

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
October 14, 2021, Via Zoom  
Accepted on 11/8/21

Board Members Present:

President - Emily McCave	Becky Reeve
Vice President - Joanie Messner	Rich Stockton
Clerk - Aimee Cotton Bogush	Susan Trotta-Smith
Treasurer - Larry Copes (left at 7:19 pm)	
Bernice Marie-Daly	

Others Present:

Bobbi Pace (Management Team), David Stagg (Management Team)

**Board Members Absent:**

**1. Gather & Chalice Lighting**

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. and the chalice was lit. The covenant was read and check in took place. Joanie announced that she has to step away from the role of Vice President to care for her mother.

**2. Future Planning**

**Budget Update - Larry**

Larry provided a budget update and reported on 1.5 and 1.6 in policy governance. Annual report on last fiscal year - overseeing the whole financial situation of the operation. Becky Friedkin is preparing a template. Will used Kathy Garner's former format from 2017, going through governance structure and evaluated the system on those aspects. Larry will report on 1.5 (financial planning and budgeting) and 1.6 (financial management and conditions) in policy governance. His observation is that 1.5 was followed as closely as possible given the uncertainty of the pandemic. He raised a question about whether enough financial reserves are available for unanticipated expenses (especially with an aging building), noting that USHN would not be in fiscal jeopardy however if something occurred. Regarding 1.6, Larry's observation is that there is nothing troubling in this section. He added that the management team and the finance committee are doing the best job they can.

Discussion followed and concerns were expressed about next year's budget. This year's pledge goal was not met. David noted that 15% of the budget is in reserve and is easily accessible in case of emergencies. It was confirmed that the management team has delegated to building and grounds to map the future of known upcoming building expenses. USNH hasn't been able to set aside funds, and had to use PPP funds to cover the budget.

Discussion took place on the role of the treasurer as it relates to the management team's work. David and Larry will follow up with each other on where the lines are drawn. The change of the treasurer's role occurred with the move to policy governance method. No action is required of the board. The board treasurer's role is to oversee the entire operation. A primary goal of the board is future planning. If it is observed that long term financial planning has a gap, the board needs to decide if there is any aspect of that that becomes their responsibility. It is appropriate for the board to say it sees a high priority in putting money in the capital fund for big expenses coming up (such as HVAC system) and doing that planning for the future. The budget process tries to take into account the board's priorities.

### **Board Investiture (10/24) – Emily**

Board investiture will take place on Sunday, October 24. Emily asked that as many board members as possible and are comfortable to attend service in person, please do so.

### **Fall Retreat – Emily**

With Joanie resigning, the officers and Reverend Lindasusan recommend postponing the retreat. The topics are important and ideally the new vice president will participate. Looking at a winter instead of fall.

### **Nominating Committee Update – Sue**

Discussion took place regarding filling the vacancy for the vice president role and it's transition to the president. Sue reported that the Nominating Committee (NC) is planning to meet early next week and they understand the need to move quickly. NC needs to resolve choosing a chair and to draft a charge to codify the processes when it comes to expected and unexpected candidates that need to be selected. Emily will work with them on the charge to help on the process piece. Reverend Lindasusan will also be invited to help. NC's work intersects with MELD's goals of building relationships in the work of nominating to increase diversity and build in some systems. Dan Gelperin is on both committees, linking the groups.

### **Congregational Meeting Planning – Emily**

The meeting is December 12 at 11:45 am. The board worked through the agenda and assigned roles. Two questions have been raised by the 8th principle working group regarding a congregational vote: what is the threshold for passing and should it be anonymous or open. Discussion followed. If quorum is met, a simple majority of those present at the meeting is needed to pass. Having a low number of members pass the 8th principle was raised as a concern and opinions were expressed on both sides of the question of an anonymous vote. Most agreed with non-anonymous voting and the board might need to consider including clarifying language in the bylaws about votes needing a simple majority.

Discussion continued around preparing the congregation for the vote, whether enough education has been done, and if the December 12 meeting is the right time. No one attended the listening

circle offered on Sunday after the service. Another will take place on 11/7. A pamphlet addressing FAQs will be mailed to all member households around 11/30 and a question box is placed in the USNH lobby. An evening session will be held in November and the worship service on 12/5 will be dedicated to the 8th principle. The working group feels those efforts will be proactive.

The board will talk more about this next month and make a final decision.

### **3. Reports**

#### **Minister's Report – Rev. Lindasusan (attached)**

Emily noted that in the last Sunday service, Reverend Lindasusan announced that they are using they/them pronouns exclusively. Emily encouraged board members to gently remind others as well if needed.

#### **Update on weekly in-person/live stream services - David**

David reported that live streaming is working and is handled by the Worship Committee. He is helping to get the in-sanctuary video working. A 75" tv and cart were purchased.

#### **Management Team Policy Review 1.9 – David (attached)**

David shared the Management Team's Policy Review report. As the board is to be aware of all grants and contracts, he shared that a new lease for the daycare, The Little Munchkins, was signed today. There will be a new director but the same staff and clientele.

### **4. Closing**

The minutes from the September 13, 2021 board meeting were approved.

