

Unitarian Society of New Haven  
Minutes of the Board Meeting of the Board of Trustees  
September 11, 2014

*Accepted October 9, 2014*

Board Members Present: Mary Donohue, Mary Losee, Merrily Kaplan, Rod Groff, Dan Gelperin, Peggy Rae, Holly Hawkins, Russ Heinrich, David Jones

Board Members Absent: Suzanne Miller

Also Present: Fritz Hudson, Tisha Ferguson

M. Donohue called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and P. Rae recorded the minutes. A quorum of Board Members was present, and the meeting proceeded with M. Donohue presiding.

Report from Congregational Administrator on website development and Church DB

Congregational Administrator Tisha Ferguson gave an update on the progress in developing a new USNH website, then outlined a proposal and schedule for rolling out the new site by the end of October. Last year, considerable progress was made in building and populating pages on a new template, and more than half of the pages were drafted and are on a beta site. However, Mike Sanger, who has been key to the process, is no longer able to assist with the development.

Tisha proposes that a professional web designer be hired to provide assistance; that a simpler Wordpress template be used; and that she be permitted to spend at least 50% of her regular hours working on the website for five weeks to get the website up and running by the end of October. She has begun looking for web designers who can implement the Wordpress theme and expects to have a cost estimate shortly. She and F. Hudson will work out a plan for office coverage while she is working on the website and inform the congregation.

Wordpress tutorials are very helpful and should make managing the site easier for Tisha and others. Once the new website is in place, it will be possible to have a link to the Church DB directory, accessible to USNH members only.

The Board agreed to Tisha's proposal and voted to appropriate funds for web development.

**MOTION** R. Heinrich, to permit expenditure of up to \$2,000 to develop the USNH website, the money to come from unrestricted funds; **SECONDED** Holly Hawkins; **PASSED** unanimously without dissent or abstention.

T. Ferguson departed the meeting at 7:30 pm.

## Consent Agenda

- Approval of Minutes of 8/14/14 Board Meeting, as corrected (Board subgroup to work on budget meetings does not include M. Losee)
- Governance - Approval of Global Executive Limitations Policy  
“Global Executive Limitations. The Executive Team shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision or organizational circumstance which is either unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of USNH Bylaws or commonly accepted business and professional ethics.”
- Approval of 9/5/14 proposal from P. Rae to deviate from certain Membership Policy procedures this September (proposal is attached to these Minutes)

**MOTION** R. Heinrich, to approve Consent Agenda; **SECONDED** R. Groff; **PASSED** unanimously without dissent or abstention.

## Development of Board webpage on USNH website and posting of operational policies

M. Donohue reported that Gregg Burton has agreed to help set up a Board webpage on the USNH website as the site is revamped. As planned at this point, the page will include links to USNH operational policies and procedures that will be accessible to USNH members only. The question of access will be revisited in the future.

## Roof problems and mold remediation

M. Donohue reported that a heavy rainfall two weeks ago resulted in flooding of Marion Visel’s former office and a classroom. Building and Grounds Committee Co-Chair John Kennedy investigated and suspects the leak is the consequence of missing flashing or siding that has left a gap between the roof and the window. The Committee is getting bids for the repair and looking into the possibility that insurance will cover all or part of the cost. The Committee is also having an evaluation done to determine whether or not there is mold, and if so, its extent; if remediation is needed, they will have it done.

## Minister’s Report

F. Hudson discussed his September 9 Executive Monitoring Report to the Board, which is attached to these Minutes. Under Policy Governance, such reports are presented to allow a Board to monitor how well the organization and its leadership are proceeding toward achievement of the organization’s stated Mission and Ends.

This report is our introduction to the monitoring process, and in it Fritz noted ways in which the connection between Ends and the achievement of Mission could be strengthened. In particular, he pointed to the need for the Board to prioritize Ends; this

will enable the Executive/Executive Team to focus its energies on those areas the Board feels are most important at this particular time. In addition, he recommended the Board review the Ends statements themselves to assure they are consonant with the Mission and specific enough to permit the Executive/Executive Team and Board to know what is expected.

Fritz noted that the assessments in this first report are somewhat general, but will become more specific in future reports.

