.

Securing the Essentials for Waverly

Intro: How and Why it Works

Tynicha

RELIABILITY VERSUS POVERTY

What's Next for the Waverly USNH/Partnership



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Securing the Essentials for Waverly

History and State of the Partnership

Sharon

RELIABILITY VERSUS POVERTY

What's Next for the Waverly USNH/Partnership



S.E.W.

Securing the **E**ssentials for **W**averly

Waverly Townhouses was one of the smallest, original mixed community housing developments under Housing Authority of New Haven. It consisted of 49 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroom units constructed in a split level style.

Waverly Programming Highlights:

***Waverly Youth Leadership Group** (12-18 years old) Tynicha Drummonds travels with the teens to USNH each week. Meeting every Wednesday in USNH Library from 7 – 8:30PM with volunteer drivers picking up at 49 Waverly Street at 6:30)

***Waverly Little Learners** (5 – 12 years old) Linda Bray and Carole Arnold lead the programming. Meeting at 6:30 each week at 47 Waverly Street in “Jack and Jill Learning Center”.

***Waverly Food Pantry** – Located in upstairs bedroom at 49 Waverly Street



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USNH IN ACTION

Waverly Tenant Management Board was still in place by the early 200s, but not as strong as it had been. Marie Heggie and Carole Arnold worked together to fill the food pantry with food and to distribute it. Sharon McBlain and June Schafer attended WTMB meeting as non-voting members. Waverly/USNH Partnership – The members of the two communities had built strong relationships based on earned trust and respect.

USNH had set aside \$10,000 in the yearly Budget for the Waverly Youth Programming. Jean Winchel was still alive and was contributing \$1000 each year to cover Tynicha's work that continued through the summer.

At some point the Social Justice Council was created at USNH and the funding for the Waverly Youth Programming under the SJC Budget.



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Around 2015, the Housing Authority of New Haven decided to renovate 47 & 49 Waverly Street where the resident programming office and computer learning center resided, respectively. 47 Waverly Street was repurposed as the office of the “Property Manager”. The Waverly Food Pantry was closed.

After meeting it was decided that USNH and Housing Authority of New Haven (HANH) needed to sign a “Letter of Memorandum” regarding the use of the space for the Waverly Youth Program. The Waverly Youth Program was allowed the use of the two upstairs bedrooms at 49 Waverly Street. The Little Learners program struggled but survived the following 2 or 3 years.



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USNH IN ACTION

The decision makers at USNH began to wonder if the Waverly Youth Program was functioning adequately. They had heard rumors that things were not going well. There were increasing Budget problems at USNH and the Board decided to interview each of the “Little Learners Volunteers” to be find out what they were thinking about the functioning and future of the program. They had heard that there were concerns and were hoping they could be of help to strengthen the program, but also concerned this might be money that could be used better elsewhere. This may have been the time when the Budget for the fall was reduced to \$9500.



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Securing the **E**ssentials for **W**averly

CONTINUING TO RUN A PROGRAM

- **MILESTONE-** Major reorganization of programming. Little Learners began meeting each Wednesday from 5:30 – 7PM at 49 Waverly Street. WYLG began focus on mentoring and helping with Little Learners and no longer meet at USNH. This decision was made by Tynicha and the Waverly parents who decided that it was very important to strengthen the programming for the younger children. The Housing Authority decided the Waverly Youth Program could use the large downstairs room for our meetings as long as we stored all supplies and tables out of the way. The HANH put a bank of computers in the downstairs room. The HANH offered on site housing for a grade school teacher and a policeman at Waverly.
- **MILESTONE –** The Waverly Reading Programming and homework help programming resumes. 5:30 – 6:00 was reading and homework time and 6:00 – 7:00 was for crafts, computer games, dress-up, supervised outdoor activities and refreshments.
- **MILESTONE-** The Waverly Youth Program became a year round program. The decision was made by Tynicha, parents and volunteers, that children needed to continue the reading programming through the summer months
- **MILESTONE –** The Housing Authority made the decision to renovate all of the units. The teacher and police officer were moved from the complex. The Wednesday night Waverly meeting continued until January 2020 when the renovation finally started and the “Waverly Community Center” was closed. Families were gradually moved around from one side to the other of the development or moved out.
- Tynicha and the Volunteers began look in earnest for another meeting space.



S.E.W.

Securing the **E**ssentials for **W**averly

CONTINUING TO RUN A PROGRAM

USNH IN ACTION

- The concerns regarding USNH's financial situation and the amount in the General Budget high. The Waverly Youth Programming Budget was reduced to \$9000.
- The Decision was made at USNH that in order to preserve the Waverly Budget it would be moved from the SJC budget to its own line in the General Budget.



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Securing the **E**ssentials for **W**averly

CONTINUING TO RUN A PROGRAM

COVID PANDEMIC

- Masks were made and delivered to Waverly children and families. Stop and Shop and Laundry cards were purchase by USNH funding and distributed to Waverly families as needed. Outdoor COVID safe toys and equipment was purchase and given to children by Tynicha. An effort was made to continue relationships and traditions. School supplies were distributed, Halloween COVID Safe event, Christmas Holiday Party at Waverly, etc.
- Renovation is finally completed including reopening the playground in the Courtyard. Families are moved back in.

February 2021

- Weekly 5:30 Waverly ZOOM meeting focusing on educational and internet needs of children and families and planning for Post-COVID resumption of regular Wednesday night programming



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Securing the Essentials for Waverly

Future Now:
Re-Emerging Non Profit
Wendy

RELIABILITY VERSUS POVERTY

What's Next for the Waverly USNH/Partnership



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Next Step:

Support in Written Form

RELIABILITY VERSUS POVERTY

What's Next for the Waverly USNH/Partnership



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- Letter of Support: is an outside testimonial that backs up a nonprofit's claims of success and promises to deliver.
- Memorandum of Agreement: between organizations that have agreed to partner for the project offered.
- Memorandum of Understanding: clarifies, assesses and assigns the role and value of the promised components.

RELIABILITY VERSUS POVERTY

What's Next for the Waverly USNH/Partnership