

Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
Unitarian Society of New Haven  
April 11, 2024  
Approved by the Board May 9, 2024

**USNH Board Members Present**

Bobbi Pace, President

Sue Trotta-Smith, Vice-President

Tom Ward, Treasurer

Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk, Clerk

Joan Ciano

Kathy Haskins

Becky Reeve

**Board members Absent:** Kyle Manning, Alissa Chapin

**Also present:**

David Stagg, Management Team

Rev. Stephen Kendrick, Ex officio

Sunny Joy McMillan, Ministerial Intern

1. Call to order: President Bobbi Pace called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Chalice lighting: Board President Bobbi Pace lit the chalice.
3. Reading: Treasurer Tom Ward read a summary of “Pre-emptive Measures” by Elizabeth Svoboda, an article in *Scientific American* describing the increase of depression among US teens since the pandemic, as well as programs that teach students skills for managing their emotions and stress.
4. In responses to President Bobbi Pace’s question to *name what one thing Board members could teach a class on if called upon to do so at the last minute*, folks identified “the essence of music,” how to knit a hat, Emily Dickinson, the novels of Terry Pratchett, using a “body compass” in navigating one’s life, mindfulness, the theory of probability, the body-mind connection, Abraham Lincoln, and knife skills for cooking.
5. Board members took turns reading the Board’s Shared Covenant and then gave their reflections on the Covenant item: *To respect ambiguity and encourage multiple viewpoints*.
6. After Board members took turns reading from the recently adopted USNH ENDS Statements, Rev. Stephen suggested that we find a synonym for the word ENDS in the title. President Bobbi Pace agreed with this idea and will ask Board members to suggest alternative words.
7. Prior to adopting the agenda, Rev. Stephen suggested that Board Agendas be mailed to USNH staff, Chris Grundy and Bill Braun in advance of meetings. The agenda was adopted unanimously.
8. Prior to adopting the Minutes of the March 14, 2024 meeting, David Stagg noted that his experience performing the “decapitation of a garfish” as an aspect of his “best job ever” had not been included in those minutes. Clerk Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk apologized for the oversight. Bobbi Pace moved that the minutes be amended and Terry Blackhawk seconded. The amended minutes, including garfish, were approved unanimously.

9. Minister's Report: Rev. Stephen reported that he has preached on matters related to UUA's Article II and that the UUA is aiming to start a "climate revival" in September of this year. A USNH climate service is upcoming and USNH can become a regional center to help other Connecticut congregations become involved in this initiative. Continuing to attend to the needs of pastoral care, Rev. Stephen reported that Marion Visel is willing to come out of retirement to consult with him. The USNH pastoral team has recently increased from 3 to 5, with 9 as an optimum number for the team. Ministerial Intern Sunny Joy McMillan has completed her first year of service with USNH and is aiming for ordination in Spring of 2025. She described her wide variety of USNH activities and gave thanks to the Board for its recent sponsorship. Sunny is putting out feelers to the Yale Divinity School for a possible underwritten internship in the future.

10. Management Team. After David Stagg reported compliance with Section 1.1 of Policy Governance, regarding "Treatment of Congregants, Friends, and Visitors" Board members discussed "Summary of MT Discussions, March 12 and March 26" prepared by Becky Friedkin.

11. Budget discussion. David Stagg presented "Budget Narrative (and a) Draft Operating Budget as of April 8, 2024" from the Management Team. An updated USNH Budget will be presented at the May 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board. The Management Team will lead a May 19<sup>th</sup> forum on the budget, which will be followed by presentation at the June 2 congregational meeting for approval.

12. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Tom Ward reported a satisfactory execution of the USNH Budget which has a surplus at this point in FY24. Expenses are close to what has been budgeted (ca. 75%) with 85% of income received.

13. Article II: President Bobbi Pace and Board Member Kathy Haskins are leading activities around Article II. These will include another e-blast to congregants, a small group discussion after the service on April 21, and a survey to be sent out in May. A straw vote on Article II is planned for the June 2<sup>nd</sup> congregational meeting.

