

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
February 18, 2014  
(Rescheduled from Feb. 13 due to snow)

Accepted March 18, 2014

Board Members Present: Nancy Lesh, David Jones, Holly Hawkins, Bobbi Pace, Rod Groff, Mary Donohue, Greg Seaman, Peggy Rae, Alison Cunningham

Board Members Absent: Suzanne Miller

Also Present: Emily Melcher

A. Cunningham called the meeting to order at 7:10 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 Minutes of the 1/30/14 Board of Trustees Meeting

**MOTION** by B. Pace to approve Minutes, **SECONDED** by D. Jones; **PASSED** unanimously without dissent or abstention.

Financial Report

G. Seaman reported that YTD budget figures have improved since last month as more pledges have come in.

As a result of payroll errors, some staff (Marion Visel and Jesse Greist) were overpaid July 1, 2013 through the end of January. Paychecks for February now reflect the correct salaries. The Board discussed recovery of the overpayments and will await a formal proposal from the Finance Committee before proceeding further.

As mentioned at the 12/12/13 Board Meeting, UUA has new options for contributions to its retirement plan that can impact our budget. The Personnel Committee has been asked to review options and will submit a recommendation to the Board. The Board must sign a Participation Agreement with UUA by June 30, 2014.

Committees

E. Melcher presented drafts of charges to the Rental and Building and Grounds Committees outlining what the committees might be expected to do. They are derived in part from committee charges the Board drafted in 2011 but did not implement, and in the

case of the Rental Committee, also from retiring committee chair Susan Godshall's recommendations.

Discussion of the Rental Committee charge centered around the need to develop a comprehensive written rental policy for incidental rentals. Having written policies in place will clarify rules, rates, and procedures, making it easier for Congregational Administrator T. Ferguson to answer questions from would-be renters and assuring that renters are aware of policies. In her draft, E. Melcher pointed to several specific areas where there are no current policies and other areas where current policies should be reviewed. The Board agreed that a task force should be set up to develop the policies.

**ACTION** P. Rae to post the draft charges on the Discussion Forum of the Board's website for Board members to review and discuss further before the matter is taken up again at the next Board meeting.

### Website Update

E. Melcher reported on the status of updating USNH's website and showed the Board a computer mockup of the proposed re-design. As proposed, the website will continue to be based on WordPress but will use a different style, allowing for graphics and photos on the home page. To prevent inadvertent damage by inexperienced users, only two people will manage content: Mike Sanger, who is providing technology services, and T. Ferguson.

Board members were not in agreement on the proposed re-design. Some members expressed interest in hiring a website designer, and it was suggested H. Hawkins query the Ministerial Search Committee about its website designer, as well as M. Sanger, then report back to the Board.

### Membership Categories

P. Rae reviewed the most recent Board statements of membership policies, from November 2009 and March 2010, in preparation for this May's vote to call a new minister. Only USNH members may participate in this vote.

She pointed out that under existing policy, "membership requires signature or comparable affirmation committing to the Society's purpose and program" as well as a financial pledge to USNH in the current fiscal year. The pledge requirement can be waived at the recommendation of the Senior Minister.

The policy has been for letters to be sent out in the fall to members who have not yet pledged for the current fiscal year, to remind them of the policy and to see if they wish to remain members. The number of members reported to the UUA in January is based on the resulting updated membership. This year, because of switches in database and administrator, letters were not sent out in the fall, and the number reported to UUA included members who may not have pledged or contributed in FY13-14.

Board members were in general agreement with the policies but raised a few points to possibly tweak. For example, a financial contribution from a member should be acceptable in the absence of a pledge.

**ACTION** Further discussion of membership policy and what to do about members who have not pledged or contributed this fiscal year is deferred to a later Board meeting. P. Rae will write up her understanding of the Board's suggested policy revisions for comment.

P. Rae introduced categories in the ChurchDB database that can be used to indicate a non-member's connection to USNH. A formal proposal concerning these will be made to the Board later in the spring.

### Minister's Report

E. Melcher spoke of factors that may impact the Ministerial search, some internal to USNH, others external. This year, there are about 10 more congregations searching for a new minister and about 10 fewer ministers in search; nevertheless, a good number of people expressed interest in USNH. Our moving ahead on policy governance, particularly with regard to executive structure, is important to enable a ministerial candidate to understand better who we are and determine if it's a good fit. USNH financial concerns and other issues may also impact whether a candidate finds us a good fit.

She reviewed three options available should a new minister not be called in May, either because the Search committee does not recommend a candidate or because of discernment by the candidate and/or congregation during candidating week that it's not a good match.

(1) Quick second round of search in which Search committee looks again at its list of interested ministers and arranges to meet with and to hear preach the one it thinks is the best match. If appropriate, the person is then offered the position and proceeds with the candidating steps that involve the congregation.

(2) Hire another Interim minister for 6 months or a year, and continue the search either with the current Search committee or with a new one in which all members of the current committee are replaced. Applications for Interims are due April 15, so this option is really only viable if it is already known by that date that a new search is needed.

(3) Enter into a 2 to 3 year contract with a minister for Developmental Ministry who specializes in areas USNH wants to develop, e.g. Policy Governance, Conflict Resolution and/or Right Relationship. This minister could eventually become USNH's called minister.

In response to a question from A. Cunningham about who would make the decision as to which option to follow, E. Melcher said that although she would recommend it be a Board decision, it would be up to the Board to choose the decision process.

### Other business

Stewardship Campaign: E. Melcher encouraged Board members to show their support for the campaign by making on-line pledges before Celebration Sunday March 2.

Right Relations: A. Cunningham reported that she, B. Pace, and N. Lesh have found 5 to 6 people interested in working with them on right relations. The group will study work done a few years ago and bring suggestions back to the Board.

Policy Governance: Board's Policy Governance meeting is re-scheduled to Thursday, Feb. 27, and will include discussion of congregational feedback to draft Values, Mission, and Ends Statements presented at the Jan. 26 Special Congregational Meeting.

### Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:42 pm.