

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

February 10, 2022

Meeting held virtually due to COVID-19

Final Minutes by Jodie K. Holway, Clerk of the Board of Trustees

Reviewed by Cecile Bonvouloir, Burns Fisher, Lindsey Hedrick

Meeting Attendees: Victoria Agnew, Caro Barschow, Cecile Bonvouloir, Andy Capen, Burns Fisher, Roy Goodman, Lindsey Hedrick (Vice President), Jodie K. Holway (Clerk), Lindsey Sylvester (Treasurer), Brenna Woods (President), and Rev. Allison Palm

Agenda: see Appendix A

1. **Chalice Lighting and Congregational Storytelling**, by Cecile Bonvouloir
 - a. One admirable congregant who gradually became a very close friend
 - i. Cecile came from a conservative Catholic background
 - ii. As she joined UU Nashua 20 years ago, someone welcomed her
 - iii. Their paths kept crossing, they would stand outside the preschool and wait to pick up their kids together and chat, she was active in the White Wing board and raising money for its parent group PAWWS
 - iv. Eventually their kids worked together at Sunday coffee hour doing dishes, and played together on the UU basketball team for a few years
 - v. She co-taught some Religious Education classes with Cecile and Jim, and they traded weeks being rovers and did UU kid sleepovers
 - vi. They confided in each other occasional issues with significant others
 - vii. She is a lifelong UU and taught Cecile so much about the principles of our faith, and never lets you get away with unsubstantiated statements but challenges you to think – and never in a confrontational way
 - viii. The big reveal: we're talking about Donna LaRue!
 - ix. She is such a kind-hearted lady, with such a mellow maturity - sometimes things get can huffy, and she never goes down that path, encourages people to step back and listen to their better angels
 - b. Cecile's family suggests more congregants who made a big positive impact:
 - i. Dan Early, Monica Staples, Jed Holland, Roy Goodman
 - c. Rev. Allison recalls that Donna was the first person she talked to from ministerial search - charmed that Donna broke from script to be genuine
 - d. Burns Fisher also notes that Donna's kids are also wonderful
 - i. Bryce created the UU garden on the Grove street side, as Eagle scout

2. Revisiting January's Board Meeting

- a. Need to recreate last month's Board of Trustees meeting
 - i. Clerk Jodie Holway had a technical glitch and lost last month's notes
 - ii. All of us will now review its agenda to reconstruct the discussion topics, so we can still publish basic meeting minutes to the congregation
 - iii. See below italics – to be published as January 2022's meeting minutes
- b. *January's Storytelling, by Lindsey Sylvester*
 - i. *Her first visit to UU Nashua - I was having an off day, but the people who greeted me and sat near me in the pews were so nice and friendly. I felt that I was probably not my best self, but I was still welcomed very warmly.*
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- c. *January's Consent agenda to approve December's minutes as amended*
 - i. Redoing January's approval motion now in February, to make it official
 - ii. **MOTION** by Victoria Agnew, **SECOND** by Roy Goodman, **PASSES**
- d. *January's Minister's report, Rev. Allison*
 - i. *Discussion of COVID practices, responding to Omicron*
 - ii. *Good news, Building our Vision team has chosen and hired an architect*
 - iii. *General Assembly is coming up, people should go!*
- e. *January's Finalizing Ministerial Evaluation form*
 - i. *Discussion of wordsmithing per question and its final online format*
 - ii. *Will send it out very soon*
 - iii. *Invite participation from the usual groups: Worship Associates, Pastoral Care, this Board of Trustees*
- f. *January's Sabbatical updates*
 - i. *Caro Barschow accepted the new role during Rev. Allison's sabbatical*
 1. *Clarify the agreement for this job: yes their benefits do continue during the sabbatical*
 2. *Board expressed happiness to hear that they accepted!*
 - ii. *Each staff member who is usually supervised by Rev. Allison now has a Board point-person for the duration of sabbatical*
- g. *January's Endowment Committee update*
 - i. *Presented their thinking up to this point, not seeking feedback yet*
- h. *January's Monitoring Committee update*
 - i. *Presented the review of policies A through B*
 - ii. *For policies A and B the Board agreed with the revisions*
 - iii. *Policy C the committee will do more work before agreement*
 1. *This covers treatment of church staff and volunteers*
 2. *Committee must go back to the changes we made last year, the finalized/corrected version, then confirm that this document's language matches the personnel manual, then make sure personnel manual language matches this revised Policy C.*
 - iv. *Policy D the committee also has a bit more work before acceptance*
 1. *Covers the compensation and benefits of church staff*

