

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
September 8, 2022, held on Zoom  
Notes by Kyle Manning, At-Large Trustee  
Approved by the Board on October 13, 2022

Board members present: David Jones, President, Joanna Scaparotti Norris, Treasurer; Joan Ciano, Kyle Manning, Sue Trotta-Smith; Rev. Lindasusan, ex officio

Board members absent: Becky Reeve, Tina Santoni

Others Present:

David Stagg (Management Team)

Dan Gelperin, Maggie Goodwin, Becky Sandmann (Nominating Committee)

## **1. Gather and Chalice Lighting**

The meeting began at approximately 6:30. The chalice was lit, check-in was completed, and the minutes from August 11, 2022, were approved.

## **2. Future Planning**

### ***Board Retreat***

David spoke about the upcoming Board retreat, scheduled for 11/22/22, and confirmed that it will be an all-day, hybrid event. The Management Team and Council of Chairs will be invited. Rev. Lindasusan stressed that the retreat will focus on setting goals for the congregation. The retreat is being planned with Joe Sullivan, from the New England region of the UUA. More information will be forthcoming.

### ***Leadership Recruitment--Discussion with Becky, Dan, and Maggie (Nominating Committee)***

Becky brought up several issues that need discussing:

- 1) The need to work as a team when recruiting people for Board positions.
- 2) The possibility of shared positions.
- 3) Whether the Board should decide which positions people hold, once recruited. This may require a bylaw change.

As a past Board president, Dan spoke in favor of shared leadership, where all Board members work together (writing the newsletter, taking the minutes, etc.). He suggested we discuss this—and generally how best to run the Board—at the upcoming retreat. He also suggested we brainstorm with past Board members to gain insight as to why people may be reluctant to serve. Becky agreed, and she suggested that it might be helpful to get previous Board presidents together (those who served after the formation of the Management Team) to discuss their experiences; specifically, how they encouraged participation on the Board. Dan acknowledged that the pandemic has had an enormous impact on the congregation and, in general, has made everything more difficult.

Maggie said that one concern people have with the Vice President position is that it is a two-year commitment. People are reluctant to make that commitment, especially considering the uncertainty of the

pandemic. Rev. Lindasusan questioned why folks would agree to serve in other two-to-three-year term positions, but not the Vice President position. Joanna suggested that starting out as an at-large member can give people a chance to observe and learn how the Board operates, possibly sparking an interest in serving in a particular position afterward. David said he thinks it is good for members to be on the Board for a year (as an at-large member) before running for office.

Maggie and David reminded the Board that, after the Management Team was formed, the size of the Board was reduced, making its role more visionary, with the Management Team running the congregation's day-to-day operations.

The discussion ended with David suggesting we continue to talk about these issues; he particularly liked the idea of speaking with past presidents. He said perhaps something could be set up for next month.

### **3. Management Team Report**

David Stagg reported that Madison Shoreline UU and other congregations are sponsoring short spots on NPR, which introduce and promote Unitarian Universalism to Connecticut listeners. Broadcasting will begin on Saturday. Rev. Lindasusan shared that USNH contributed money and language for the two spots.

### **4. BRAG Update**

Rev. Lindasusan reported that masking is now optional in the social hall, and coffee can be served and consumed inside. Masking remains mandatory in the rest of the building.

### **5. Minister's Report**

Rev. Lindasusan submitted the Minister's Report for September (attached) and requested that, if we hear folks referring to them with incorrect pronouns, we gently remind them that Rev. Lindasusan uses they/them pronouns.

### **6. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:36; the next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2022.

Attachments:

- Monitoring Report on Policy 1.8, Communication and Support to the Board
- Minister's Report

## MT monitoring of Policy Governance Section 1.8

(MT responses in red)

(The Management Team last reported on this section on September 13<sup>th</sup> 2021)

### 1.8 Communication and Support to the Board

The Management Team shall not permit the Board to be uninformed, misinformed, or unsupported in its work.

Accordingly, the Management Team may not:

- a. Fail to inform the Board in a timely manner of relevant trends, public policy initiatives, public events of the organization, material external and internal changes.

The Management Team has attended all the regular monthly meetings of the Board. We have provided reports on financial matters (see c. below). We asked the Board for priorities for the budget and presented our proposed budget for fiscal 2022-23 for discussion and approval. We have reported to the Board on the creation and development of the MELD (Meaningful Engagement and Leadership Development) group. We have reported on meetings of the Council of Chairs, live-streaming implementation and technology and the transfer of our Daycare to new management. We have also reported progress on repair of our roof and walls (until David Jones took over Project Management in April 2022) and finalization of the report of the ad-hoc Committee on Financial Roles and Responsibilities (CFRR). We proposed an addition to the USNH Bylaws changes proposed by the Board to clarify that USNH friends are welcome to attend and/or join committees unless otherwise indicated.

- b. Fail to report to the Board, in a timely manner any significant information it requires including anticipated media coverage, threatened or impending legal issues, claims, or lawsuits.

