

Meeting of the USNH Board of Trustees  
Unitarian Society of New Haven  
February 8, 2024  
Approved by the Board March 14, 2024

**USNH Board Members**

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

**Also present:**

David Stagg, Management Team  
Rev. Stephen Kendrick, ex officio  
Sunny Joy McMillan, Intern, Yale Divinity School

1. Call to order: President Bobbi Pace called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
2. President Bobbi Pace lit the chalice.
3. Alissa Chapin read from “Give Us Our Peace” by Langston Hughes. Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk will give the reading at the March meeting.
4. Bobbi Pace asked Board members to identify one new thing that they would like to do in 2024: something that they have never done before. Those present listed a variety of goals including taking up pickle ball, finishing a novel, not spending any money on polyester, going to a dark star park, continuing pastoral education in a hospital, writing weekly entries in a story book, witnessing a solar eclipse, taking a scenic train trip, and performing a solo cello recital.
5. Members took turns reading aloud the USNH Board’s Shared Covenant.
6. Board members took turns reading aloud the new USNH Ends Statements.
7. In discussion of the Covenant statement regarding when to remind others to abide by the Covenant, members of the Board commented that our practice of process observation supports reminding when necessary.
8. Bobbi Pace called for approval of the agenda, which passed unanimously.
8. Kathy Haskins made a motion to approve the January minutes; Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk seconded. The motion was approved with one abstention. The Board expressed gratitude to Kyle Manning for taking the January minutes in Terry’s absence.

10. Board members discussed and expressed appreciation for Becky Friedkin's update on Management Team activities with applause for the Management Team's hard work. President Bobbi Pace reminded the Board of the necessity of keeping pastoral care at the center of attention.

11. David Stagg presented the *Management Team Monitoring Report on Policy Governance Sections 1.2 and 1.7*. The report covers emergency Management Team succession procedures (1.2) and USNH Asset Protection (1.7) which includes insurance policies, financial controls, and building and grounds maintenance.

12. Minister's report: Rev. Stephen's upcoming stewardship sermon will emphasize the vitality inherent in being a UU. In preparation for the General Assembly this June, he reminded the Board that UUA purposes and principles were established 45 years ago and, given that we are a "creedless" organization, this generation has the opportunity to include the word **love** in UUA principles, a move that he endorses as reflective of the spiritual work at the center of who we are. Regarding USNH's crisis of the past year, Rev. Stephen reminded everyone of the excellent stewardship campaign raised in response to the crisis and expressed hope that this year's stewardship campaign will be a buttress to the last. Rev. Stephen will start the process of Article II analysis with a sermon in March. He is heartened that over 100 people are signed up for the visit by Nicholas Dawidoff, author of *The Other Side of Prospect*, and encouraged the Board to think about what it would mean for USNH to be an urban versus a suburban church. Intern Sunny Joy McMillan continues facilitating the USNH Bereavement Group and is helping to lead a Small Group Ministry on the Caring Congregation. She reported that the Waverly Project begins tutoring in the next week, meeting in the Wilson Library, and is planning a garden project with the Sierra Club. Sunny is moving from being an applicant to an aspirant candidate through Yale Divinity School and requests sponsorship from USNH to make that move. President Bobbi Pace will send information so the Board can consider her request.

13. Treasurer's report. Treasurer Tom Ward reported that the USNH balance sheet currently shows \$29,000 in income over expenses. Of the \$16,000 budgeted for staff's professional expenses, only \$1,000 has been spent. He noted that the RE program is underspending so far. He also explained that the budget has a separate line item for speaker's fees.

14. Board members spent some time discussing the letter, previously circulated, which suggests that USNH post internal signage re: a Firearms Free Statement for our facility. Members questioned whether signs posted inside the building would make us any safer, whether or where signage should be placed, and whether this should be accomplished as a declaration, a policy, or a standard operating procedure via the Management Team. President Bobbi Pace reported a positive reaction to the suggestion from the director of the Over the Rainbow Day Care Center, which rents space in the USNH building, and noted that any actions we take must be in congruence with UU values. She then moved to accept the letter as presented. Treasurer Tom Ward seconded. Further discussion noted that a national decal might be useful as a sign, which in any case ought to be as unobtrusive as possible. Bobbi Pace called the question, which passed with five votes in favor, one against, and three abstentions. President Bobbi Pace noted that what gets posted is for now an open question. The Board will receive more information as the process goes forward.