3. Minister's Report, Rev. Allison Palm (Appendix B)

- a. In-person services have restarted! Next week begins OWL and options for kids
- b. Sadie's sabbatical started, now just working out any surprises as they come
- c. Sunday is kickoff for Stewardship campaign - runs until March 13
 - i. She encourages Board to be leaders and get our commitments in early
 - ii. Stewardship team runs a phone-a-thon calling members who didn't pledge yet
 1. They will probably ask for Board's help to share the calls, which shows our support for their good work
 2. Will likely be March 20, after pledge period closes
 - iii. Next Sunday you'll see the fun video created by Stewardship team
- d. BoV team had first meeting with our chosen architect, went really well
 - i. Need to start financial feasibility study, next phase is coming up
 - ii. Who does this study? It's our decision:
 1. It could be Mark Ewert, his company Stewardship 4 Us is recommended by the UUA
 2. Or we could choose another Stewardship Consultant
 - iii. Often done in tandem with architect presenting 3 tiers of options
 1. Timing is complex; nobody has a clear timeline to tell us when to do each step – but we should be starting both right around now
 2. Let's not vote on a plan before knowing what we'll probably be able to afford!
- e. Preschool still working on relationships but no meeting time yet set up
 - i. Things are still feeling positive, regardless
 - ii. Parents on the preschool board are all different, everyone has turned over within the past five months
 - iii. As long as we're clear about keeping a preschool in this space, which we seem to be, then Rev. Allison doesn't see a need to push the relationship conversations to go faster just in the name of the Building Our Vision plans

4. Endowment Committee, Burns Fisher

- a. We are seeking review of our work, especially in the highlighted parts
 - i. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vMIFi5wwVRhfa47REbe8PtY4atg6oxGD/edit>
- b. Wordsmithing points:
 - i. Hyperlink to our Principles makes sense; or better, put in a hyperlink to the Bylaws: https://www.uua.org/files/2021-08/uua_bylaws_2021.pdf
 - ii. When this lists "fair wages" for various categories, should we add more examples, e.g. "per genders", or just generic UU values?

- c. Bylaws imply that the appropriate custodian manages the endowment:
 - i. “If the Board of Trustees, or such individual or Committee chooses to use a custodian other than themselves to manage the funds, it must use a reputable financial institution that offers investment advisory services commensurate with the amount of church funds to be managed.”
 - ii. After we do decide how to invest it, then we’ll have to evaluate whether that custodian is a financial institution - else we’ll need a bylaw change
- d. Discussion of why and whether our historic buildings should be prominently mentioned as a reason to spend from the endowment and/or its proceeds
 - i. We could state that we CAN use for balancing the operational budget, while also stating our goal to not depend on this and rather to raise all operating costs by efforts of Stewardship
 - 1. Rev. Allison raises the fact that this wording could be interpreted differently by future boards:
 - 2. Perhaps they’d think that spending from endowment is the worst case scenario, therefore they won’t use that money - which is not exactly our current intention
 - 3. Or perhaps they’d think that they should give more weight and importance to our historic buildings than to our programs - which is also not our current intention, especially after two years of pandemic in which we really haven’t used our buildings much
 - ii. We could state that all these goals are equal in a list, e.g. ...upkeep of our historic buildings, special projects in our wider Nashua community...
 - iii. We could simply add a statement, e.g. the cost required by our historical buildings is just one of the reasons our operating budget is only partially funded by stewardship
 - iv. Mark Ewert stated: you have to have a purpose for the endowment beyond the operating budget, especially if you want to inspire donations
 - 1. But in reality no congregation is able to afford expenses based only on stewardship pledge inflow nowadays
 - a. Most congregations cannot give away their whole collection plate as we do, it’s too critical to their budgets
 - 2. We don’t want to be dependent on the endowment but we are lucky enough to have it and we do need to balance this without stigmatizing it in this policy
 - v. Stepping back: what DO we aspire to do in our budget???
 - 1. Is it our highest aspiration to care for our physical buildings?
 - 2. Is it fitting and required that the money donated by our historic members must be spent on upkeep of the historical buildings?
 - 3. Is it now clear that “church” is more than the tangible buildings, rather it’s the actions/mission of the church - so this is the most important way to spend our money?
 - a. Consider: is this likely how most of us would be motivated to leave our own money in our wills

