

# Agenda & Minutes

## Board of Trustees, Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua

**Date of Meeting:** September 19, 2024

**Attendance:**

**Present:** Rev. Allison Palm, Erin Scott (Ministerial Intern), Lindsey Hedrick (President), Burns Fisher (Vice President), Karen Murray (Clerk), Cecile Bonvouloir (Member at Large), Victoria Agnew (Member at Large), Amanda Banner (Member at Large), Paul Cardone (Member at Large), Robin Trudel (Member at Large)

**Absent:** Emma Rearick (Treasurer)

6:30 (20)     **Check In**

6:50 (5)     **Chalice Lighting:** Story Telling (Burns) Theme: Home

6:55 (5)     **Follow Up Story Telling** (Open)

- Burns did the story telling with the theme being Home: Burns reflected on a sermon he did back in 2013 titled "Born Again." He remembers a quote by Sally Potter that talks about our principles and throwing away doing only familiar things and trying new things. Burns realized that the reason people may not is that fear is the enemy of change and he recognizes that he is most likely willing to do scary things at home. Burns also shared that church is his second home so he has been willing to push outside this box at church as well. Other members shared how this resonated with them discussing the saying of "killing your darlings" which is a metaphor often used in writing where the author needs to remove unnecessary parts of a piece even if they are well-loved

7:00 (5)     **Consent agenda** (Lindsey)

- Lindsey spoke about the consent agenda and we currently have minutes that have not yet been voted on which includes: June 12, 2024 (only Burns, Victoria & Robin approved); July 31, 2024 (only Burns & Cecile approved); August 25, 2024 (only Burns & Emma approved); plus our retreat minutes and September 19th minutes. So in total we would like to

aim to vote in all five sets of minutes at the October meeting if all members would review prior

7:05 (15) **Minister's Report** (Rev Allison)

- Allison spoke about the Minister's report and explained that the bulk of her efforts over the summer were focused on building displacement. See Addendum 1 for report below.

7:20 (20) **BOV Update** (Rev Allison)

- Allison also spoke about BOV update and reported that as of today we have 40 donors who contributed to our current September campaign initiative with a total of \$223,355. Also, four are new donors. Each week the staff sets a micro goal from Monday thru Sunday to get 40 new donors and so far they already have 10 new donors going into the weekend. They will be emailing those this week that they have not yet heard back from.

- Vote to approve Rev. Allison and Frank Grossman as the owner's representative
  - **Allison presented for BOV that it was recommended that they have two owner representatives that will deal with the builders answering the day to day questions and the BOT voted to elect Rev Allison Palm and Frank Grossman. Burns moved and Victoria 2nd with the vote being 8-0-0.**
- Officially vote to withdraw from the endowment when we need to pay an outstanding balance and have run out of paid commitments, and repay it with a 4.5% interest rate
  - **Motion from Cecile to approve the above, Amanda 2nd, All approve, Motion passes with the vote of 8-0-0**
- When will we want to vote to sign the final contract? Does it need to be a meeting? An email?
  - **Motion that once we receive additional commitments that equal \$250K we will sign the contract. Burns so moves, Robin 2nds, all approve and Motion passes with the vote being 8-0-0**

7:40 (5) **Subcommittee Check in**

- Financial policy

- Bylaws
- Rev. Allison's review form
  - Teams are getting started, and are finding the documents related to the work of each team.

7:45 (30) **Executive Director Contract Updates** (Allison)

- Rev. Allison has chosen not to accept the healthcare that the church offers to full time employees. In analyzing options, Rev. Allison discovered that the current way we compensate Staff when they choose not to use the healthcare is now not suggested by the UUA.
- Flat rate compensations for not using insurance are the suggested way to go now and that it is accessible to the rest of the staff.
- Suggestion is to change Rev. Allison's contract, and then she would use the same options for the additional staff. This in the end also saves a bit of cost for our budget. The new wording would say that \$5000 would be paid one time, where the old version would be approximately \$8000. Rev. Allison shared potential language.

CURRENT LANGUAGE:

3.23 The Church agrees to cover the cost of Insurance benefits as prescribed below:

3.2.3.1 80% of the premium for Comprehensive Health Insurance for the Minister and the Minister's spouse/partner and family. Should the Minister elect to be covered under a spouse's or partner's Health Insurance plan and provide evidence of such coverage, the Church agrees to compensate the Minister by an amount commensurate with 80% of his/her personal Health Insurance benefit.

