

**Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, NH (UUCN)  
Retreat Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

September 9, 2017

**Minutes:** Final draft as of October 5, 2017 by Jodie K. Holway, Clerk of UUCN

**Reviewed and Approved by:**

Rick Spitz, Rev. Allison Palm, Dave Hudson, Lindsey Hedrick, Pam Jordan, Ellen McCormick

**Meeting Attendees:** Lindsey Hedrick, Jodie K. Holway, Carol Houde, David Hudson, Ellen McCormick, Rev. Allison Palm, Rick Spitz, Brenna Woods

**Excused:** Steve Hedges, Pam Jordan

**Meeting Venue:** Sept. 9, 10 am - 3:30 pm at Dave Hudson's home, Bedford NH – 2017 Board Retreat

**Full Agenda:** see APPENDIX A

**1. Opening and informal portion of meeting**

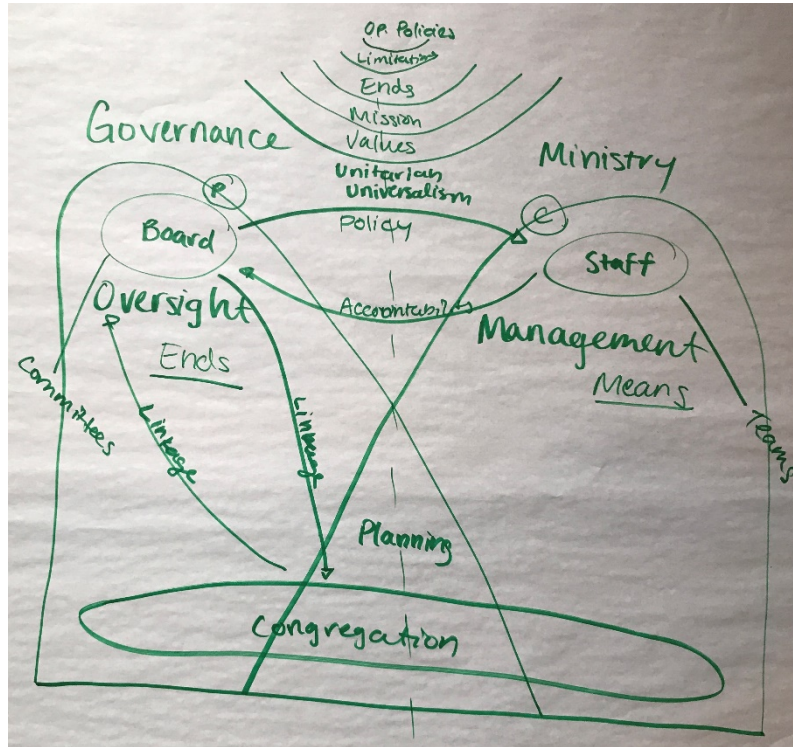
- a. Extended check-ins, to reconvene after summer
- b. Reviewed, agreed to covenant for UUCN Board of Trustees, Policy G (see APPENDIX B)
- c. Team-building exercises to reacquaint both old and new board members
- d. Brief recap of church leadership history, both recent and not-so-recent

**2. Children's Winter Garden at White Wing School discussion**

- a. UUCN BoT discussed a difficult organizational issue for CWG-WWS Board membership
- b. BoT reviewed the well-written letter from a key participant, summarizing the situation
- c. Discussed the factors surrounding the issues raised, and how we might communicate better and/or what might be done differently in similar situations down the road.
  - i. Work to understand when one or more people feel they have fallen out of covenant with the church, and HOW exactly to repair this covenant?
  - ii. **ACTION: Rick Spitz and Carol Houde** to discuss with this key participant
  - iii. Clarity that our Minister has the role of Executive Director. Thus Rev. Allison can take necessary actions for any staff, teams, or groups that report up to her.
  - iv. Continued adjustment to and acceptance of our Policy-based governance
  - v. Clarity of the implications of growth, to UUCN's communication strategies
    1. In a larger church, direct communication is no longer possible, and one person cannot see and follow everything that is ongoing
    2. In the absence of meeting minutes and direct communication, in a vacuum people may form negative impressions
    3. **ACTION: Jodie Holway** and BoT to post minutes without months' delay

3. Policy-Based Governance overview

- a. Discussion was led by Rev. Allison Palm
- b. Rev Allison recreated and led a discussion of a helpful graphic from Dan Hotchkiss' book [Governance and Ministry](#):



- c. For the governance side, the Board of Trustees defines overall Ends (the goals) and sets Policies which provide some broad parameters (a.k.a. limitations) on what can and can't be done to achieve those ends.  
For the ministry side, the Executive Director and Staff are responsible for accomplishing the Ends and deciding the Means (i.e. how to reach the Ends).  
The chief advantage of policy based governance is that the Board is freed from day-to-day operations and the ED & staff are free from micromanaging.
- d. BoT's three main ongoing responsibilities:
  - i. Visioning – looking at the big picture and thinking about where we might want to be years from now
  - ii. Monitoring – checking the organization's progress towards fulfilling our mission, evaluating the minister, and self-evaluating the Board
  - iii. Linkage – listening to our stakeholders, which primarily means our fellow congregants, but also includes other people the church serves
- e. In order to improve our alignment and focus on those three responsibilities the Board **AGREED** to form 3 subcommittees who take the lead in these 3 areas
  - i. Work in each area will be performed offline between monthly meetings, rotating presentation of findings from each team in monthly BoT meetings.
  - ii. **ACTION: BoT** to finalize members of each, in next meeting with all members

