

UU Nashua Board of Trustees
Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2013

Present: Ellen Fisher, Mary Licking, Pat Ladew, Kate O' Shea, David Hudson, Mike Wilt, Reverend Olivia Holmes, Harry Purkhiser Absent (excused): Lance Pratt

Note: There is one vacant position on the BoT. Also, among those currently serving on the BoT, no one currently holds or is slated to hold the office of Vice-president. Ellen has notified the Nominating Committee of the BoT's request for Nominating Committee to advise the BoT about filling the vacant position on the BoT. For the task of filling the position of Vice-president, Ellen has notified the Nominating Committee of the Board's desire for the Nominating Committee to advise us about an appointment for the position of Vice-president, using information the BoT supplied (see September 09, 2013 BoT meeting minutes and see also the announcement below in these minutes regarding an appointment for the position of Vice-president).

Timekeeper for each agenda item of the meeting was Kate. A Check In was performed during which a BoT member could share a word or two with the group. Some members did. Pat performed the chalice lighting, giving a reading that provided enlightenment about the day to day service experience of veterans.

A motion passed made by Harry and seconded by David to approve the consent agenda. The consent agenda consisted of the October 14th and October 17th, 2013 BoT meeting minutes.

A motion passed made by Pat and seconded by Kate to appoint Harry to the office of Vice-president. That motion about the office of the Vice-president was made after the BoT received the news that the Nominating Committee recommended the BoT consider Harry for the position. David announced that he has accepted an offer from the Nominating Committee to run for Vice-president at the next Annual Meeting. In related news about members volunteering for open positions, it was announced that Russ Leonard has agreed to serve as Co-Chair of the Stewardship Committee for next year and that Ellen will help in the effort to find another Co-Chair.

Mike gave the Treasurer's Report. A motion passed made by David and seconded by Harry to accept the detailed 2013-14 budget and the Statement (see the Statement regarding the budget that appears below the signature block of

these minutes). See discussion below regarding the draft Ministerial Search agreement for more of Mike's efforts regarding treasury-related topics.

Consideration was given to the compensation package for the minister that will be hired as a result of the ministerial search process and subsequent congregational action. Harry composed a report of compensation range options that was made available to the BoT several days prior to this meeting for BoT members' study. Supporting those range options was data available on the UUA website regarding Midsize I and Midsize II congregations. A motion passed made by Harry and seconded by David that the BoT recommend to the Ministerial Search Committee Range A for salary and housing (see attached .pdf document, 131111Picking a Salary Range, that includes a chart delineating ranges and the one labeled "Range A" is the one discussed here).

A motion passed made by Harry and seconded by Pat to approve the statement on Church Size that appears below the signature block of these minutes with noted amendments.

Consideration was given to the draft Ministerial Agreement that was made available to BoT members to read several days prior to this meeting. Kate, the BoT member who is a member of the Negotiating Team, led the discussion regarding a listing of provisions to be finalized, a follow on task to the discussion on this topic that was initiated last meeting. Besides the reference stated in the October 14th minutes that serves as a resource for developing this document, Kate mentioned that she is also using a sample agreement reference from the Unitarian Universalist Ministerial Association (UUMA) website. It was also reiterated that the draft document Kate brings to the BoT for consideration also includes suggestions from the Ministerial Search Negotiating Team of which Kate is the BoT appointed member. Kate mentioned that the Negotiating Team has an awareness of the pitfalls of doing swaps between salary and benefits, and therefore that activity will likely not occur. As the result of questions raised at the October 14th meeting, Mike provided input on questions concerning treasury issues such as FICA and sick leave. Rev. Olivia served as a resource regarding questions that were raised concerning the negotiating process final stages. It was also mentioned that this draft Ministerial Agreement is to be viewed as only a starting point because it is common practice that changes are made during the negotiation process with the ministerial candidate that is selected to enter into this negotiation. A motion passed made by Harry and seconded by Pat to approve the draft Ministerial Agreement as amended.

