

Unitarian Society of New Haven
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees
August 8, 2013

Accepted September 12, 2013

Board Members Present: David Jones, Jessie Whitehead, Nancy Lesh, Suzanne Miller, Peggy Rae, Mary Donohue, Greg Seaman, Alison Cunningham

Board Members Absent: Rod Groff, Bobbi Pace

Also Present: Emily Melcher

A. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:07 pm and P. Rae recorded the minutes. A quorum of Board Members was present, and the meeting proceeded with A. Cunningham presiding.

Consent Agenda

- Approval of Board Meeting Minutes 6/13/2013 Meeting
- Approval of Board Meeting Minutes 7/11/2013 Meeting

Because the June 13, 2013 meeting was a meeting of the former Board, the Minutes of the two meetings were considered separately. Approval of the June Minutes was limited to those members who were present at the June meeting.

A correction to the Minutes of the June 13, 2013 Meeting was offered by E. Melcher, to indicate her presence at that meeting.

MOTION D. Jones to approve the June Minutes as amended; **SECONDED** J. Whitehead; **PASSED** without dissent or abstention.

MOTION G. Seaman to approve the July 11, 2013 Minutes; **SECONDED** M. Donohue; **PASSED** with one abstention.

Governance Retreat Update

M. Donohue summarized her research on possible locations for the Sept. 20-21 Board retreat with Unity Consultant Laura Park. Budget limitations constrain the choices. Members discussed the options and agreed to hold the Saturday portion of the retreat at Wisdom House retreat center in Litchfield; Wisdom House's rates include a light breakfast and lunch. E. Melcher offered her home for the Friday evening portion of the retreat, and members gratefully accepted.

ACTION ITEM: M. Donohue to reserve Wisdom House space and arrange catering for Friday evening. A. Cunningham to contact Laura Park to fill her in and to find out if she needs equipment beyond that which is available at Wisdom House and E. Melcher's home.

Calendar/Events

Board meetings will follow this schedule for the year.

- Regular Board meeting to be held 2nd Thursday of each month, 7pm.
- Board meeting to work on governance to be held 3rd Tuesday of each month, 7pm.
- Executive Committee of Board to meet 1st Thursday of each month, 6pm.

The annual Fall Congregational Meeting is tentatively scheduled for Oct. 20, 2013, following the 11:15am Sunday service. The Board decided to schedule the meeting earlier than the usual mid-November date to permit timely approval of the ministerial compensation package the Ministerial Search Committee (MSC) will post. A. Cunningham will check with the MSC to see if this date fits their timeline.

A Special Congregational Meeting will be held Sept. 8, 2013, immediately following the 10am service, to fill the vacancy on the Board created by the departure of J. Whitehead, who is moving to Chicago in mid-August. A. Cunningham has been in touch with the Nominating Committee co-chairs about the desirability of filling the vacancy quickly to enable the new Trustee to attend the Sept. 20-21 retreat. An early start is especially important because the person's term will end in June, 2014.

The MSC will be scheduling a number of events over the course of the year as part of the search process. To get an overview of these, Board members should read (or re-read) the UUA's 2013 Settlement Handbook and "Board Responsibilities in the Ministerial Transition Process" from Ministerial Search Representative Georganne Greene. Both are posted on the Board website in the Resources section.

It was decided the Board will not attend this fall's Gathering of Boards, a program offered by the UUA Clara Barton and Massachusetts Bay Districts to help Boards formulate their goals and plans for the coming year, because of the Board's progress in these areas already and the anticipated continued development of plans at the Sept. 20-21 retreat.

Financial Report

G. Seaman distributed Quickbooks Reports on Profit&Loss (Income/Expenses) for July and year-to-date, along with the USNH Balance Sheet as of July 31, 2013. To familiarize Board members with their contents and how they are generated, he went through the reports, clarifying categories and the methods used to arrive at certain figures. Similar reports will be generated monthly before each Board meeting and posted on the Board website in the Board package for that meeting.

G. Seaman will also prepare more detailed itemized monthly reports to allow interested people to track activity more closely. E. Melcher commented that detailed reports will be helpful, as ministers looking at USNH during the search process will look at financial reports carefully. She and G. Seaman will confer on what information it will be helpful to include.

G. Seaman reported that although an upgrade from Quickbooks Pro to a more recent version is desirable, he has reservations about the web environment of a new version, particularly backups and data recovery. He will consult with IT committee member Robb Camm for advice.

Roof Repairs Update

G. Seaman reported that rain continues to delay completion of the repairs. The Children's Chapel roof is either completed, or close to being completed, and he estimates that less than two weeks of work remains to be done before the whole project is finished.

Board Membership

Board vacancy due to the pending departure of Trustee-at-Large J. Whitehead in mid-August was discussed earlier in the meeting (see Calendar/Events).

Staffing Report

E. Melcher reported first-round interviews of applicants for the Congregational Administrator position are almost finished. Promising candidates will then meet with staff members E. Melcher, Marion Visel, Jesse Greist, and Treasurer G. Seaman for a series of half-hour long one-on-one interviews. After a decision is made on hiring, a background check will be done. Uncertainty about how long it will take for the background check makes it hard to estimate the start date for the new person; at the earliest, it would be the beginning of September.

E. Melcher reminded Board members that according to the Bylaws, the Board is responsible for hiring decisions. To facilitate and expedite the hiring process, the decision was made to delegate this authority to E. Melcher, Board member B. Pace, and Personnel Committee Chair Jean Rosenthal, who have been shepherding the process from the start.

MOTION D. Jones to delegate the Congregational Administrator hiring decision to the team of Emily Melcher, Bobbi Pace, and Jean Rosenthal, with input from Marion Visel, Jesse Greist, and Greg Seaman; **SECONDED** S. Miller; **PASSED** without dissent or abstention.

E. Melcher praised volunteers Sue Linsley, Vicki Seitz, Sally Connolly, and Rob Garskoff, who have stepped in to cover office tasks and re-organize office emails. She reported,

however, that she has been working 80-hr weeks and needs further administrative help, particularly now that her sermon-writing has resumed. Board members agreed with her suggestion to ask DRE Jesse Greist if he would be willing to work an additional 10 hours per week, with pay and benefits, to handle administrative tasks during this transition period. His DRE position is a three-quarter time position and he has indicated an interest in helping out.

MOTION A. Cunningham to allow E. Melcher to offer Jesse Greist an additional 10 hours/week to assist with additional responsibilities in the absence of a congregational administrator. Jesse would be compensated at his current rate of pay per hour, with commensurate benefits; **SECONDED** M. Donohue; **PASSED** without dissent or abstention.

Although not discussed in full, there was general agreement that a temporary worker should be hired, even if J. Greist declines the offer.

Other

Attendance at the summer Sunday services is good, averaging about 95 per week.

Topics were suggested for the Board's monthly newsletter communication to the congregation, which is due soon. It was agreed that it would be good to introduce the congregation to the concept of policy governance and to its potential benefits; this will help people understand the purpose of the activities Board and congregation will be undertaking over the months to come.

Mention should be made in the newsletter that the Board Meeting Minutes are posted on-line.

A. Cunningham distributed copies of the book Serving with Grace, a gift to Board members.

Adjournment

MOTION D. Jones to adjourn; **SECONDED** G. Seaman; **PASSED** without dissent of abstention. The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.