

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Unitarian Society of Hartford
May 22, 2011

Call to Order: The annual meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm by President Sue Kinney.

Welcome and Opening Words: Plan to discuss agenda as listed and follow Robert's Rules of Order – purpose to allow people to come forward, right of minority to be heard, etc.

Explained procedures regarding motions, seconds, discussions to speak to motion, procedural question come to middle aisle, speak to motion by lining up in front of organ speak only up to 3 minutes given size of group.

Use green cards to vote for motion – nobody claimed to not have ballot card. After business meeting is adjourned, can open to open discussion – no motions, no voting. Commits to staying until last person who wants to be heard has had the opportunity to speak.

Rev. BJ lit chalice and spoke opening words

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from annual meeting – approved unanimously

Reports on the State of the Unitarian Society

President's Report: Thanks to fellow board members for support & commitment this past year is only thing to add.

Questions:

- Clarification from eNews – Reference to Interim Music Director or Music director – clarified that it is only interim

Minister's Report: Rev. BJ provided comments and her annual report to attendees. Full text of her comments is available in the Addendum to the Annual Meeting Minutes of the Unitarian Society of Hartford.

Secretary's Report: As of 2/1/11 membership of USH was 217. During the past 12 months accepted 12 members. Names of members who have passed on were read, needed to add Helen Cross to list.

Treasurer's Report: Liz Garmise – Comments are in report – Any questions? – None!!

Endowment Committee Report: Al Herzog – excellent year 12.5 % return on investment 940K. Have given 50K to operations. Recommendation was for 35K for the coming year.

Questions:

Comment a little more on endowment level above/below operating budget.

Al: 2 times operating budget must be kept in the endowment

Request to keep that ratio reported in future reports

Motion on new article to Constitution: Sue read the proposed new article to Constitution proposed by David Newton. The motion was seconded. David not present, so Sue read a statement from him.

Open floor to general discussion of this motion:

- 18.75% of official members would be permitted to recall officers and/or elected leaders
- Call attention to fact that number cited is correct, that would be minimum of who could pass. The other 72 % would still be able to show up to defeat a motion.
- Did same math and was shocked. I think numbers are profoundly undemocratic
- Spoke to what would happen if someone were recalled – would leave a vacancy and board would appoint someone to fill rest of term
- Concerned about people raising children won't be represented in this case, not able to get to USH to vote. Loves intergenerational aspect. Need to have all of us talk together, not small groups making decisions. Concerned that 25% is too small number, not representative.
- Checked Constitution – board would still be viable. Have nothing in principle against the motion, but if motion is used to remove several board members at once, would leave – nothing would allow for succession if entire board is removed.
- 25% is the quorum for annual meeting. Per constitution, 10% of membership is required for quorum. Most Unitarian congregations do have provision for recall of elected members.
- Question – what is election requirement? More research would need to be done to answer that question.

Proposed absentee ballots

- also concerned about # of people
- Having a provision for voting if not present. Is there anything in place right now to do what is being proposed? Sue: nothing
- Agree with pretty much everything that others have said. A safety clause would be good. Concern with this motion is timing and context – in context of divisiveness, this feels like a wedge. After some time of healing, maybe would be good to address something like this.
- Disclosure. Reviewed drafts of Constitution, noticed there was no withdrawal clause. Should have some opportunity of checks and balances. Thinks problem with a typo in proposed article. Wants to propose an amendment to correct this. Vote on amendment.

Proposed amendment:

“A quorum of at least 25% of the eligible voting members must be present.” Seconded, not unanimous, but amended motion passes.

Discussion on amended motion:

- Can we table this and vote another time.
- Request to call the question

Counters come forward, Sue rereads the amended motion.

For: 56

Against: 47

Motion does not pass – requires $\frac{3}{4}$ majority

Proposed Congregational Covenant (Peter Meny):

Spoke about Dick Horton – ombudsmen, embodiment of USH covenant

Steering committee formed CALM. Called upon to provide counsel in face to face meetings and provide mediation.

Framework:

We the members of the Unitarian Society of Hartford encourage all our members and friends to embrace this covenant as an essential part of our faith journey. It is grounded in Unitarian Universalist principles and is a guide for practicing these beliefs in our everyday lives. We understand that our common values regarding relationships with each other will help us be a loving and respectful congregation. These values include:

- We welcome and appreciate individual differences
- We respect and accept the opinions of others even when they are different from our own
- We recognize that constructive criticism and conflict can be an opportunity for growth, learning, and more authentic relationships
- We maintain our dignity and integrity by taking responsibility for our actions

With this common purpose we covenant to: practice patience, taking care not to make premature or unfounded assumptions; listen for understanding, without interrupting or making judgments; speak truthfully, directly, and with compassion; reflect carefully about the potential consequences of our words and actions; keep our discussion to topics and issues rather than personalities; speak directly to those with whom we have disagreements in order to reach a resolution that is mutually satisfying; take responsibility for resolving problems and seek assistance when they cannot be resolved; care for one another by seeking to heal differences, misunderstandings, and hurt feelings.

Sue: As a congregation do we affirm this covenant?

Congregation: We will.

Thanks to all

Presentation of the New Slate of Board Members:

Members of the Nominating Committee include: Carolyn Cartland (chair of the nominating committee), Tina Davies, Greg Nickett, Bruce Robbins, and Cedric Woods

The following slate was nominated:

Peter Meny (President-Elect)

Carol Davidson (Spiritual Life)

Tina Davies (Secretary)

2 candidates for chair of social justice

- Ed Savage

- Mike Winterfield

Everyone complete ballots and turn into counters
Break while ballots are counted
1:10 pm – counters have returned
Ed Savage wins

End business meeting