Policy formulation regarding whether there is to be inclusion of outreach collections in the operating budget was considered. Olivia will pose questions on this to the UUA church finance personnel in an attempt to provide the BoT with more information on which to make a decision.

In volunteering for tasks, the BoT agreed to 1) a schedule for providing Words of Welcome at services (see List #1), and 2) complete the following tasks that were generated from the Workshop with Unity Consulting on Policy Governance (Ends Statements) that was held October 14th (see list #2), 3) attend the Stewardship workshop, November 23rd, 2013, Exeter, NH (see List #3), and 4) accept the appointment of congregational member, Joan Connacher, as partnering with Mary in working on the Norma Rowley Fund. Ellen mentioned that Joan Connacher has already applied herself to the task of performing research on the history of administrative actions regarding the Norma Rowley Fund, and those hours of research and further hours that she has planned may prove fruitful in determining a future path for the handling of the Fund.

The next regularly scheduled BoT Meeting is Monday, December 09th, 2013 (see List #4 for other important near term dates and the time set for the regularly scheduled BoT meeting).

Rev. Olivia gave the closing words that accompanied the extinguishing of the chalice.

Lists #1 through #4

List #1

Words of Welcome
& Church Service

Announcements:

November 17	Pat
November 24	Harry
November 26	Ellen (Interfaith Thanksgiving Service on a Tuesday)
December 1	Kate
December 8	Mary

List #2

Tasks generated from the Workshop on Policy Governance (Ends Statements) that

was held October 14th:

- A) Further “How has connection to this church changed your life” research 1. Ellen, 2. Harry, 3. Mike, 4. Mary, 5. Lance, 6. Kate, 7. Pat, 8. David
B) Draft Ends Statements
1. Ellen 2. Pat

List #3

Stewardship Workshop, UU Society of Exeter, NH, on November 23rd, 2013 (see attached announcement of event)

1. Harry 2. David 3. Rev. Olivia, also 4. Kate Messner

List #4

Saturday, November 23rd (9 am - 3 pm) Congregational Stewardship Network Workshop, UU Society of Exeter, NH

Sunday, November 26th, Interfaith Thanksgiving Service; Lance, Kate, Harry, and Ellen attending / helping

Sunday, December 8th, (11:45 am - 2 pm) Designing UU Religious Education for the Future

Monday, December 9th, (7 pm) Next regular BoT meeting

Reminder: regularly scheduled BoT meeting times have been moved to the second Monday night of the month.

//original signed//

Mary Licking,

Clerk, Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua,

New Hampshire

Board of Trustees’ Response to UU Nashua Ministerial Search Committee:

Board of Trustees’ Statement on 2013-2014 Church Budget

and

Board of Trustees’ Statement on Church Size

Board of Trustees' Statement on 2013-14 Church Budget

From Minutes of May 28, 2013 Board of Trustees meeting, as approved on June 11: A motion passed made by Jenn and seconded by Harry that proposed a budget for 2013 – 2014 containing a \$15K deficit, a deficit which is specifically for the work of the Search Committee and that proposed a balanced budget be presented for 2014-15.

Just 9 days before the Annual Meeting on June 6, 2013, the Board of Trustees passed the motion quoted above. The final working budget available that evening, listing contract obligations and expected expenses for the 2013-14 Church Year, showed an approximately \$29K deficit. Because of the short time involved, the Treasurer and Minister (in her role as Executive Director) did not feel that a responsible assessment of \$14K worth of budget reductions was possible. As a result, the 2013-14 Budget presented to the Annual Meeting was written in summary form with the commitment that there would be adjustments made during the year, either in decreased expenses or increased income, to bring the budget within the Board's approved \$15K deficit level. Several committees are currently working with the minister, conducting research on how churches of similar size organize themselves and staff their programs.

In fact, the cost of the entire \$29K deficit could be covered by the Church's cash reserves, but since the previous year's budget also contained a deficit which was covered by reserves, the Board wanted to launch a re-evaluation effort, rather than approving a deficit budget for a second year in a row.