4. And anyway shouldn't aspiration be kept out of policy, since policy is more concerned with matters of (non-)compliance
- e. Running out of time, to be continued next month
 - i. Didn't discuss the point about short-term loans
 - ii. Next meeting will review the end of this plus Section 4
5. **Not really a "Preschool Update"**
 - a. No, this is merely what the Agenda claimed, to hide a small surprise party
 - b. Brenna Woods and Board gave Lindsey Sylvester our baby shower gifts!
6. **Monitoring Committee Update**, Lindsey Hedrick
 - a. Policy E, Financial Planning and Budgeting
 - i. Committee's goal was to holistically review and shorten this policy, after years of nitpicking and additions
 - ii. Much discussion and wordsmithing among the larger Board, consolidated and improved the proposed policy further
 - b. Ran out of time to finish Policy E, didn't approve nor touch Policy F and D
 - c. Concern raised by Cecile Bonvouloir: what is the purpose of committees?
 - i. If the larger Board is interested in repeating the work of the committee, at the detailed level with wordsmithing and small improvements?
 - ii. Take up this important question overall at a retreat, not tonight
 - d. Committee will come back next month with recommendations for D, E, F, etc.
7. **Ministerial Review Discussion**
 - a. Reviewing the results from all respondents
 - i. Each group of 3 board members reviewed 6 topics, of total 18 topics
 - ii. Pulled out key words and ideas to help Brenna Woods write a coherent review with all this input and illustrations, which is the next step
 - b. How did this process work, to get the work done?
 - i. Overall well, except some unhappiness with the tool Google Sheets
8. **Closing**
 - a. "[The Hill We Climb](#)", poem by amazing youth poet-laureate Amanda Gorham

Appendix A: Agenda

Appendix B: Minister's Report

Agenda

Board of Trustees, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua

February 10, 2022 6:30 pm

- 6:30 (10) Check in**
- 6:40 (5) Chalice Lighting: Cecile's Story**
- 6:45 (10) Follow Up Story Telling (Everyone)**
- 6:55 (10) Mock Make Up Minutes**
- 7:00 (20) Allison's Board Report (Allison)**
- 7:20 (30) Endowment Committee (Lindsey S.)**
 - Review policy draft #1
 - Policy draft number #2 will be presented at March meeting
- 7:50 (10) Preschool Updates (Brenna)**
- 8:00 (5) Break**
- 8:05 (30) Monitoring Committee (Lindsey H.)**
 - Policy E review
 - Policy F review
 - If time, revisit Policy D.
- 8:35 (45) Ministerial Review Discussion (Allison)**
- 9:20 (5) Check Out and Closing Words**

Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees
Rev. Allison Palm
UU Church of Nashua, NH
February 9, 2022
Covering January 12-February 9, 2022

Worship has been going well this month, with small in person attendance but decent online participation. Interestingly, several of our in person attendees have been newcomers. It has been nice to be able to give those folks some one-on-one attention after the service, and I'm glad to be able to connect with them in person. I am leaning in to some collaborative worship opportunities this winter. I led worship with Bob Keating on Jan. 23, and will be leading with the Pastoral Care Associates on Feb. 20 and the Widening the Circle Study Group on Feb. 27. In March, I will be doing a three way pulpit swap with the Manchester and Milford churches, so will only be leading worship in Nashua once that month. We also had a guest worship leader this past Sunday – Matt Meyer led worship and offered both great drumming and a thoughtful message.

