

## Board of Directors' Meeting

### UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF HARTFORD

Tuesday, July 6, 2016

**Members present:** John Brancato, Chris Wilt, Phil Gardner, Katharine Ann Buck Anderson, Hank Murray, Margaret Leicach

**Members absent:** Rev. Cathy Rion Starr, Rev. Heather Rion Starr, Gloria Francesca Mengual, Martha Bradley

**Guests present:** David Newton, Janice Newton

**Call to Order:** John Brancato, President called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

#### **Chalice Lighting and Opening words**

The chalice was lit and John Brancato offered opening words for reflection.

#### **Board Covenant and Mission Statement**

John Brancato read the Board Covenant and USH Mission statement.

#### **Comments from guests**

None

#### **Approve minutes of June meeting**

**Discussion:** Margaret thanked Board members for feedback provided via email on the May minutes and provided two copies of the minutes – the original version and the final version with input from members highlighted.

**Decision:** The minutes of the June meeting as revised via email were approved.

**Actions:** None needed.

#### **Board Signatures**

**Discussion:** In an effort to at least minimize the number of times we have to gather signatures on financial documents throughout the year, we will get signatures updated at once at the beginning of the fiscal year. Margaret will get forms from Brian and gather signatures at upcoming meetings. John and Phil will cover for signatures over the next month as each will be on vacation some of that time.

**Decision:** None needed.

**Actions:** None needed.

#### **Laptops at Board Meetings**

**Discussion:** Both the benefits and disadvantages of Board members actively using laptops during Board meetings were briefly discussed. Members were polled about their comforts and discomforts with this matter.

**Decision:** No rule is requested nor needed in this matter. Rather we will collectively be aware of steps to maximize benefits and minimize disadvantages.

**Actions:** None needed

#### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Sanctuary**

**Discussion:** Katharine Ann updated the Board on the status and progress of the Task Force, which the Board charged last fiscal year with coming up with a concrete plan for achieving this vision for our congregation. Katharine Ann summarized the specific projects that Task Force is exploring in the areas of hearing, lighting, projection and sound. The previously tentatively-planned fall fundraiser for this project was discussed. The importance having a clear and detailed budget to present as part of the fundraising was mentioned. Also discussed was the

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importance of sequencing the work both to minimize costs and to avoid having one project undo work done for a previous one. Katharine reported that a follow-up meeting of the Task Force has not yet been scheduled. In the discussion it appeared that the role of Chair of this Task Force was unclear, including who would convene the next meeting.

**Decision:** None

**Actions:**

1. John will meet with Virginia deLima for a progress report and to discuss a plan for the Task Force.
2. Katharine Ann will convey to Bill LaPorte-Bryan, Chair of the AIM Sub-Council, the Board's input on and support for the September congregational fall survey.
3. John and Katharine Ann will talk with Bill LaPorte-Bryan and Virginia about steps to get the Task Force moving forward.
4. Task Force members will be invited to the August Board meeting for further discussion.

#### **Reconstitution of the Finance Committee**

**Discussion:** Phil reported that the work of expanding and finalizing membership on the Finance Committee has progressed and is still a work in progress. Hank Murray, Phil Gardner and David Newton have been engaged thus far. Rev. Cathy is working on finding the right person to serve as fundraising coordinator and who would also serve on the Finance Committee. The position of Chair of Stewardship Committee also needs to be filled, and this person would also serve on the Finance Committee. Phil reported that the goal is to have the Finance Committee positions filled and for it to have identified its goals for the year by August. Once clarified and formed, we will ensure that Virginia de Lima, as Chair of the Nominating Committee, is aware of the need to have these positions filled going forward.

**Decision:** None needed.

**Actions:** None needed.

#### **Budget Line Item for Building and Grounds Annual Allotment from the Endowment**

**Discussion:** For the past several years the Board has authorized \$10,000 to go to the Building and Grounds SubCouncil from the endowment for capital improvements to the Meeting House. This is not, however, automatic and needs to be officially voted on each year. Phil pointed out that, with the \$43,000 draw on the endowment for the operating budget, this total of \$53,000 draw on the endowment represents approximately 5.4% of the endowment and is within the allowable limit.