14. President Bobbi Pace reported that the idea of installing video screens in the sanctuary has been shelved for the present. Rev. Stephen encouraged the Board to reflect on this issue as an aspect of covenantal decision making and trusting in democracy.

15. Update on Reimagining Church. President Bobbi Pace reported that she has heard from Alison Cunningham who reports that the Yale Divinity School is in the process of identifying prospective students to be recruited for this. She will meet informally with Rev. Stephen to discuss the matter.

16. The Board concurred on a satisfactory process observation regarding the meeting, expressing appreciation for the laughter and good interaction.

17. Adjournment: President Bobbi Pace moved to adjourn and Clerk Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk seconded. The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk, Clerk

Attachments:  
Monitoring Report on Section 1.1 of Governance Policy

## Management Team monitoring of Policy Governance Section 1.1

Last reported 4/11/2023

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

### 1.1 Treatment of Congregants, Friends, and Visitors

With respect to interactions with members, friends and visitors of the church, the Management Team shall not cause or allow conditions, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, disrespectful, unnecessarily intrusive, or that fail to provide appropriate confidentiality and privacy.

*Approved by the Board: October 9, 2014; revised February 12, 2015*

#### MT Interpretation

The Management Team will work to maintain our Principles, Mission and Values using our Covenant of Right Relations within all the activities of the Society. To that end, the MT will develop Policies and Procedures to provide guidance to the various committees, task forces and society members. The MT will receive and act upon any reports of activities that are inconsistent with our values or compromise the safety, confidentiality or privacy of members and friends. The MT will also ensure that access to confidential information is strictly on a “need to know” basis

*MT Interpretation Approved by the Board: March 14<sup>th</sup> 2019*

#### MT Report

With COVID remaining a big health concern, we continued to rely on the Building Reopening Advisory Group (BRAG) for advice throughout the year. We are particularly grateful to Gwen Heuss-Severance who has so ably chaired the group since its formation in 2020. On the advice of the BRAG group we continue to keep the first five rows in the Sanctuary reserved for those wishing to be masked.

With the continuing threat of building security, MT asked our newest member, Mark Bauer, to form a security workgroup to review our physical security provisions and suggest changes. Mark assembled a group of 12 members and staff to advise and in October 2023 the group presented an “implementation tracking sheet” listing items in need of attention. Following is a list of some of the recommendations and actions:

1. Finalize changes to SOP-0010 “Emergency Procedures”. Completed 11/20/2023.
2. Walk-through of facility and evacuation plan with Hamden Police. This is scheduled for 4/12/2024 at 8.30am.
3. Arrange de-escalation training. Scheduled and attended by 25 staff and members on 3/23/2024
4. Congregational education. There was a presentation from Steve Jacober from Mishkan Israel to the congregation on 1/21/2. Attendance was 30-40 staff and members
5. Improve the path from USNH to Congregation Mishkan Israel (MI). An asphalt pathway was installed last week from the Sanctuary Memorial Garden doors to the MI parking area.
6. Install shatter-resistant film for lobby windows and doors. We have estimates but no decision yet on best implementation given different options and significant cost. We

## **Management Team monitoring of Policy Governance Section 1.1**

applied for a grant to the state of Connecticut program for increasing safety to nonprofit organizations including houses of worship. Over 500 applications were received by the state, and they anticipate having decisions made sometime in April.

7. Consider signs designating USNH as a Firearms-Free Community. The Board approved designating USNH as a firearms-free facility. After much discussion at several sessions of the Board, no decision has been made as to whether or where to place signage.

Confidential data are stored in the Quickbooks and Breeze databases. Our previous database ChurchDB ceased operations last December and the data were transitioned to Breeze. MT continues to monitor access to both databases to ensure access is also on a “need to know” basis. Access to Quickbooks is restricted to the Bookkeeper, the Congregational Administrator, the Finance Committee and the Management Team. Access to confidential data in Breeze is restricted to the Congregational Administrator, the Finance and Stewardship Committees and to the Management Team.

At this time, MT is not aware of any incidents or activities that compromise the safety, confidentiality or privacy of members and friends.

We report compliance with section 1.1

*Submitted by the Management Team 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024*