15. Discussion of the UUA General Assembly. Most Board members have viewed the teach-in from Hartford congregation on Article II. A discussion will follow. President Bobbi Pace reported that USNH gets 6 to 7 delegates to the G.A., with Lurline deVos, Becky Sandmann, and Cathy Jackson currently in place. She suggested that someone from the Board also sign up to attend.

16. As a follow-up to Alison Cunningham's January presentation to the Board about the Yale Divinity School Reimagining Church project, Board members were positive about working on this with YDS during the remaining years of their five-year grant.

17. Board members discussed ways of making USNH's new Ends Statements more accessible to the congregation. Suggestions included getting the statements into the newsletter, presenting them during Sunday services, and posting them in the Social Hall.

18. Protecting Democracy. Some USNH members have become active with Tending SOIL: Skills, Organizing, Interdependence, Liberation leadership training. These are leaders with a proven track record of dedication to UU the Vote, climate justice, reproductive rights, and LGBTQ justice. President Bobbi Pace will send out an overview of Tending SOIL and will likely ask the Board to approve funds required to support participation in the program.

19. Process observation about the meeting. Board members felt positive about the meeting, thanks to lively conversation and the fact that everyone participated, with the Board speaking with one voice. President Bobbi Pace was complimented for the way she makes sure we are all part of the decision-making.

20. The Board wishes to express thanks to the coordinators of the Chocolate Auction.

21. President Bobbi Pace moved and Alissa Chapin seconded a motion to adjourn, which was approved unanimously. The Board adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Next meeting: March 14, 2024, 7:00 p.m. in person.

After adjournment, Bobbi Pace shared that she will continue as President for one more year, with Sue Trotta-Smith continuing as Vice-president.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk, Clerk

Attachments:

Monitoring Report on Policy Sections 1.2 and 1.7

## **Management Team monitoring of Policy Governance Sections 1.2 and 1.7**

The last report to the Board was 2/9/2023

Current Governance Policy sections are in black; MT interpretations in blue; MT report is in red

### **1.2 Emergency Management Team Succession**

In order to protect the congregation and Board from sudden loss of Management Team services, each Management Team member must not fail to designate and keep informed at least one other Management Team member of their activities as they relate to Board and Management Team issues and processes.

MT Interpretation:

The Management Team shall ensure that there are at least two people informed of Board and Management Team issues and processes. Key leadership requirements include familiarity with the board's role and functions, with the day-to-day operations of USNH.

*Policy approved by the Board: March 12, 2015*

**MT Interpretation Approved by the Board: October 12, 2017**

In December 2022, Bobbi Pace was elected to the Board Vice-President position and resigned from the Management Team to be replaced in January 2023 by Becky Friedkin. At that point the other MT members were Jean Rosenthal and David Stagg. In June 2023 Mark Bauer joined the MT to replace Jean who resigned in August 2023. Also in August we were joined by our new Minister Stephen Kendrick.

The Management Team works collaboratively. All of the members are involved in decision making and aware of financial and operational situations. We are informed of what other members are working on at our bi-weekly meetings and keep track of tasks assigned through carefully recorded minutes. Between meetings we keep in touch by email and phone. Should one member of the team become, for some reason, unable to serve, we are equipped to reassign their duties and tasks to other members of the team.

We report compliance with section 1.2

### **1.7 Asset Protection**

The Management Team shall not allow the assets of the Society to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, inappropriately used, or unnecessarily risked.

#### **1.7.1 Insurance**

The Management Team shall not fail to assure that:

- a. The building and its contents are insured against losses from fire, wind, flood, theft and vandalism.

MT Interpretation:

Property Liability Insurance on the USNH buildings and contents shall be purchased and renewed on an annual

basis. Timely payment of insurance premiums shall be made to prevent gaps in coverage.

We have maintained an Insurance Policy with the Church Mutual Insurance Company for many years. The current policy was renewed on 10/17/2023 and provides a blanket liability of \$5,381,613 for the building and personal property with a \$1,000 deductible. Our two outbuildings are also covered for the cost of replacement. The policy document is 352 pages and is available as a PDF upon request from the MT.

- b. The officers, Board, Management Team and staff have professional liability insurance.

MT Interpretation:

Professional liability coverage protects against lawsuits which claim that people as individuals or collectively have used bad judgment, have a conflict of interest in decision making, or have used funds improperly. (It does not protect against illegal actions.)

