

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Board Meeting in the Social Hall  
December 14, 2023  
Approved by the Board January 11, 2024

**Board Members Present**

Bobbi Pace, President	Joan Ciano
Sue Trotta-Smith, Vice-president	Becky Reeve
Tom Ward, Treasurer	Kyle Manning
Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk, Clerk	Alissa Chapin
Kathy Haskins	

**Also present:**

David Stagg, Management Team  
Mark Bauer, Management Team  
Rev. Stephen Kendrick, ex officio

1. Call to order: President Bobbi Pace called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. Chalice Lighting and Reading: Becky Reeves read “My Courageous Life,” by David Whyte. Kyle Manning will present the reading at the January Board meeting.
3. In response to the question posed by Bobbi Pace—*What is something you’re working on to improve in yourself?*—members discussed the need for patience, forgiveness, and maintaining a positive attitude. Others stressed not succumbing to despair, but finding ways to be grounded and not triggered by the cruelties and injustices of the world. Others described efforts at being intentional, decluttering, struggling against procrastination and learning to let go.
4. After a reading of the USNH Board’s shared covenant, those present gave various interpretations to the item: *To be as present as possible.*
5. Alissa Chapin moved and Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk seconded approval of tonight’s Agenda and minutes from the meeting of November 9, 2023. The motion passed unanimously.
6. David Stagg (MT) presented Monitoring Report 1.10. An energy audit advises replacing sanctuary and outside lighting with LED fixtures. Construction of a pathway between USNH and Mishkan Israel is set for the Spring. On December 7, 2023 Board members approved via email a \$4,800 single-bid contract with landscaper Jake Clapp for this work. Building and Grounds has researched the proposal and are on board with the plan. Board members’ questions about accessibility and lighting for the path will be considered as the project becomes finalized.
7. Report from Security Working Group: Mark Bauer (MT) presented updates from the SWG vis a vis operating procedure, educational needs of the congregation, and building and grounds safety. A description of updated Security SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) will be disseminated. The Connecticut Peace Center will conduct de-escalation training for volunteers and staff; and Steven Jacober, E.D. of Mishkan Israel, will lead a congregational session on safety on Jan. 21, 2024. Board members discussed SWG’s recommendation for posting a statement that USNH is a “firearms free community” on the property. The topic will be revisited pending conversations with Hamden Police and the director of Over the Rainbow Child Care.
8. Minister’s report: Reverend Stephen focused on (a) ways to express gratitude for USNH staff and volunteers (including thank-you dinners, modest bonuses, and personal notes) and (b) the

challenges of ministering to an aging congregation, especially in engaging honorably with the 30 people on USNH's "extreme elderly" list. Tom Ward suggested increasing the budget for pastoral care via the upcoming stewardship campaign, and Rev. Stephen announced that he and Sunny Joy MacMillan will lead a course titled "The Caring Congregation" in the spring. He also noted that average attendance at Sunday services has increased to 170, up from 110 last year, and shared highlights from Sunny Joy's Internship report. SJM appreciates being included in every aspect of Worship. She is co-facilitating the Bereavement Group, leading a course on UU Mysticism, and getting involved with Waverly. Rev. Stephen applauded the dignified and appropriate way she filled in, on very short notice, at the funeral of a congregant's wife.

9. Treasurer's report: Treasurer Tom Ward reported that the USNH current budget shows \$275K in income vs \$267K in expenses. The Finance Committee wishes to deposit money in a Fidelity MMF (Money Market Fund) insured by SIPC (Securities Investor Protection Corporation) and requests that the Board approve a change of wording by inserting "or SIPC" after "FDIC" in the current MT interpretation 1.7.2c – "*Operating cash (currently set at an average of 15% of the annual operating budget) is held in FDIC insured checking accounts, money market accounts, and/or CDs.*" Joan Ciano moved and Alissa Chapin seconded approval of this change of wording. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Ends Statement. Board members read aloud and responded positively to the current draft of Ends Statements as being "active and relatable" and doing an effective job of presenting USNH values. The Board expressed gratitude to Vice-president Sue Trotta-Smith who word-smithed the final draft of the statement and discussed ways of presenting it to the congregation.

11. UUA Article II. President Bobbi Pace will send a link to resources about Article II to the Board and to Becky Friedkin for inclusion in the USNH Newsletter. The Board will discuss ways to present this topic to the congregation at the meeting on January 11, 2024.

12. November memo from the Worship Committee on applause. Reverend Stephen reported that the discussion is resolving itself within the Worship Committee.

13. The Yale Divinity School's Reimagining Church Project. Bobbi Pace reported that Alison Cunningham, formerly of USNH and now with YDS, will attend the January Board meeting to report on this fascinating project.

14. Process Observation: The meeting stayed on track with 100% participation by those present. Bobbi Pace responded to Rev. Stephen's comments on thank-you's by suggesting that Board meeting time be set aside for members to write personal notes of thanks.

15. Becky Reeve moved adjournment. Kathy Haskins seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

The next meeting of the USNH Board will be held in person on January 11, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk (she/her), Clerk

Attachment:

Draft Ends Statements

Draft statement of revised ENDS for USNH:

**Members of the Unitarian Society of New Haven are called to work within ourselves, among one another in our community, and beyond in the wider world to:**

**Boldly seek** opportunities to grow, learn, and worship, embracing the transformative power of connecting to that which is larger than ourselves.

**Joyfully welcome** all who find within our community a home where we affirm and embrace diversity of thought, orientation, and lifestyle.

**Generously give** and receive support in times of joy, sorrow, and transition.

**Responsibly dismantle** oppression in ourselves and our institutions.

**Tenaciously engage** in spiritual and applied practices that promote ecological sustainability and environmental justice.