#### **Process Observations – Becky**

Becky noted it was nice to show flexibility in the agenda to accommodate Larry. The opening reading was moving as was the sharing that occurred during the check in. Many are facing difficult times and it is nice knowing we are willing to share with each other and to put words to how we feel and receive the support of others. Becky appreciated Bobbi providing clarification on the role of board and nominating committee. A lively honest discussion regarding the congregational meeting took place. We did go way over and had unexpected agenda item but the discussion would have run us over anyway. It was a productive use of time.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aimee Cotton Bogush, Clerk

## MT monitoring of Policy Governance Section 1.9

(MT responses in red)

(The Management Team last reported to the Board on this section on October 8<sup>th</sup> 2020)

### **1.9 Grants or Contracts**

#### **1.9.1 Grants**

The Management Team shall not fail to assure that it is aware of grants applied for and received by the Society.

*Approved by the Board: May 14, 2015*

In March of 2021 we received notification that the PPP loan of \$74,800 we had received on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 was 100% forgiven. We had used the money to support salaries and utilities so we were able to transfer a corresponding amount to our Gifts and Donations Fund. A portion of that money will be used to balance the budget for the current fiscal year.

In May 2021 a Grow Grant in the amount of \$2,800 was awarded to “Securing the Essentials for Waverly” (S.E.W.). USNH will be custodian of the funds which will be deposited in the Waverly Temporary Restricted Fund once they arrive.

In September 2020 we received a grant of \$500 from the Unitarian Universalist Social Responsibility Fund in support of our Social Justice Network “Get Out the Vote!” project.

We report compliance with section 1.9.1

#### **1.9.2 Contracts**

- a. No one other than the Management Team, its express designees, or the Board President (or the Vice President in the President’s absence) shall execute any contract on behalf of USNH.
- b. The Management Team shall not fail to assure that each contract for work or services in excess of \$2,500 is awarded only after
  - 1) preparation of specifications/requests for proposals, and
  - 2) procurement and evaluation of two or more price proposals, or approval from the Board for a sole-source justification.

#### **MT Interpretation:**

While this section is always applicable for NEW contracts, MT believes that it may not be appropriate to require this section when certain existing contracts are expiring and being considered for renewal. For example, it may be appropriate to renew the yearly snow removal contract with the existing contractor when the performance has been satisfactory and there is

no reason to think that another contractor would provide superior service. MT would not want to renew any contract indefinitely, but it seems reasonable in a case such as this to renew up to 3 times before rebidding the contract.

***Approved by the Board: May 14, 2015***

***MT Interpretation Approved by the Board: March 8, 2018***

Last winter we contracted with Jake's Landscaping for snow plowing but omitted any ice/snow work on the back parking lot since we did not anticipate using it. This year we are planning to stay with the same company but include snow clearance and ice treatment for the back parking lot.

Several maintenance contracts were automatically renewed including HVAC system maintenance, fire/security monitoring/alarm systems, handicap elevator maintenance, outdoor pest control etc.

The yearly contract with Antonia Baroga, our Bookkeeper was renewed July 1<sup>st</sup> 2021 on the same terms as for the previous year.

We report compliance with section 1.9.2

MT 10/14/2021



# Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees

October 14, 2021

## What do you notice?

- Since September 10, there have been four memorials (Marty Lipnick, Lindsay Korth, Meredith Fahey, and John Pawelek), with Helene Goward's on October 17, Ron Grunloh's on October 23, and several more to be scheduled. For some of these, I was the main officiant: meeting with the family, creating the liturgy, preparing a eulogy. With others, my participation was less central, but holding the space is still a significant task. I don't anticipate this pace to slow down much until the cold weather makes outdoor receptions impractical.
- We've reopened for worship! The COVID numbers for New Haven County have been going in the right direction, and we haven't heard of any cases of COVID in the congregation. The Worship Planning Team continues to make a week-by-week determination, with the status clearly communicated in the weekly e-news and the Saturday worship announcement. Congregants have had a much more powerful experience seeing these real-time services, whether seeing them in person or virtually. I also get the sense that the congregation feels they're getting to know me better, and therefore trusts me more. I attribute this to them seeing me fully in my element for the first time.
- On October 10, I launched the Pastoral Care Network during the worship service. This included an explanation of the new structure: logistically, covenantally, and theologically. Congregants are asked to perform 2-3 acts of care per year as a spiritual practice. Each in-person attendee received a volunteer form to fill out for the types of pastoral care they'd be willing to offer during the year; livestream participants received the URL to an online version of the form ([bit.ly/USNHCARE](https://bit.ly/USNHCARE)). Becky Friedkin is compiling this data, which the Pastoral Care Team can draw on when needed. Given that this is one of my top three priorities for the year, I'm especially excited that the new structure is underway.
- On October 8, we held the first all-staff retreat during my tenure. We discussed our different communication styles and began forming a staff covenant. All of us agreed that we have a very healthy dynamic among the staff.
- Over the past several weeks, we've had many newcomers at Sunday services. Indeed, Anna and I had originally planned to hold off on the New to UU Class, but we've had enough interest that we need to schedule one.
- I'm working with Jen Payne on our USNH website redesign. We've finalized the menus and will begin to look at the visual components next.

- Lectio divina has restarted on Mondays at 10am via zoom. You're always most welcome.

### **Do you have questions?**

- If this pace continues, especially with memorials, what would you like me to cut back on doing?

### **What do you need?**

- I wanted to let you know that I spoke with the person who had concerns about USNH's authority to close, and the matter has been closed to his satisfaction.
- During the worship service on 10/24, we're planning to do a brief investiture of the board. This will recognize all Board members and allow the Board and the congregation to speak their support to each other. I hope to see as many of you as possible. (Note: If you don't feel comfortable coming to in-person services yet, please honor that.)
- Please come as well to my installation, which will take place on November 14 at 3pm. Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt, Interim Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for the Theological School at Drew University, will be preaching.