**Decision:** Hank moved and Katharine Ann seconded a **motion to formally approve the allocation of \$10,000 from the Endowment to the Building and Grounds SubCouncil for capital improvements to the building for the fiscal year 2016-2017**. This amount is separate from the \$10,000 for Building and Grounds that was approved in the budget at the last Board meeting. There were six votes for, no votes against, and no abstentions. **The motion passed.**

**Actions:** Phil will ensure that the Endowment Committee and Brian Mullen take steps to implement this decision.

### Semi-Annual Congregational Meeting

**Discussion:** At previous meetings the benefits of such a semi-annual meeting have been discussed. If it could happen on a Sunday when we have extended childcare and when the youth group has soup, that might increase attendance and participation. January has previously been identified as the best month to do this. Various ideas about the format and content of this event were discussed and it was acknowledged that we have time to work that out but that getting it on the calendar now is the most important first step. The Board discussed briefly the pros and cons of holding it in Fellowship Hall rather than the sanctuary, as we did two years ago.

**Decisions:**

1. The date of January 8<sup>th</sup> was selected to avoid conflicting with Martin Luther King Sunday on the 15<sup>th</sup>, though this doesn't necessarily coincide with extra childcare Sunday and/or Youth Group soup.
2. We will hold it in Fellowship Hall.

**Actions:** John Brancato will explore with John Bengston, Youth Group Advisor, and Rayla Mattson, Religious Education Director, the possibility of moving Soup and extra childcare in January to the 8<sup>th</sup>.

### 2017 Board Retreat

**Discussion:** As discussed at the previous meeting, missing Board members, especially incoming Board members, at this year's retreat was experienced as a loss. In the effort to maximize the chances that all incoming, continuing and outgoing Board members can attend, we want to set the dates for the next Board retreat early so that the Nominating Committee can advise candidates at the outset of these dates. For new Board members, it was clarified that the retreat typically begins with dinner on Friday evening and ends at the end of the day on Saturday and has been held for at least the past two years at Senexet House. The next annual meeting will be held on May 21<sup>st</sup> so the slate will be known well before that and the new Board members will have been officially elected a couple of weeks prior to the retreat and will take office about a month after it.

**Decision:** The 2017 Board Retreat will be scheduled for June 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, beginning with dinner on Friday evening

**Actions:** John Brancato will confirm those dates with Senexet House.

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#### Closing Items, Announcements:

- Phil reported that while particular parts of the costs and savings on the electric bills resulting from the solar system are coming in a bit differently than projected, the differences have no net effect on the budget.  
**Decision:** None needed  
**Actions:** None needed
- The theme for the Board Under the Stairs (BUS) on July 24<sup>th</sup> will be the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Sanctuary. Margaret committed to help host it and other Board members will attend as available.  
**Decision:** None needed  
**Actions:**
  1. John will highlight 21<sup>st</sup> Century Sanctuary Project in his eNews article.
  2. Margaret will post an announcement in eNews of that theme for the BUS in hopes of stimulating greater participation/interest than we have had recently for the BUS.
- An important Ken Burns film will be aired on PBS on September 20<sup>th</sup> beginning at 9:00 PM. A UU minister and his wife will be featured. There was interest expressed in arranging a series of house meetings to jointly view and discuss the film.
- Members briefly re-capped a commitment made and worked hard at last fiscal year to avoid the temptation for the Board to slip into making decisions at Board meetings that are actually the purview of Councils, SubCouncils and staff.
- The next Board meeting will be Wednesday August 3rd at the Meeting House beginning at 6:00 PM with a potluck for those who can make it at that time  
**Decision:** None needed  
**Actions:** John will remind members via email of the time and solicit donations for the potluck.

#### Adjournment

President John Brancato adjourned the meeting shortly before 9:00 PM.