

Unitarian Society of Hartford
 Board of Directors
 Unitarian Meeting House – June 23, 2009 (scheduled 6-9pm)

Members Participating: Heather Ferguson Hull, Carolyn Cartland, Sue Kinney, Nina Elgo, Amy Hines, Bill LaPorte-Bryan,

Fran Carnevale, Martha Page,

Others Participating: Rev BJ Jamestone, Gail Syring, Brian Mullen

Members Absent: Jim Venneman

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Subject	Discussion	Action Required/Responsible
	<p>Heather welcomed all and BJ had some opening words asking “what characteristics or virtues are important to you that might carry us through in good form?” Responses included authenticity, good will, responsibility, temperance equanimity, honesty, compassion, patience, wisdom, perspective and humor. We each then covenant that we hold our own, and one other while BJ lit the chalice while speaking the two most mentioned – humor and patience – and celebrate the work that we are about.</p>	
Check-in	<p>At Carolyn's invitation board members shared “what is alive in us as we leave, stay or join the board”</p>	
Heather	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read thank you note from Mike Roy for the gifts sent during his illness. 2. Northeast Leadership School – Encourages leaders to attend week long session for UU's on Cape Cod end of July this summer or next. 3. Base camp website – will pass on administrator privilege to Carolyn for streamlining communications, maybe reducing emails, drafting documents, calendar. 4. CALM members – Peter Meny, Laurie Kelliher, Katie Doyle – – creating policies on mediation, disruptive behavior, etc; will present to BOD in Fall. 	<p>Carolyn will send out info on Base Camp website</p>
Carolyn	<p>Regarding the May 28th calendar planning meeting. Margaret Leicach took notes and is still putting it together. (Note: this has been delivered since the board meeting)</p>	<p>Carolyn will follow up with Margaret - completed</p>
BJ Report	<p>Desperation. Concerned that we never really have time for soulful conversations, about the relationships between lay leaders and staff. Discussion: Amy – maybe consult with other congregations on how they are organized. What is the role of volunteerism in</p>	

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	<p>the church? Leadership on the board – what does that mean?</p> <p>Gail – Living beyond our means in terms of size of staff, staff asks too much of volunteers. If less staff, volunteers need to do more. What is this church now, what can we reasonably expect in the future?</p> <p>Bill – Differences in what and how council chairs do their jobs, suspects it goes much further than council chairs</p> <p>Heather – probably part of the work of the new board, starting at Sept retreat</p> <p>Carolyn – need for soulful conversations. what is role of staffers and volunteers? Spend time this summer thinking about it – look at size of church and what people want to do/not to do. Sept 12 is tentative date for retreat.</p> <p>BJ – congregation is a microcosm, numbers say we are overstaffed.</p>	
Sept 12 Retreat	Who will attend? Board, council chairs, everyone in titled position, all staff, past board members, people who were part of strategic planning, governance structure. Would it be better as a small mtg or a big one?	
Gail Report	<p>Harry Potter going very well. 109 registered this last year, doubled from before Gail was hired. 45 people volunteered to teach. Kudos from Bill on OWL program.</p> <p>Question: what is biggest RE problem right now? Answer from Gail “RE is on my back. If I'm not here then it doesn't get done – very staff-centric”</p>	
Brian Report	Summer is going to be looking at building staff, what we can afford. On budget: worst we'll be is balanced, and may have a surplus.	
Service Configuration	After brief discussion of the history and reasons for switching to 2 services, motion was made and seconded (Martha/Carolyn) to go to one service. After additional conversation that included BJ's request that the board shoulder the responsibility for setting the time, the motion was amended to “go to one service indefinitely, at 10:00am” (Nina/Amy) and was unanimously passed.	
Statement of Support for Worship & Music	Heather proposed the document. Motion was made to accept it (Bill/Amy) Plan is to publish the statement in enews. Ed Savage voiced a concern that Worship Arts Sub Council might be too general and that it would be better to name the people. The motion was unanimously	Carolyn will write article - completed

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	passed. Carolyn will write up article for David to include in enews	
Small Capital Projects	Martha asked for a motion to create a total of 10K for small capitol projects for 2009-2010 (Nina/Amy) – motion unanimously passed. Money remains from B&G; remainder will be withdrawn from the endowment to equal 10k.	
Summary of Sunday Financial Conversations	<p>Good discussion, about 25 people. Collected questions and ideas on stewardship, fundraiser, canvas in the fall, monthly collection to replenish the endowment. “A budget is not a contract” - need to be conservative so we’re not engaging in wishful thinking – need to operate with what we have today. Got feedback that people understood this. Carolyn noted that there was a very small group attending, many people won't hang around after the service. Gail pointed out “Don't take silence as consent” - thinks having another budget discussion in early fall would make sense</p> <p>BJ stated what she had intended to say on Sunday – that she will be releasing 14-16K this year (reduction in comp package plus her reduction in her pledge to USH). She harbors no ill will, but that salary reduction means she is embarrassed to have to reduce her pledge. Wants clarification – does board expect staff to continue same hours and product with less compensation? Supports reducing dues to denomination this year, and supporting music budget at original cut. If not, she will guarantee the additional 6K herself so that we don't go back on our handshake deal</p> <p>Martha – at 33K, music represents 8% of our total cost – this is on the high side. At 12%, which is where we are, there is nobody close.</p> <p>Amy discussed finance subcouncil meeting discussions and options and added that Finance sub-council did not assume staff duties would be reduced.</p>	
Budget	<p>Motion to accept the budget that has been given to us by the finance council (Amy/Carolyn)</p> <p>Martha – Good Neighbor offerings are now reflected in budget – 8 offerings in and out in the Social Justice line –</p>	Appropriate parties will sit with Gail and BJ on recommendations