SUGGESTED LANGUAGE:

3.23 The Church agrees to cover the cost of Insurance benefits as prescribed below:

3.2.3.1 80% of the premium for the UUA PPO/Standard PPO Plan for the Minister and the Minister's spouse/partner and family. Should the Minister elect not to subscribe to the UUA Plan, the Church agrees to compensate the Minister \$5000 per year, payable with payroll. The Minister must present proof of medical insurance to elect not to subscribe to the UUA Plan. If the Minister joins or leaves the UUA Plan in the middle of a church year, the \$5000 will be prorated.

- **Motion by Cecile to accept the new language provided by Allison, seconded by Amanda, all in favor, motion passes**

8:15 (5)      **BREAK**

8:20 (45)      **Congregational Survey Results** (Lindsey and group)  
(20) minutes in break out groups  
(25) minutes to discuss your 3 takeaways

- We broke into three teams to analyze results, then discuss areas of change, and the comments associated.
- [Results linked/attached]
  - Youth faith formation - Comments that for youth it could be better, this was agreed and talked about how the feeling is this will grow stronger as the current kids and youth get older
  - Spiritual Practice - This was asking about whether people felt they have a spiritual practice, and this was only 1 in 4. Rev. Allison did say this could be a topic at an upcoming service and Erin suggested it might be the subject of an Adult faith formation series..
  - Leadership - Strong support for those entering a leadership role
  - Larger UU community: This may not be what we truly want to ask about.
- Future Survey Considerations: It was discussed that now that we have five years of data we were able to analyze longer term. We should continue to analyze longer term and not just year to year.
- Idea to share the results in various ways - incorporate into the service in various ways, with a focus on the Ends, with a follow up after church, timed near stewardship time. February is the theme of responsibility, **Feb 9th**, that this would fit into. We will lean on our worship associates to help the board work on this service.

9:05 (5)      **Check Out** (Lindsey)

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

9:15              **Closing Words** (Rev Allison)

ADDENDUM 1: Minister's Report Covering June 13- September 17, 2024

## **Addendum 1**

**Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees**  
**Rev. Allison Palm**  
**UU Church of Nashua, NH**  
**September 17, 2024**  
**Covering June 13- September 17, 2024**

Our summer was very focused on the logistics of being out of the building for worship and continuing Building Our Vision conversations, especially moving towards a final contract with Hutter, our construction management company.

Summer services, both at the church and at Temple Beth Abraham, went well, with good attendance throughout the summer. On July 7, we held a special service to say goodbye to our space as we have known it and bless the perimeter of the new spaces we will be building. This was deeply appreciated by all who attended, and made space for the feelings that come up with these types of changes.

I heard mostly good feedback about our time at Temple Beth Abraham, other than some challenges with rules being unclear, and the particular volunteers who were sometimes there to support us. The space was the right size for us, and the tech worked well. We did not have any drop off in attendance compared to other summers, and newcomers were able to find us and join us for worship there.

We did not have a ton of other programs over the summer, but there were

- An educational forum on the war in Gaza
- 3 park meet ups
- A Young Adult Trivia night
- An overnight camping trip with over 50 UU Nashua folks

In addition, our Grief Group ran throughout the summer.

August and early September have been full of preparation for the church year. We held a number of retreats and trainings:

- Staff Retreat
- Worship Associates Training
- Faith Formation trainings
- Safe Congregation Training
- And, of course, our Board of Trustees Retreat

We will conclude the season of trainings with a Pastoral Care Associates Training on Monday.

We have also done a lot of volunteer recruitment in the last month and a half, including filling up nearly a full slate of 6 Smooth Sunday Teams. The pilot of Smooth Sunday Teams went well this summer. We learned some things, and are going to see how it goes to have these teams run throughout a full church year. We are learning as we go, and will continue to refine the way the teams run as we go on.

At our Staff Retreat, we talked a lot about the impacts of being out of our building, and what our role is this year. Chief among those was lowering anxiety in a time when lots of change is happening in our congregation and our world.

We did welcome a new staff member this summer: Ray Rivera joined us as Sexton starting at the end of June. So far, he is a great addition to our team. He is working Mon-Fri, early morning hours. We do still plan to hire a Sunday Sexton, but not until we are back in our building for Sunday mornings.

