

**Minutes from the Special Congregational Meeting**  
**November 14, 2010**

**Call to Order:** The special meeting was called to order at 12:40 pm by Sue Kinney.

**Opening Words, Reading and Chalice Lighting:** Provided by Sue Kinney. Reading #434

**Proposed agenda as published in congregational notice 11/4/10 in enews**

1. To rescind the Board of Directors' actions to change our music program as they announced on October 22, 2010 under the heading "An expanded direction for the music program"
2. To encourage our Music Director, Mattie Banzhaf, choir, and organist to continue the wonderful music program as it was prior to the Board's announcement
3. To request that our organist, Mark Child, not resign and resume his organist duties
4. To encourage people who have left or resigned their membership over this issue to return as valued members
5. To form a committee consisting of Board members, congregational members, choir members, other musicians and our Music Director, Mattie Banzhaf, to continue this discussion over the next year

Board action on 11/11/10 in response to congregational conversations required that the agenda and proposed motions for the special meeting be substituted. The substituted motions are numbered 1 through 5 and are in **bold**.

- 1. Move that the meeting participants note with approval that the Board has rescinded in its entirety its action of October 12, 2010 regarding changes in the music program.**

Patrice Fitzgerald made the motion. A second was provided. Patrice spoke to her motion. Bill LaPorte-Bryant spoke in favor of the motion. Vote called. Unanimously all were in favor of the motion. Motion carried.

- 2. Move that the meeting participants note with regret the Music Director's intention to retire in December 2010, and nevertheless wish insofar as possible to continue the music program as it was prior to the Board's announcement.**

Patrice Fitzgerald made the motion. A second was provided. Patrice spoke to her motion. Mattie Banzhaf made a statement supporting the motion.

Edith Savage, Al Herzog, Josh Schreier spoke to the motion. Joann Orlando wished to include in the first part of the motion a formal recognition Mattie's years of service and give her the title Director of Music Emeritus.

Ed Savage made a motion to make an amendment. Ed felt that there were two separate issues within this one motion and the second part of the motion should be stricken as it is a separate issue. His amendment is as follows:

**Amended Motion #2: Move that the meeting participants note with regret the Music Director's intention to retire in December 2010 and that she be appointed as Director of Music Emeritus .**

A second was provided. The majority voted in favor of the amendment. The amendment passed.

The amended motion #2 received a second. The majority voted in favor of amended motion #2. Motion was carried.

There was discussion on the floor as to the wording of the second half of the original motion #2 "nevertheless wish insofar as possible to continue the music program as it was prior to the Board's announcement." Mary Gail Harrison, Josh Schreier, Julie Smith, Richard Groothuis, all spoke to the subject and language used in that ½ of the motion. Bruce Robbins reminded us that Ed Savage's amendment struck the language of the second half making the current discussion moot. This issue can be wrapped into motion #5.

**3. Provide an opportunity to encourage USH organist Mark Child to remain and resume organist duties.**

Diana Heymann made a motion to accept the original motion. A second was provided. Bill Young is in favor of a discussion with Mark Child however this motion is inconsistent with the USH Constitution Articles 9 and 10 which defines conditions of employment. The congregation cannot take action involved with staff issues. Bill Young submitted the following amended motion:

**Amended motion #3: To request that the board and the HR Subcouncil explore with the organist Mark Child his intentions given changed circumstances since he announced his resignation which will take effect at the end of the year.**

The amendment received a second. The majority were in favor of the amendment. The amendment passed.

Patrice Fitzgerald and David Newton spoke to the amended motion. A request was made from the floor to record abstentions.

The amended motion #3 received a second. The majority voted in favor of the amended motion. One vote opposed. Three abstained. Amended motion #3 carried.

**4. Provide an opportunity to encourage people who have left or resigned their membership over this issue to return as valued members.**

Patrice provided the motion. A second was provided. Patrice provided statement. Roy Cook spoke in support of this motion. Nancy Mandly will still resign but intends to meet with the Board to discuss her concerns. Ed Savage spoke in favor of this motion and noted that it is membership who is responsible for encouraging folks to return. Don Reichler spoke to this motion.

A second was made. The majority voted in favor. Three voted against. 20-25 abstained. The motion passed.

