

Unitarian Society of New Haven

Minutes of the November 19, 2023 Congregational Meeting

Held in person and on Zoom

Accepted by the Board January 11, 2024

Approved by the Congregation June 2, 2024

1. **Call to order:** Board President Bobbi Pace called the meeting to order at 12:03 p.m.
2. **Chalice lighting and opening reading:** Intern Sunny Joy McMillan lit the chalice and shared a reading from “The Indispensable Discipline of Social Responsibility” by James Luther Adams
3. **Reading of the Covenant.** Board member Alissa Chapin read the Congregational Covenant.
4. **Establishment of quorum.** Bobbi Pace confirmed a quorum of 69 people, well over the required minimum.
5. **Approval of minutes.** Cathy Jackson moved and John Deming seconded that the minutes of the congregational meeting of June 4, 2023 be approved. Approval was unanimous, with one abstention.
6. **Ministerial Report.** Expressing his delight at serving USNH as Contract Minister, Rev. Stephen Kendrick praised USNH’s spirit and staff. He highlighted USNH as one of the country’s major UU teaching congregations in its collaboration with Yale Divinity School which has brought Intern Sunny Joy McMillan to USNH. Stating that he is here to provide a “breathing space” in the short term, Rev. Stephen noted the depth of lay leadership at USNH as well as the congregation’s camaraderie and devotion to caring for one another. With love, freedom, and human dignity under peril in the world at large, our spirit is needed to assure the very existence of democracy. Rev. Stephen concluded his remarks by urging USNH to bring in younger people and to continue to grow.
7. Bobbi Pace’s **President’s Report** highlighted the year’s developments: (a) retaining Rev. Stephen as a contract minister, (b) internship with Sunny Joy McMillan through Yale Divinity School, (c) Emerita status conferred for Linda Pawelek (Music Director Emerita) and Kathleen McTigue (Minister Emerita), and (d) Vesper Service in support of Bo Bogush in the Cop City struggle. The Board will be delving into UUA’s Article II proposal for 2024 GA delegates. Bobbi complimented the congregation’s generosity and acknowledged the good work of the Management Team—David Stagg, Mark Bauer, and Becky Friedkin. The Board is looking into more and varied worship offerings as we work to grow and ensure a meaningful future.
8. **Treasurer’s Report.** Tom Ward announced overall sound financial health, crediting USNH’s lay leadership through the ministerial transition and members’ generosity as well as an effective stewardship campaign for this success. At this point in the fiscal year, USNH income and expenses are in balance, endowment stands at \$1.2 million, and level of support to the UUA has been maintained.
9. **Capital Budget Report.** Shirley Dion itemized recent current maintenance costs including upkeep on driveway, parking lot, and the Sanctuary roof; power-washing; landscaping; and snow removal, totaling almost \$16,000.

Five of our seven roofs will soon need some work.

- Lobby roof and sanctuary roofs were replaced or maintained fairly recently.
- A small section over the kitchen area is scheduled to be replaced in FY25, currently estimated to cost \$14,000.
- Replacement of the Social Hall roof is scheduled for 2025-27, currently estimated to cost \$49,000.

- Replacing the Children's Chapel, also scheduled for 2025-27, is estimated at \$26,000.
- Replacing two roofs on the wing over the RE and administrative offices is scheduled for FY27, estimated to cost \$88,337. We've had two different roof inspectors have warned that if the insulation under those roofs becomes wet, the cost will become much higher. One of the contractors will inspect the roof every year for possible water damage. The replacement schedule may need to be moved up.

We had a small business energy audit done on October 12 and have submitted to UI for the 55% incentive. This includes replacing some sanctuary lighting not previously updated with LED lights. The cost is anticipated to be offset by savings on electricity.

Roof-mounted solar is not warranted, but proposals are pending for a ground-mounted array to be located above the daycare play area.

One individual raised the possibility of replacing all the roofs at once and mounting solar on the roof to aggressively address the climate crisis. Another member suggested talking to the JCC about their solar installations.

10. Security Report. Mark Bauer reported that the Management Team has updated security procedures with an eye toward the possibility of culturally motivated violence against USNH. A document detailing roles for first line groups is in the USNH office and will be disseminated. Highlighting the need for education of the USNH congregation regarding security, Mark announced that Steven Jacober, Executive Director of Congregation Mishkan Israel, will lead a training session for USNH members at noon on January 21, 2024 in the Sanctuary. Our neighbors at Mishkan Israel have recently been faced with bomb threats. Jesse Greist and Jamie Ross added that the office goes over security policies with renters. Over the Rainbow Day Care is aware of our policies.

11. Social Justice Report. Lurline DeVos announced that USNH has been designated one of only twenty-four "Good Trouble" UUA congregations across the US. Through USNH social justice task forces, congregants work together on issues of LGBTQ justice, climate crisis, environmental justice, and more. Recent and upcoming USNH Social Justice highlights include writing 3,000 postcards to voters of color in Virginia (Electoral Justice); a January 21, 2024 meeting with CONECT (Grass Roots organizing); the February 25, 2024 book discussion of *The Other Side of Prospect* and participation in the Waverly Project (Systemic Racism); reverse Advent calendars and other support for food banks (Food Insecurity); and calling legislators on behalf of CT Against Gun Violence.

12. Closing statement. President Bobbi Pace read "In Honor" by Amanda Schubert.

13. Adjournment. John Deming moved and Alissa Chapin seconded a motion to adjourn, which passed unanimously.

14. The meeting adjourned at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Clerk Terry Bohnhorst Blackhawk