Finding a space for fall worship was another focus of the summer. I am so grateful to Rivier University for allowing us to use their space through at least the end of December. They are not charging us for use of the space, which has allowed us some flexibility to purchase supplies to set ourselves up well for this time of “church-to-go.” We are still figuring out all the details, and are eager to hear feedback about any part of how things are going. The first two Sundays have gone well, though we are still sorting out how to improve sound quality on Zoom. The logistics are a lot for the staff at the moment, but should ease over time.

We have lots of great things planned for the year, which I hope you read about in the mailing that we sent out at the end of August. Just a few highlights:

- We have a number of things planned for the election, including this past Sunday’s service, a caring circle about the election on Monday night, 2 rounds of canvassing, and an Election Day Kids Camp.
- We are doing Circle Dinners again, along with Kids Night childcare at church in October, January and April
- We will be holding OWL for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Our Auction this fall will again include an in-person event in addition to the online Auction. We are grateful to be able to use space at Pilgrim Church, UCC for this event!
- I’ll be leading a Biblical Literacy class this winter, and Erin will lead Coming of Age for Adults (which has been a popular offering in the past.

After a productive conversation with Dennis about our contract with Hutter, we are awaiting details about next steps. I hope I have something more to share by the time we meet on Thursday.

Our Window of Opportunity Campaign has also been a big focus of the last month. As of Tuesday evening, we are at \$211,155, with 36 donors. I am so grateful to Amanda Banner, Kenna McLeod and Tiffany Holmes for helping make this campaign happen!

### **Professional Development/Collegial Connection**

- Hosted a Launch Party for *Blessing It All*, which officially came out in mid-June
- Attended Ministry Days and UUA General Assembly
- Attended Faith Development Week at Star Island, including a 5 day workshop on Dinner Church, and leading a collegial conversation with my co-editor about *Blessing it All*
- Attended weekly meetings with Nashua clergy
- Attended one collegial meeting with the Greater Boston Area Lead Ministers. I will be taking a break from that group for at least this year. (But got great pulpit inspiration from a colleague there who recently made their chancel accessible!)

- I've been asked to be a coach for the next cohort of the Pastoral Innovation Network of New England. I am letting go of some other commitments so that I can take this on.
- Participated in a colleague's ordination on Sep 14

### **Community/Social Justice Activities**

- Participated in GSOP Clergy Caucus planning call, and Clergy Caucus Meeting
- Helped organize and participate in three GSOP Clergy Caucus Love 2024 conversations, with Cinde Warmington, Joyce Craig and Kelly Ayotte.
- Attended one NH Council of Churches board meeting and summer picnic, as well as helping to orient the new Executive Director. I am working on finding a replacement for myself on the Board.
- Attended 2 Nashua Housing Justice meetings. I will be taking a break from that group this year.
- Led the NAIC Exec meeting and the NAIC monthly meeting. I am serving as president of the NAIC for the next 2 years, so had a transition meeting over the summer as well.
- Attended the Nashua Multicultural Festival to table for the NAIC.
- Attended August GSOP Nashua Chapter Meeting
- Organizing an Interfaith GOTV effort with GSOP, Temple Beth Abraham and Main St United Methodist Church
- Connected with Julie Rosier at the Nashua Public Library about GOTV work

### **Children's Winter Garden with White Wing School**

- The school year started two weeks ago, with enrollment at nearly full capacity – there are just 2 openings.
- One teacher is out on parental leave this fall, and there are 2 subs filling in for her. So far that is working pretty well.
- CWG-WWS was named Best Preschool in Best of the 603 for a third year on a row!
- As a reminder, our current church members on the CWG-WWS Board are: Jay Guarneri (co-chair), Allyson Jutras and Ian Atwell. Jay and Allyson are both finishing terms this year, so we will be looking for new folks.

### **Minister's Schedule**

- I am taking off 2 Sundays in October – October 6 and 20. This is very unusual and to make up for it, I will not be taking a Sunday off in November. In consultation with the staff, we decided we could make this work, which I am very grateful for.
- I will be on vacation September 30-October 6 and will be out of the country during that time.

### **MONITORING REPORTS**

I am not presenting any monitoring reports this month. I am saving my typical September financial reports for next month so that Emma and I can try out the process of meeting together to review them first before bringing them to the Board meeting.