We found out in April 2022 that Shoreline UU is working with NPR to create a Radio Spot to “Introduce our Unitarian Faith (of 500 years) to the listeners of Connecticut NPR” and “to encourage listeners to go to the UUA.org website to find a UU congregation to visit online and in person”. With leadership from Rev Lindasusan we have contributed suggested words and money to the project. The spot will begin regular broadcasting on September 10<sup>th</sup>. We will report results in due course.

There has been an ongoing issue with complaints from our neighbors Robert and Donna Scymanski of 45 High Meadow Road regarding the noise from the Daycare (the children “screaming”) and a difference between the maximum occupancy of the Daycare agreed to by the Town of Hamden (60) and the license from the State of CT (78). We have been told by the Daycare Administrator that Hamden has now amended the special permit to allow 78 children. The neighbor has erected a tall fence at his border with our property and we have received no communication from him in the past six weeks. We will report any further developments of this to the Board if problems continue.

There have been no other incidents of the type described in the policy since our last report

- c. Fail to submit the monitoring data required by the Board policy "3.5 Monitoring Management Team Performance" in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion, and which includes the Management Team's interpretations of the policy.

MT has provided reports as required by 3.5.2 a) according to the schedule determined by the Board. These reports have included statements confirming compliance or non-compliance in accordance with MT interpretations previously determined. We have routinely evaluated the interpretations but no changes have been proposed since our last report. As a result of work on the Committee for Roles and Responsibilities we have resumed reporting on sections 1.5 and 1.6 and did so in March of 2022 with the Treasurer providing an audit of the reports

- d. Fail to advise the Board if, in the Management Team's opinion, the Board is not in compliance with its own policies on Governance Process and Board-Management Team Delegation.

There has been no occasion where MT has formed any such opinion since our last report

- e. Fail to report in a timely manner, any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any Ends or Executive Limitations policies of the Board regardless of the Board's monitoring schedule.

MT is not aware of any such actual or anticipated noncompliance since our last report

- f. Fail to recommend changes in Board policies, when the need becomes known to them.

The MT has not become aware of any needed changes in Board policies.

- g. Fail to gather and consider as many staff and external points of view, issues, and options as needed, for fully informed Board choices.

MT has consistently sought the opinion of staff, committee members and others before bringing recommendations to the Board. MT has attended monthly Board meetings with the intention of keeping the Board informed of any matters requiring Board attention

- h. Fail to provide a mechanism for official Board, officer, or committee communications.

MT has worked closely with our congregational administrator to facilitate all forms of communication on behalf of the Board

- i. Fail to deal with the Board as a whole except when (a) fulfilling individual requests for information or (b) responding to officers or committees duly charged by the Board.

Formal discussions between the MT and the Board have taken place at monthly Board meetings in person and since March 2020 by Zoom. Some matters have been discussed beforehand by email or phone with the President or by email with the whole Board before being brought to a Board meeting.

- j. Fail to limit public statements about the official position of the congregation or Board on controversial social, political, and/or congregational issues to what the congregation or Board has formally and explicitly adopted as positions of record. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to infringe upon the fundamental principle of freedom of the pulpit.

Except as mentioned in b) above, MT has not made public statements about matters described in this section.

*Section 1.8 of the Policy governance Handbook was approved by the Board: March 12, 2015*

*Changes to MT interpretation were approved by the Board: September 12, 2019*

We report compliance with sections a. through j. above  
MT 9/8/2022



# Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees

September 8, 2022

## What do you notice?

- The new congregational year is upon us! The ingathering service is right around the corner, religious education is gearing up, committees are starting to meet again, small group ministry plans are underway, UU the Vote is distributing GOTV postcards, and CONECT congregations will be assembling. There's much to be excited about at USNH...yet the mood seems subdued to me. I feel a sense of people's worry creeping into corners, whether about next year's finances, fewer volunteers, or ongoing concerns about the impact of the pandemic.
- I'm delighted to report that our new Director of Music, Christopher Grundy, has hit the ground running. Choir rehearsals begin September 8.
- The restructuring of pastoral care is heading into its next phase of implementation. We plan to schedule a training for those who have volunteered to do visits. We're hoping to work with the Unitarian Church in Westport, which has a robust pastoral care program and had offered to do a training with USNH pre-COVID.

## Do you have questions?

- As we come together for a new congregational year, what are you noticing at USNH that's going especially well?

## What do you need?

- Now that the Ends statements have been updated by the Board, the Management Team is tasked with interpreting the Ends and coming up with strategies to achieve them. To help guide us in this endeavor, the MT plans to work with Laura Park from Unity Consulting. USNH has engaged Laura in the past, and I was fortunate enough to work with and learn from her during my internship at Unity Church-Unitarian. Once we prepare the interpretations, we'll bring them back to the Board for acceptance or adjustment.

Because we didn't have any funding for the MT in the budget, I'll be using my professional expenses to pay for Laura's "coaching" on interpreting Ends statements. I consider it a worthwhile investment both personally and institutionally.

- If you hear people referring to me as she/her, I'd appreciate your help in gently reminding them that I use they/them pronouns.

**Anything else?**

- In my previous report, I noted my planned vacation schedule for the summer. As it happened, I wound up working June 25 — July 2.
- Please note that I've moved my day off to Mondays. Fridays will become my writing day.