#### 4. Annual reviews of Rev. Allison

- a. Review last year and this year are for the [UUA's Ministerial Fellowship Committee](#) (MFC)
  - i. November 1, 2017 is due date as part of new minister process
  - ii. **ACTION: Rick Spitz** to assemble Minister's Reports from Aug 2016 – June 2017
  - iii. **ACTION: Brenna Woods** to circulate current draft by Sept. 24, 2017
  - iv. **ACTION: BoT Members** to prepare all comments on current draft, for discussion in an additional review meeting on Sunday Oct 1, 2017, 12-1:30 pm
  - v. **Next Steps: Jodie Holway** to collect all these suggested revisions, then recirculate another draft by Sunday Oct 8, 2017
  - vi. **Next step: BoT** at regular meeting Tuesday, Oct 10 will review with Rev. Allison, make any final revisions, and approve
- b. Next year's review, 2018 and beyond
  - i. BoT will execute this for UUCN's own purposes, no longer mandated by UUA
  - ii. In the past two years, the format and timing of Allison's evaluation has been driven by the MFC and our spring budgeting process. We'll begin discussing the budget again just a few months after completing this review.
    1. In order to avoid duplicating its efforts, the board will transition to a single annual review completed each March.
    2. **Next Step: BoT** to decide, because we just completed the fall review, will we perform another review in March 2018 or defer to March 2019?
  - iii. BoT will create and use UUCN's own (improved) format, not UUA's

#### 5. Board of Trustees meeting mechanics

- a. Monthly meetings 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7 – 9 pm
  - i. **AGREED** this monthly cadence works for 2017-18, same as last year
- b. Role and logistics of Vice President (Carol Houde)
  - i. Owns and circulated the year's signup sheets for BoT chalice and readings
  - ii. Owns and circulated the year's signup sheets for UUCN opening words
- c. Role and logistics and minutes of Clerk (Jodie K. Holway)
  - i. **AGREED:** For each decision, record the factors that were discussed which influenced the decision, to ensure we don't rehash old topics with old reasons
  - ii. Advice: bulleted format is preferable to paragraphs of narrative
  - iii. **AGREED:** How to reach approval of monthly minutes:
    1. 1 week after meeting, Jodie will email Draft of minutes to full BoT
    2. 2.5 weeks after meeting, BoT must reply with any comments/revisions
    3. 3.5 weeks after meeting, Jodie will re-send final minutes, AS LONG AS five or more real responses are received (Jodie to record respondents)
    4. Next monthly meeting, BoT will put final minutes onto Consent Agenda
- d. Role and logistics of Timekeeper (rotating job)
  - i. BoT discussed strategies for keeping on track during our meetings and how we might share that responsibility better. It was noted that an announcement when we're "out of time" is too late
  - ii. Discussed advantages of a physical clock and potentially hanging a clock on wall

- iii. **ACTION: Jodie Holway** to send URL for Toastmasters App, so an iPhone on table will quietly glow green/yellow/red as time limit approaches and is exceeded
- iv. **ACTION: Dave Hudson** to show the allotted number of minutes per agenda item
- v. Next steps: in future meetings, each speaker will announce the allotted number of minutes when introducing the item, and attempt to allocate among all points
- vi. Next steps: when discussion reaches the allotted limit, BoT will explicitly agree how many more minutes to give this topic, rather than simply agree to finish it or automatically adding time
- e. Covenantal Check-In
  - i. **AGREED** to keep this section of the meeting, going forward: it's a key process, even though we don't often have something to share
  - ii. Allows members to express feelings or responses missed in heat of the moment
- f. Adding "Slack Time" to the agenda
  - i. **AGREED** to always schedule this buffer time, help ensure timely end of meetings

**6. Closing portion of the meeting**

- a. Covenantal check-out: all attendees
- b. Timekeeper's report: Carol Houde
- c. Closing words: Rev. Allison Palm

**APPENDIX A:** *Agenda for this meeting: UUCN Board of Trustees Retreat, September 2017*

**APPENDIX B:** *UUCN Board of Trustees Covenant, Policy G*

# Retreat Agenda

Board of Trustees, Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua

September 09, 2017 @ 10:00 AM

● **UUCN Mission:** The mission of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua is to engage people in a search for truth and meaning within a supportive liberal religious community that encourages personal and spiritual growth, embraces diversity, and promotes social justice.

☺ **Timekeeper:** Carol

10:00 Arrival, Welcome, & Beverage Selection

10:10 Chalice Lighting (David) & Extended Check-in (All)

10:25 Goal & Agenda Review (David)

- Get to know each other a little better.
- Welcome new members and share our story so far, i.e. our history, our process, etc.
- Enjoy a rare opportunity to step out of our regular routine and responsibilities to be reflective and think expansively about where we go from here.
- What goals do you bring to this retreat?