This past Sunday, we had our first indoor, in-person faith formation program since March 2020. OWL Taking Flight began with 12 youth and 4 leaders. Caro is the staff liaison for this and the program will run most Sunday mornings through the end of the year. We will also be introducing an in-person option for our kids' workshop Sundays starting this week. Basically there will be two options – one in person and one online. This feels like a big step in coming back together in person!

We had a lovely send off for Sadie on Jan. 16, and she is now on sabbatical until May 15. So far, things are going pretty smoothly. We are figuring out who is doing what and trying to lean into our goal of nurturing lay leadership in Faith Formation during this sabbatical time.

In other sabbatical news, Caro has officially agreed to be our Sabbatical Minister from August-November, while I am away. This is great news!

Caro is continuing to work on our Welcoming Renewal process, with a team of folks meeting for a second time this month. The Land Acknowledgement folks are also continuing their work, and figuring out where there may need to be more conversation and learning in the congregation. The "Widening the Circle of Concern" study group is winding down, with our final meeting on Feb. 20. We are working on distilling 5 takeaways from the report for our congregation and will be presenting those in a service later this month. The GSOP Clergy Caucus that I am on the core team of had our big public launch on Tuesday, January 18 outside the State House. We got some good press coverage and were able to connect with some of our legislators in person.

Our Stewardship Campaign will begin on Feb. 13, so the Stewardship Team is busy preparing for that. We are continuing the "Fueling our Flame" theme for a third year, and are excited about once again using the lovely wooden chalice art with tea lights to track pledges that come in. I encourage all Board members to get their financial commitments in during this kick off week – it makes a difference when our leaders are all in from the beginning. The Stewardship Team may ask the Board to join them again for a phone-a-thon in mid-March.

The Building Our Vision Team had a kick off meeting with our architects and are still working on officially signing the contract. We announced to the congregation that we have chosen an architect and started making plans for more frequent updates to the congregation. We will also be putting together small task forces to work on specific parts of the design with the architects as we get further into the project. One hope from this is to involve many people in the planning and decision making so folks are already bought in on the project when we get to voting on a design. The BOV team held a brief after service info session on Feb. 6, which was very well attended.

Professional Development/Collegial Connection

- Weekly support and collaboration calls with Nashua area clergy
- UUMA New Hampshire Cluster Meeting
- Attended UUMA Institute for the Learning Ministry, including a seminar on “Sustainable Leadership for Emergent Systems”
- Continued work on ritual book project, including two calls with our book editor
- Watched a Side With Love webinar on reproductive justice

Community/Social Justice Activities

- 2 New Hampshire Council of Churches meetings
- 1 Nashua Interfaith Housing Justice meeting
- Submitted testimony for 5 bills in the NH legislature, 4 on abortion care and 1 on amendments to multiple state anti-discrimination statues that could have dire consequences for LGBTQ+ folks in NH.
- GSOP clergy caucus launch event and two follow up conversations
- Clergy Caucus meeting with Senator Cindy Rosenwald
- 2 1-1 conversations with community partners

Children’s Winter Garden with White Wing School

- There have not been any other Covid exposures since the closure that happened at the beginning of January. Chris did send out a note at the end of that time clarifying policies and encouraging all kids to wear masks. She reported at the Jan. Board meeting that there was definitely a good percentage of families who were sending kids with masks after that encouragement.
- The school board has a full slate of officers for the first time this school year, after struggling to fill parent roles in the first couple months. Amanda Banner is working on recruitment for new church members, as our three church members have all been on the Board for awhile.
- Registration is going really well for next year. Chris has been doing a ton of tours.
- Tiffany Holmes is still working on putting together a meeting between the Board and the preschool teachers
- Chris used some grant money to get new blinds for all the classrooms, which is a huge improvement, especially on sunny afternoons.

Minister’s Schedule

- Sundays off: March 27
- I may take some vacation days the week of February 28