

Board Retreat Minutes

Board of Trustees, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Nashua

September 10th, 2023: 12pm-5pm

Attendees: Reverend Allison, Lindsey Hedrick, Paul Cardone, Cecile Bonvouloir, Emma Rearick, Karen Murray, Robin Trudel, Ann Smith, Victoria Agnew, Erin Scott, Burns Fisher,

12:00 (45) Lunch (Pressed)

Yummy. Thank you. Area of improvement: Labeling

12:30 (15) Checking in/Introductions (everyone)

New family members, Nicaragua memories, getting settled into new functions, remembering family members, healing, travel stories, kids are good, busy summers with weird schedules, good church energy, new schools from kindergarten to college, studying for tests, milestone birthdays.

12:45 (5) Chalice Lighting (Lindsey)

Chalice Lighting for Businessy Meetings by Li Kynvi [LINK](#)

12:50 (5) Consent Agenda (Lindsey)

o June Minutes, Motion by Ann and a second by Victoria. All in were in favor.

12:55 (30) Team Building (Lindsey)

Pick a year between 2010 and 2023 to share something memorable to you about that year.

2022 making new family traditions of connection

2019 dogs bringing joy, family coming for celebrations

2016 family coming home

2015 loss, amazing success realized!, birthday surprises

2014 transition and reinvention

2013 weddings, success

2012 housing buying

2011 walkabouts on a limb

2010 reinvention through traveling

Next team building topic – pick a state to tell a story

Board of Trustees Covenant

Presentation: Lindsey led us in reading the covenant.


Discussion: One item shared was how we are meant to have thoughtful debate and discussion, we may disagree but finally come to a consensus. Then we have to bring that final decision out broadly as one Board unit. Decisions then have us leave as one voice;

Meeting Structure: There is a preference towards in person meetings but absolutely hybrid is always an option and we would rather have people join online than to not join.

Signing: Anyone who hadn't yet signed the confidentiality document yet has signed and given to Rev. Allison

1:25 (30) Policy Based Governance (Rev Allison)

Allison brought the group through the concepts of Policy Based Governance

BOT	Executive
Big picture goals, ENDS	MEANS, how do we get there
Monitoring ☐ Monitor the work of the Executive and our progress to the Ends, and policies. Visioning ☐ Creating the Ends Linkage ☐ How are we staying connected to the congregation from listening to communicating; transparency. - Examples: Surveys, chatting in coffee hour Policies	
Financial Examples: Endowment Ministers Compensation	Financial Examples: Budget Financial policy checks brought by Rev. Allison ~quarterly
Policy Governance is like Nested Bowls:  Bylaws ☐ Values ☐ Mission ☐ Ends ☐ Governing Policies	Values: the categories of Wonder, Authentic Connection, Courageous Community, Love in Action Mission: We are a welcoming community of faith, inspiring lives of wonder, generosity, service the world through love in action

Questions:

What are some of our incomes?

- Pledges, endowment are the two largest.
- Preschool annual contribution, ~\$33,000
- Smaller: Outreach offering, Fundraisers, Rentals

Recommended Reading:

- Governance in Ministry [Amazon Link for Reference](#)
- The nested bowls by Laura Park [Amazon Link for Reference](#)

1:55 (30) Survey Results (Lindsey)

Congregational survey discussion. [Survey Results Document](#)

The same survey is sent year after year to be able to see changes over time.

Survey insights:

- o Goal of the survey is to assess how people feel we are moving closer to our ends.
 - o There were not enough respondents (29) for it to lead to valuable insights – except that there has been a decline in respondents over the year.
 - o Initial discussion regarding the low response and what potentially to do is below for use later in the year to decide if, when and how to do another survey.
1. Number of respondents has declined year over year.
 - a. Discussion: A different time of year? Lots of new families. Survey on average takes 5 minutes; Align with annual meeting?
 - b. Why low? Possibly people don't want to or know how to answer the questions;
 - c. Background of the survey – doing it was a suggestion of the consultant at the time who had a larger congregation
 - d. Educational/Marketing Campaign – would that be helpful? Do people know where the results go? People are unsure of the concepts of policy governance, so they don't want to answer them.
 - e. Going forward:
 - i. There is a feeling that surveys (or this survey) are not as useful these days and what other ways can we do linkage throughout the year to get better results on the surveys?
 - ii. If we did a survey would we want reword questions

2:25 (30) Subcommittees (Lindsey)