Professional Liability is included in the General Liability and Management Protection Liability sections of our policy (see next clause).

- c. The Society has General Liability insurance.

MT Interpretation:

General Liability insurance shall be purchased and renewed on an annual basis. Insurance against theft of property and cash is part of the Property Liability coverage. The cash theft limit is \$2,000, based on the underwriter's assessment of the maximum amount of cash that would ever be on the property at one time.

Our Insurance Policy takes the form of a Main Policy with an Umbrella policy addition. The Main Policy has 6 sections: Common, Property, General Liability, Inland Marine, Crime and Management Protection. The General Liability covers claims up to \$1,000,000 with an aggregate limit of \$3,000,000. The Crime section covers loss of cash up to \$2,000 with a \$250 deductible. Our two Rembert paintings are no longer listed separately but are covered under property contents insurance of \$682,317.

*Policy approved by the Board: May 14, 2015; revised February 14, 2019*

**MT Interpretation Approved by the Board: June 9, 2016; revised February 14, 2019**

## **1.7.2 Other**

The Management Team shall not fail to assure that:

- a. The buildings and grounds and equipment are maintained to allow continued value and use.

MT Interpretation:

Through its oversight of staff and committees and through preparation of the annual capital and operating budgets, the MT will assure that the building, grounds, and equipment are maintained, repaired, and replaced as necessary, within the financial capabilities of the Society.

Since February 2023 we have seen gradually increasing use of our building. Our Building and Grounds Committee, staff and other volunteers have made minor repairs to the inside of the

building, made landscaping improvements and facilitated both a Spring and Fall Cleanup party. Our Sexton has continued to work his normal schedule throughout the year to maintain the building and grounds and to make minor repairs when necessary.

In 2023 the Sanctuary roof was recoated with aluminum paint. This is recommended to be done every six years to maintain the roof.

In November 2023 we completed a Small Business Energy Audit (SBAE) conducted by Energy Solutions of Shelton CT. The audit recommended energy savings mostly from installation of VFD (Variable Frequency Drive) fan control of the Sanctuary HVAC and conversion of the Sanctuary lighting to LED. The project is financed by UI and paid for by a 5 year interest free loan. The Sanctuary lighting conversion was completed in mid-January 2024.

- b. Financial controls are in place to guard against loss and mismanagement of funds.

MT Interpretation:

The Treasurers and Finance Committee have implemented procedures for counting, handling, and securing cash and checks, making weekly bank deposits, timely recording of financial information in USNH databases, monthly reconciliations of bank accounts, and oversight of these financial tasks as they are carried out by staff and volunteers.

Financial tasks are carried out by the Management Team, the Finance Committee, our Congregational Administrator, our Treasurer and our Bookkeeper in accordance with roles and responsibilities defined in our Operation Policy “Financial Operations” SOP-0013. The Management Team reports to the Board on compliance with sections 1.5 and 1.6 of the Policy Governance Handbook in March each year. The Treasurer audits this report in addition to making separate monthly reports to the Board.

- c. Funds used for operations are kept in insured instruments.

MT Interpretation:

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.

Liquid funds are kept in Citizen’s Bank accounts and are FDIC insured. CD’s have been purchased from TIAA (presently 7 x \$25,000 CDs) and are also FDIC insured. Liquid funds are also deposited in a Fidelity Money Market Account insured under SIPC. We are presently working with our Treasurer and Finance committee on a Memorandum of Understanding that would allow our Endowment and Legacies Committee to manage some operating funds on our behalf.

In addition, the Management Team shall not:

- d. Unnecessarily expose the organization, its Board, or staff to claims of liability or risk the nonprofit status of the Society.

MT Interpretation:

Through its oversight of staff and volunteer operational activities, the MT will endeavor to prevent activities and behaviors that are a) illegal; b) inconsistent with the mission, values, and ends of the Society, or c) inconsistent with the Society's Covenant of Right Relations.

Since our last report in February 2023 the MT has not become aware of any USNH related activities that are illegal.

Throughout the year, the MT has continued to work with the Council of Chairs to endeavor to prevent activities that are inconsistent with the mission, values, and ends of the Society, or inconsistent with the Society's Covenant of Right Relations.

We report compliance with Section 1.7

*Policy approved by the Board: May 14, 2015*

**MT Interpretation Approved by the Board: June 9, 2016; revised February 14, 2019**

MT 2/8/2024