Board of Trustees' Statement on Church Size

The 2013 Annual Meeting passed bylaw amendments with the purpose of clarifying the requirements for voting membership. As a result, our voting membership is now about 250 people, all of whom are actively supporting church operations. We now understand that over the past 7 years the number of people actively supporting church operations has been gradually declining, while during the same period the average financial commitment of those people has been increasing.

The new voting member count, which can fluctuate somewhat throughout the year, places us on the edge of the divide between a Mid-Sized I and a Mid-Sized II congregation. We realize that this church size designation is a determining factor in the UUA recommendations for compensation to our minister and staff (and we take those recommendations seriously).

Over the past 10 years the congregation has made it clear that we expect to meet our Fair Share contributions to the NNED and UUA. To determine those contributions annually, we will continue to assess our voting membership numbers as of the reporting deadline of February 1st each year.

For further details of the Board's analysis of our size and what appears to have happened over the past decade, we offer the following report, "Investigation of Church Size."

****Amendments: (Oct item of newsletter - total package for interim minister + the fact that we in the past were under impression our church was larger – actively goes to financially supporting church operations).****

The following article appeared in the October 2013 newsletter of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua, New Hampshire, in a column entitled, "On Board," written by Ellen Fisher, Church President:

Investigation of Church Size

At the annual meeting in June, the Board of Trustees had only recently discovered that we seemed to be a smaller congregation than we thought we were. It was a distressing surprise, to say the least. We knew that the main reason for the confusion was an inconsistency in the Bylaws' definition of voting membership. We define the size of our congregation by the number of voting members. As the Bylaws previously were written, people who had contributed to Outreach Collections (the proceeds of which are all rightfully given to the designated organizations), but not to the church's operating budget, were technically eligible to be voting members of the church. This was not the original intent of the Bylaw. At the Board's recommendation, the congregation voted that evening to clarify the Bylaw language. Please see "Membership Clarified" elsewhere in this newsletter for further details.

At the annual meeting I said that the Board would be investigating the size question so that we could report to the congregation what has happened to our numbers over the past few years. The Board has done that. Here is a summary of what we found.

According to our records, if voting membership were counted the way the Bylaws previously read, over the past 10 years our voting membership has hardly changed. It was 320 in 2004-05 and 317 in 2012-13. Counting by the new Bylaw language, however, we have gradually decreased from 321 in 2004-05 to 251 in 2012-13. This was not a sudden drop in one year, but a steady small loss each year. Tracking the decline in voting members (by the new counting method) is a corresponding decline in our Church School registrations and average Church School attendance. During the same period registrations gradually fell from 116 children to 89, with average weekly attendance going from 75 to 58. Surprisingly, average adult attendance at Sunday morning services has not changed much in the same period. It averaged 127 in 2004-05 and 124 in 2012-13, with fluctuations both higher and lower in the intervening years.

During the same period the numbers of pledges we received each year also declined, from 190 in 2004-05 to 146 in 2012-13. This is "pledging units," which may represent an individual, a couple, or in a few cases, three actual members. During the current year we have 138 pledges so far, but we expect that more may come in before the year is over so that number is not complete.

There is good news. The stability of our adult Sunday services attendance is good news. More surprising though, alongside the drop in the number of pledges and the number of people who are pledging, we have an amazing increase in the amount of money collected in pledge payments over those years. In 2004-05 we collected \$187,595 while in 2012-13 we collected \$219,102. For three especially good years during that period, we collected \$234,566, \$236,075 and \$246,194.

So what does all this mean? We know that UU churches throughout the country, along with mainline Protestant churches, have generally had a decline in membership over the past decade. It seems clear that we have not had a decline, but rather a tremendous increase, in the commitment of our remaining members—and that is something to be proud of. Even so, I assume that we still would like to see this congregation grow. It may be that we need to think hard about how to be a more appealing and welcoming place; it may be that we need to polish up some of our programs. We might need to get the word out in new and different ways about who we are and what we have to offer. I know that

discussions about these topics are already taking place in committee meetings, workshops, and among members wherever we come together. I invite you to join in.