**5. Move that the meeting participants note with approval the Board's intention to appoint a committee to work with the minister to choose an interim music director, and to establish a task force to develop plans for the future of music at USH, and strongly suggest that both the committee and the task force include representation from those Society members who are content with the established music program.**

The motion was provided Patrice Fitzgerald. A second was provided. Patrice spoke to the motion. Discussion was provided by Peter Olguin, Mary Gail Harrison, Fran Carnevale, Ann Bailey, Don Reichler, Bill LaPorte-Bryant, and Shai Cassell.

Discussion included concerns that the second part of this amendment "and strongly suggest that both the committee and the task force include representation from those Society members who are content with the established music program" would seem divisive and not inclusive. Some discussants felt that more general language was appropriate and it was understood that the process would be inclusive. Conversely others felt it was important to leave it in as it honors the current music program and the value it provides to the congregation. Some discussants felt that to rebuild trust between the congregation and the Board that phase needed to be left in.

Al Herzog requested to amend the motion to read: *Move that the meeting participants note with approval the Board's intention to appoint a committee to work with the minister to choose an interim music director, and to establish a task force to develop plans for the future of music at USH and use this committee and task force to also reevaluate our Sunday Morning Ministry.* This was determined to be out of

order by the meeting chair and parliamentarian as it was not germane to the motion on the floor.

Peter Olguin submitted the following amended motion #5:

**Amended motion #5: Move that the meeting participants note with approval the Board's intention to appoint a committee to work with the minister to choose an interim music director, and to establish a task force to develop plans for the future of music at USH.**

Shai Cassell submitted the following amendment to proposed amended motion #5:

**Amendment to the amended motion #5: Move that the meeting participants note with approval the Board's intention to appoint a committee to work with the minister to choose an interim music director, and to establish a task force to develop plans for the future of music at USH. *This task force will communicate its process to the congregation and provide a specific timetable for the completion of its task.***

A second was provided on the Cassell amendment to proposed amended motion #5. 46 voted in favor. 49 opposed. 5 abstained. The amendment to the amendment failed.

The amendment received a second. The majority were in favor of the amendment. The amendment passed.

A second was provided for the Olguin amended motion #5. The majority voted in favor. The amended motion #5 carried.

Al Herzog requested to make a motion to use the aforementioned committee to also evaluate our Sunday Morning ministry. This was again ruled out of order as this issue was not part of the published meeting agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.

The floor was available for open discussion. Comments expressed included issues like:

- The spiritual experience and value of singing together in rounds.
- 5 years ago our desire as a congregation included having an uplifting Sunday experience, music and a sermon that made us think. In recent years that has been diluted. We need to re-evaluate our Sunday morning program.
- Choir members aren't just resigning over Mattie, it is also because of issues raised in the above point.
- There is frustration with Non-Violent Communication. We need to express what we feel.

- There is a feeling of polarization with “us” against “them”
- Mattie has been hurt and no longer feels wanted.
- There are feelings that people aren’t heard.
- There are bigger issues of governance and leadership. These issues will not go away.
- On December 13<sup>th</sup> we won’t have a music director. That is going to be an immediate challenge. There is concern that there will be no choir program to participate in.
- This event demonstrates the broken process here at USH. We need a full review of decision making processes, as well as a review of our constitution and bylaws. We need to have another congregational meeting to discuss this issue.
- The Board gets voted in to represent us but frequently we know very little about them.
- The Humanist voice doesn’t get heard or honored.
- Do we have a failed communication system?
- These meetings have unleashed a good deal of creative thinking and communicating. These ideas need to be heard.
- Congregants have talked with leadership and have felt like they weren’t heard and that their concerns were disregarded.
- There are many ways to make your voice heard. Talk to committees, council chairs, RE staff, worship associates.
- New technology provides other opportunity to be heard like Facebook and e-news.
- Some expressed frustration that their concerns have been dismissed by past and present Board representatives.
- Representational government is difficult. Those that are struggling with this should serve on the board.
- We could have Caring Conversations a few times a month to work on the issues being raised.
- We need to continue to show and honor tolerance. Those with strong views may not be happy week after week as their needs are not met. But if we think broadly about ministry and music we can survive and thrive.
- We need to treat employees fairly. We need to do what is right to take care of our staff.
- Some feel that Sunday worship as it is now does not nurture them.