10:32 Review our Board Covenant (All)

10:40 Getting to Know Each Other (All)

11:25 A (Brief?) History of Everything: UUCN Version (David)

11:40 Letter about Preschool (Carol)

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Policy Based Governance: An Overview (Allison)

1:05 Policy Based Governance: Discussion and Q&A (All)

1:15 How The Board Works: A Review and Some Ideas (David)

- Being Mindful of the Church's Mission
- Quick Overview of How We've Worked in the Past
- Housekeeping: Board Welcome & Chalice Lighting/Timekeeper Sign-ups
- Wait a Minute: Keeping Track of Our Meetings
- Keeping Time: Discussing the Role of the Timekeeper
- Proposal: Adding "Slack Time" (see below)
- Proposal: Creating Permanent Sub-committees for our Three "Jobs":  
Linkage, Monitoring, & Envisioning
- Discuss: Covenantal Check-out

1:35 Asking and Answering Questions (All)

- What questions do you have? What questions have come up as we've talked?

1:50 Looking Ahead (All)

- What priorities call to us as we look ahead to the 2017-18 church year?

## 2:10 Other Business

- Confirm second Tuesday of the month @ 7 PM for our meetings.
- Discuss how we want to handle existing gaps in our own Board Policies.
- Looking Ahead: Tuesday's Agenda
  - Long Range Planning Committee (LRPC) Update & Discussion
  - Allison's Formal Evaluation due in October, we'll start discussing Tuesday. Enough time?
  - Need to examine role of Personnel Committee.
  - Need two folks to serve as liaisons to Nominating Committee
- xxxxx

## 2:20 Slack Time

- Time to be allocated throughout the day as needed.
- NOTE: We should have some more time on Tuesday to follow-up as well.

## 2:40 Covenantal Checkout

- What worked in our meeting today?
- What did not work in our meeting today?
- Are there any questions or concerns?
- How are we working as a group?

## 2:50 Timekeeper Report

## 2:52 Closing Words (Allison)

## 3:00 Adjourn

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### Upcoming Dates:

- Tomorrow – First Service of 2017-18 Church Year
- Tuesday, September 12 @ 7 pm – next Board of Trustees meeting

# Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua Governing Policies

## Policy G: Board Members' Code of Conduct

The Board commits itself and its members to ethical, businesslike, and lawful conduct, including proper use of authority and appropriate decorum when acting as Board members. Accordingly, Board members subscribe to the following *Board Covenant*.

### Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua Board of Trustees Covenant

The members of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, New Hampshire, acting in the tradition of the Free Church, have entrusted us with the responsible governance of our congregation. To help us honor that trust we promise the following to one another. As fellow members of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua, we will:

**Show respect for one another.** We will honor the dignity of our fellow Board members and respect their opinions. We will strive to assure that everyone's voice is heard and refrain from interrupting each other. We will assume the best intentions of our fellow Board members, remembering that we are working toward common goals.

**Take responsibility to express our opinions on the issues before us.** We recognize that we each have an obligation to express our views on the important matters that come to the Board. We will keep an open mind when listening to the viewpoints of others, and express our disagreements respectfully.

**Respect the dignity of Board decisions.** We may offer varying opinions in our discussions, but we will stand behind the decisions the Board has made once the decision making process has been fairly completed.

**Maintain the highest levels of confidentiality.** We realize that in the course of our service on the Board we will be presented or become aware of confidential information pertaining to the activities, operations and the business of UUCN and/or financial and personal information of UUCN's members. We will treat this information with care and take every reasonable measure to guard against its disclosure.

**Make efficient use of time.** We will focus on the issue on the table with minimum distractions and complete our work in a timely manner. Making efficient use of time includes timely dissemination of meeting materials; taking time to read through materials and prepare for meeting discussions, respecting established time limitations; and keeping comments pertinent and succinct.

**Respect the value of face-to-face interaction, but allow the use of alternative communication technologies when necessary.** Whenever possible, we will conduct our discussions and deliberations in person. When we cannot meet in person we will value real-time, interactive communication technologies (e.g. Skype) over alternatives, resorting to email only as a last resort when expediency demands it. To that end, any member(s) participating remotely who can both hear our discussion and speak will count towards a quorum and be allowed to vote.

**Maintain a sense of the sacred.** Even as we attend to matters of business, we will remember that we are a religious community, and our purpose is to advance the mission and covenant of this Church.

**Inject fun in our work.** Though our work together is serious, we shall not take ourselves too seriously.

**Make our activities transparent to the Congregation.** We are mindful that we have been entrusted by the members of this Church to carry out the business of governance. Therefore it is our duty and obligation to participate in and encourage open, two-way communication regarding our work on their behalf.

**Keep mindful that we are part of a greater community.** We shall remember that in our deliberations we must consider the needs of our larger community and the impact of our decisions on the world outside our doors.

**When we fall short of this covenant,** we will make amends, forgive ourselves and each other, and, if necessary, seek help to restore covenant between us.

**This is a living document.** As such, it can be reviewed and revised by consensus at any time.