

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees, held on Zoom
January 12, 2023
Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk, clerk

Approved by the Board on February 9, 2023

Board Members present:

David Jones	Bobbi Pace	Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk
Joanna Norris	Joan Ciano	Kyle Manning
Sue Trotta-Smith	Tina Santoni	Becky Reeve

Also present: Jean Rosenthal, Susan Meredith, David Stagg, Becky Friedkin

1. GATHER AND CHALICE LIGHTING

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. Bobbi Pace lit the chalice and read “Fitted for This Day” by K. Q. Johnson. Each person present read a line from the Board Covenant. This was followed by a check-in from various members. Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk will bring the language for a USNH Land Acknowledgement to the next meeting. There were no changes to the agenda.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the December meeting of the Board were approved.

3. MINISTER/WORSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE

A. Decision: David Jones and Bobbi Pace reported that Reverend Lindasusan Ulrich’s ministry has come to an end. Two letters—one from Rev. Lindasusan and one from the Board—will be emailed to the congregation on Friday, January 13th. The letters were shared via screen share on Zoom, with David and Bobbi each reading one of them aloud. David expressed a great sense of loss over this turn of events, but shared that after much discernment, Rev. Lindasusan made the decision herself. In discussions with Rev. Lindasusan, David and Bobbi had explored all possible options to resolve the situation but could find none.

B. Follow-up. On Sunday January 15, following the service, the Board will host a listening session for congregants in response to the news of Rev. Lindasusan’s departure. Rev. Marian Visel, who will come out of retirement to provide ministerial care to USNH congregants on an as-needed basis, will be in attendance. Rev. Lindasusan will deliver their final sermon at USNH on Sunday February 5. The Worship Committee has filled the pulpit for almost all Sundays through the end of February and will be filling the pulpit through the end of June.

C. Departure. Rev. Lindasusan has applied for CT FMLA benefits. As a gesture of good will and to help minimize financial hardship on the family, it was moved and seconded that USNH cover the difference up to their full salary for the month of January. The motion was approved unanimously.

This is a negotiated departure. President David Jones, Vice-president Bobbi Pace, and Treasurer Joanna Scaparotti Norris will negotiate for the Board, with recommendations from David Stagg from the Management Team as to how this will affect the USNH budget. It will be the Board's responsibility to approve a departure plan once negotiated. The Board expressed confidence that the negotiating team will balance compassion for Rev. Lindasusan with consideration of USNH finances and the good of the congregation.

4. OTHER MATTERS

The Budget Planning Task Force report, the Treasurer's report, and the Stewardship report are postponed until the next meeting. Board members are reminded to look at the Budget options for 2023-2024 in the memo from members of the Endowment and Legacies Committee, especially Section A, before the next meeting.

Board members reiterated their appreciation and gratitude to David and Bobbi for their leadership at this trying time. The UUA has also expressed great confidence in our congregation and respect for the way we are dealing with a difficult situation.

Motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Adjournment: 8:13 p.m.