In response to a question on how reporting is done when the executive function is handled by an Executive Team, Fritz noted that in some congregations a single person (e.g. the Minister) gives the report, while in others individual Executive Team members give reports on the particular areas over which they have responsibility. This aspect of executive function will be discussed further as the Board considers executive structure at its meetings on governance.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer M. Losee reported that the Finance Committee is working with the accountant to finalize the figures on the FY2013-2014 budget, which is anticipated to have a deficit of about \$5,000-10,000. Some pledges are outstanding and may yet come in.

Mary reported on a joint meeting of the Finance and Building and Grounds Committees, attended by President M. Donohue also, where the subjects of leaks and certain contracts were discussed. In addition to the roof/flashing/siding problems that led to flooding of Marion Visel's office, the Building and Grounds Committee is investigating whether blocked downspouts or too small drainpipes contribute to leaks and is getting prices for repair of the gutter over USNH's front entrance. The two Committees discussed new contracts for snow removal and oil. Alternative contracts have been found or are being researched, but it remains to be clarified which entity will make the decisions on the contracts.

A gift of \$14,000 has been received from the estate of Ethel Massey. The gift was not specifically designated for the Endowment, and there is some uncertainty about whether it should be applied to the Endowment or elsewhere. M. Donohue has asked the Endowment and Finance Committees to prepare a joint proposal that will clarify policy in such a situation. For the present, the gift has been placed in the Money Market fund.

In other matters concerning the FY2014-2015 budget, a bid for insurance from Church Mutual is in line with the budgeted expense and is actually lower than our present cost, while covering more. Greg Seaman is awaiting word on mortgage refinancing; if refinancing proves feasible, monthly mortgage payments could drop. The savings of leaving the Associate Minister position vacant this year is \$29,986.

## Decision on Associate Minister Position for 2014-2015

With the resignation of Marion Visel this past August, the position of Associate Minister is vacant. Upon discussion, the Board voted to keep the position vacant this year. This will help with the current year's budget shortfall. The question of what to do in future years will be discussed with the congregation during the year.

**MOTION** M. Losee, to leave the Associate Minister position vacant through June 30, 2015, the remainder of this fiscal year; **SECONDED** D. Gelperin; **PASSED** unanimously, with no dissent or abstention.

## Budget Cottage Meetings/Conversations

D. Gelperin and R. Heinrich presented an outline of how the cottage meetings with the congregation will be conducted this fall. The meetings will be held after the Sunday service(s) on Oct. 19 and Nov. 2 and will begin with a review of the USNH Mission and Values, followed by a presentation of financial information to educate members about USNH's budget situation. This will be followed by exercises to discern from attendees what is important to the congregation in light of a financial situation that places limits on what we can do vs. what we may want to do. In addition to providing guidance to the Board, the meetings aim to encourage the congregation to take ownership of the budget and recognize that USNH has difficult choices to make.

Board members offered suggestions on the draft script and handout; Dan and Russ will make revisions, and plans for the meetings will be discussed further at the Oct. 9 Board Meeting.

## Other business

Thank you notes will be sent to Jeremy Hill and Carol Cheney for their role in acquiring the automatic emergency defibrillators for USNH; Alison Cunningham, who left the Board to be on the Ministerial Search Committee, for her two years of service as President; and Jesse Greist and the Sunday Morning Team for the August 17 picnic at Brooksvale.

## Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:17 pm.

**ATTACHMENT: Consent Agenda Item for Sept. 11, 2014 Board Meeting**  
*(approved at 9/11/14 Board meeting)*

Deviation from Membership Policy Procedures this September

According to USNH Membership Policy (6/17/14), a letter is to be sent in September to members who have not yet pledged for the current fiscal year and who have not had their pledge requirement waived, to alert them that their membership will lapse unless they pledge or speak with the Minister within the time specified in the letter.

I respectfully propose the following deviations from the policy this September.

1. Co-signing of the letter by the Minister and Clerk (policy mentions only the Clerk's signature).
2. One-month response deadline, even if the deadline falls after Oct. 15 (policy is silent on length of response period; it gives Oct. 15 as date for membership list completion but allows for adjustments before Jan. 1).
3. Flexibility in the response deadline for particular individuals, at the discretion of the Minister and/or Clerk.