Two subcommittees

Financial: Emma, Paul, Burns, Cecile

- Drafting a job description including executive limitations. Letter of Call is an input and needs to be reviewed. There is new guidance from the UUA of what should go into that doc.
- How does the Board want to monitor finances and to what level of oversight.
 - o Financial Records Review (FRR) process needs updating. They currently report to the congregation. It's a small committee that creates a report for the annual meeting but the report doesn't review the report. Is this process really serving the board and congregation.
- There is no policy for a formal financial audit. Are we acting responsibly?
- There used to be an audit but that had gone away. What to replace it with?
- Rob Bates and Frank Grossman would be key contacts as they lead the FRR
- Team would make suggestions, bring to the board, we vote and could update bylaws

Cemetery: Ann, Robin, Karen, Victoria

- Multi year situation where some issues have come up every year.
- The cemetery has a set of five trustees that report to the congregation
 - o Examples of issues
 - Fall clean up, and that would be a fundraiser for the church; many years ago there was an issue with payment because of quality of service
 - State of disrepair, and it's not safe;
 - Administrator burden; passing it onto the trustees but then action not taken; Now in the budget to pay for Administrator support
 - Unsure whether we were able/allowed to use the cemetery space
 - Positive experience with the cemetery guided tours
 - Should it be locked?
 - Ownership and accountability and purpose
 - How does it fit into our ends?
 - Find historical and write new bylaws
- Could potentially result in bylaw changes, creation of a shared vision
- Contacts: Ericka

2:55 (15) Break

3:10 (15) BOV Update (Rev Allison)

Update from Rev. Allison (Emma and Victoria are board members of the BOV).

Talked to city planners. We had three lots with three different addresses. Would be good to consolidate into one lot. \$25 fee. We do retain the same address.

We are in information gathering phase. Update to come later in Oct.

Contract: We will sign but need missing attachments. We can vote on the contracts at next Board meeting. No need to sign contract with Hudder at this point.

Action: Rev. Allison to send attachments for review

Current savings account: Voted to open savings account last year and that is now in use and is earning interest. Holding about \$400,00 at this time. Large amounts will not come out soon. First payment of \$9,000 has come out.

Keeping track: Rev. Allison will work out the process with Book keeper to keep it separate and transparent

Questions and insights related to project:

- Will acknowledgement come when payments are made? Each person can get info from Breeze.
- Archival standpoint, would be good to document current standing of our campus. Microfiche is a noted way to go for anything beyond 50 years

3:25 (45) Business Catching Up (Lindsey H.)

o Board Meeting Day: 2nd Thursday of every month. In person preference, but online is always acceptable as needed.

- o Board members can have a key, work with Ericka if you would like one.
- o Parking lemon st. lot

o Nomination Committee Liaisons

- o Volunteers – Cecile, **next position to be filled in next Board meeting**

o General structure of meetings/approval of minutes

- o 6:30 – 9:30
- o Karen will take minutes, distribute minutes and call for corrections with a due date. Required 5 people respond, send an updated one, vote to approve that version of the minutes
- o **Update website with new team (Karen)**

o Sign Up genius (Sunday offerings) Schedule is full through December. We do the speech for the offering. This helps with the congregation to get to know the board members. If you need a backup, Ann is a good person to start with.

- o Chalice lighting sign up for the board members. The theme for this year we will follow the church monthly theme. Ex. Gifts of our Faith – How you have experienced that or how you have seen the congregation live that out. Lindsey will do the first one and bring list for us to sign up. Idea came from consultant that he felt there could be better at storytelling.

- o Hosting coffee hour(s)? **Decision** is to sign up for October 15th and November 12th

- o paper sign up sheet for sign ups in general
 - o Idea that it would be good to have a list of suggestions of what to bring
- o Safe congregation training, background checks. **Please respond to an email regarding a background check if you have not done so already.**

4:10 (45) Article 2 (Rev Allison)

[LINK to version on the UUA website](#)

- o Article 2 is the 7 principles. Current version created in 1985.
- o 8th principle movement around racial justice. We haven't done it here because we also had BLM going on at the same time.
- o Collected feedback on core values and sent them along
- o At last UUA got new draft of article 2.
 - o Talked a lot about this at UUA GA, heard and debated about 15 at the meeting; 5 were incorporated
 - o Now a new version with incorporated amendments
 - o Needs to be voted on 2 years in a row, so the first one has happened and 2nd next year.
 - If yes it will be replaced in the bylaws
- o Rev. Allison sees this being part of our congregations discussions this year
 - o Soul Matters monthly theme will be based on some portion of article 2
 - o During worship, and with others
 - o Erin will lead wellspring, 4 session curriculum that goes through it and to reflect in that; do in cohorts that might have leaders emerge to help do future sessions
- o Active session:
 - o Went through current Article II to discuss like, resistance, missing
 - o Explored revised version to discuss the same

4:55 (5) Check out and Closing Words (Rev Allison)

- o How did we do and did everyone feel heard?
- o Are there any concerns or compliments you want to give to the group?