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it's a wash

Added unused funds in Schwab account. Compensation reductions not yet included in detail levels. Other possible considerations cannot be officially put into budget – still speculative

Comments from visitors:

Sheila Ward – concerned member but also chair of RE sub council. Just realized how dire the situation. Huge priority and need to make sure this program (RE) does not suffer. Hopes we can publicize this more. If people understand we are asking staff to take this kind of cut they will understand. She will work childcare every Sunday. Thinks people will volunteer to do things we're paying other people to do and may help with having only one service.

Edith Savage – Sunday was turning point – everyone's salary, people were more important than the music program. No contest. I can't do nothing. Everyone has to hear this discussion. Volunteering more, giving more money. It's that important. Encourage you (the board) to be as creative as you've been, inform everyone, give everyone the gift to be part of the solution.

Lisa Sementilli – RE sub council – She has not paid her dues, already furloughed and facing loss of pay. Asks that board tries to set guiding principles on how to make decisions. What is essential vs non-essential. It's important to do fewer things but do them well. Give staff as much choice as possible. What is temporary? What may be permanent? Fair to ask for reduction in responsibilities but keep in mind what is essential/non-essential.

Josh Schreier – rooming with BJ, but speaking for himself. If we're making such deep cuts in our own budget, salaries and music, we should look at dues for Clara Barton and UUA. Feels a lot of frustration – very important conversation but feels like it's last minute. Seems like we don't want to talk about it – seems like the board is just going along with finance committee.

on compensation and restructuring duties assuming availability of all parties in July, including S. Huntington of HR

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Ed Savage – employment support group with Esther McKone. They were trying to expand, but will bring to close because it can't be done without staff. Volunteers need to shoulder more.

Martha – budget work has been ongoing for months, financial situation has unfolded over that time and has only gotten worse

Bill – on finance committee, budget was approved unanimously. He wants to take 3K out of dues to UUA and district toward music. USH known for excellence in music.

Further discussion about input from staff, how compensation reductions impact staff responsibilities, clarification that the cuts included in the proposed budget are intended to be a one time reduction. General agreement that there need to be negotiations with BJ, Gail, Susan Huntington, and the board. Agreed that staff can determine when/how to take furlough, but will not be taken till second half of year so the board has opportunity to try to avoid the furlough altogether.

A minute of silence was shared to have everyone remember our thoughts of what we are holding (humor and patience)

Amended: (Amy/Nina) that if furlough is needed timing will be at discretion of staff after January 1, 2010 – unanimously passed

Bill moved on an amendment to reduce payments to UUA and district by 3K and add 3K to music budget – no second

Amended: (Martha/Amy) by August 1, appropriate parties will sit with Gail and BJ on recommendations on compensation and restructuring duties assuming availability of all parties in July, including S. Huntington of HR – unanimously passed

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	<p>Final discussion: Edith Savage asked that the board and finance committee consider reducing payment to central (UUA/district) in equal percentage of salary cuts. Hear with your hearts. Heather noted that this will be part of larger congregational conversation in the fall.</p> <p>Vote on approving the budget as per finance council – unanimously passed</p> <p>Everyone thanked visitors who cared enough to sit through the meeting. Need to communicate better to the congregation – could get support and help.</p>	
	<p>Motion to extend the meeting to 9:15 (Heather/Martha) unanimously passed</p>	
<p>Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Carolyn said the update is 95% done – pulling in the final pieces</p>	
<p>Old Board – What worked and what didn't?</p>	<p>Martha – board covenant, being on time. Being characterized as leisurely and lazy did not work. Hope for new board – that things we start on keep making forward progress</p> <p>Amy – board has to wholeheartedly support the minister, and minister has to fully support the board, as a group and individually</p> <p>Gail – what doesn't work – still painful struggle trying to figure out what staff and volunteer roles are. Hope for new board – that we can covenant with each other like the staff does.</p> <p>Nina – Values the staff. Love this church and wants it to thrive and grow. We've changed over the years, she's been burning out. Acknowledge the huge leaps made in last 15 years. Appreciate all of you, appreciate BJ. None of us are perfect, we do what we can.</p> <p>Sue – hope as a new board member – to the best of our abilities we can leave behind past memories and what didn't work, and start this new board as a new board. Don't carry forward pains and what didn't work into the new year.</p> <p>BJ – hope new board to have vision about what's really possible. Something in the culture that works against us all. Pressure to conform. Let's fight the DNA together. I am against what has held this congregation back. I need</p>	

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	<p>to not be here in the business of the board, need to be your pastor. Ed Savage – was on the board years ago. It was larger, and was male. With more people at the meetings, information spread much faster.</p> <p>Bill noted in SGM, people talk about the church with love BJ appreciated the way there was integration with committee on ministry</p>	
Goodbye to Old Board	Carolyn gave thank you/good bye gifts to Heather and Nina, and will send email to new board, set meeting for August	
	Heather had a closing reading	

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. The next meeting of the Board is not yet scheduled for August, 2009

Respectfully Submitted, Fran Carnevale, Board Secretary