Rationale: Minister Fritz Hudson will provide important input in the crafting of the letter; for this reason and because the letter refers members seeking a waiver to speak with him, it is appropriate that his signature be on the letter. A one-month response deadline seems a reasonable amount of time. Flexibility in the deadline will permit follow-ups if deemed appropriate.

Peggy Rae, Clerk  
Sept. 5, 2014

# UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN

EXECUTIVE MONITORING REPORT TO TRUSTEES

Rev. Fritz Hudson –September 9, 2014

**We are a diverse, multi-generational faith community that**

- inspires lives of compassion and generosity**
- nurtures spiritual growth**
- cultivates transformative connections, and**
- creates a more just world**

**ENDS** (*What specific, measurable differences will we make and for whom?*)

\* Request: current prioritization of ends (Top 5?) (to answer question: "At what cost?")

\* Request: check consonance with mission

- ? Do ends direct fulfillment of mission to "cultivate transformative connections . . . as a multi-generational faith community?"

## **WITHIN**

***Respecting different spiritual journeys,  
the people of USNH find***

***- inspiration***

***and***

***- a safe place***

***to***

***\* Develop our best selves***

***\* Grow spiritually***

> Small Group Ministry success under assessment

***\* Live with more joy and open-heartedness***

***\* Experience a connection to something larger than ourselves***

> Sunday Service music success under assessment

***\* Find meaning and purpose in our lives***

***\* Articulate our Unitarian Universalist identity***

> Pathways to Membership program success under assessment

> CYRE programs success under assessment

# UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN

## EXECUTIVE MONITORING REPORT TO TRUSTEES

Rev. Fritz Hudson –September 9, 2014

### **AMONG**

***USNH is a congregation of***

***- welcome***

***and***

***- connection,***

***where people of all ages:***

***\* Treat one another with respect***

> Right Relations support under assessment

***\* Give and receive support in times of joy, sorrow and transition***

> Lay Ministry success under assessment

> Music program support under assessment

***\* Embrace diversity***

> Physical ability diversity support under assessment

~ Sanctuary Hearing assistance

***\* Engage in life-long learning***

> Adult RE programs under assessment

***\* Give generously of ourselves and our resources***

> Financial Stewardship success under assessment

> Time&Talent Stewardship success under assessment

> Administrative support under assessment

### **BEYOND**

***The people of USNH, together and with our partners, act on our values in the larger world.***

***We:***

***\* Advance justice in our community and beyond***

***\* Expand our understanding and awareness of social and environmental issues***

> Green Sanctuary program under assessment

***\* Develop new understanding of ourselves and others through our justice work***

***\* Strengthen Unitarian Universalism's Mission***

> Request: interpretation/clarification of this end:

? Does the UUA have a mission statement?

# UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF NEW HAVEN

## EXECUTIVE MONITORING REPORT TO TRUSTEES

Rev. Fritz Hudson –September 9, 2014

### **EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS**

#### **GLOBAL EXECUTIVE RESTRAINT**

***The Executive Team shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision or organizational circumstance which is either***

- unlawful,***
- imprudent, or***
- in violation of USNH Bylaws,***  
***or commonly accepted business and professional ethics.***

> ***USNH Bylaws:*** compliance under assessment

#### **TREATMENT OF CONGREGANTS, FRIENDS, AND VISITORS**

***With respect to interactions with members, friends and visitors of the church, the Executive 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.***

#### ***Unsafe***

- \* Children's & Youth RE program safety policy & volunteer staff safety procedure is in place
- \* An Emergency Evacuation Plan is in place
- \* A Weather/Emergency Closing Procedure is in place
- \* An Automated External Defibrillator (AED) has been installed. Use procedures are being formulated
- \* A draft Lockdown Procedure has been proposed. Consultation with the Hamden police is in process.

#### **EMERGENCY MINISTER SUCCESSION**

***To protect the Board from sudden loss of Minister services, the Minister shall not permit there to be fewer than one other executive sufficiently familiar with Board and Minister issues and processes to take over with reasonable proficiency as an interim successor.***

\* NOT IN COMPLIANCE