

August 30, 2017 USH Board Meeting

Board Members Present: Katherine Ann Anderson, Sherry Manetta, Chris Wilt, Stephanie Briggs, Valerie Klokow, Phil Gardner, Sarah McKenzie, Hank Murray (late - 7:31); Cathy Rion Starr and Heather Rion Starr, ex-officio

Guests: Ed Savage, Janice and David Newton, Laura and Paul Cipriano

6:32- Katherine Ann called meeting to order, shared 2 readings (1 from Governance and Ministry, 1 by David Breeden - We Unite in our Differences)
Stephanie lit the chalice
All looked at most up-to-date Board Covenant in new Board Manuals

6:37- Thank you notes for Sue Smolski & Martha Bradley (for running summer services), and Peter Meny (stepping down from Stewardship) were circulated for Board members' signatures.

Performing Arts "short item" moved up to front of meeting due to the presence of guests with vested interest.

6:38- Performing Arts

Paul and Laura are heading up Performing Arts, Chris W highlighted concert series they would like to keep going, and they are changing the name to "Meeting House Presents" in place of the "Performing Arts Series". Performing Arts currently has no budget, needs to be able to bring in artists and run concerts, they would like the Board to guarantee a shortfall of up to \$5,000 should it occur. Ticket sales would replenish funds used to pay artists, and they are hoping to make the series self-sustaining. They currently have Dave Massengill lined up for \$300, 65% of door & 100% of merch. Hoping to start slow, and build upon door receipts. Want to be able to offer live music, bring in people unfamiliar with USH, and hopefully someday to generate \$. Paul and Laura would especially like Leadership to promote concert series among the members. Ed Savage works at WWUH at UHart, can promote shows on drive-time radio. Past promotional efforts have been minimal, perhaps look into posters & do postcard mailings with full season line-up printed on them. Paul & Laura are both on the Board of the Sounding Board, and are proposing to the Sounding Board that we co-produce with their series to assist in promotion for the Meeting House Presents series. Ed has reached out to Sam Moffett, who has a jazz quintet; to Ann Stowe about bringing New World Trio in also, hoping to bring in talent from the church to perform. It was pointed out that this is a budget issue, and that we might need to vote on appropriating funds. Also pointed out that artists are booking now, due to the outdoor folk music season coming to an end, and those acts moving to indoor venues. We would need to move somewhat quickly in order to lock performers into upcoming dates. Phil G - pointed out that we could approve a short-term, stopgap amount, and then vote later on more funding. Paul is working on a deal with the Sounding Board to be able to use their owned PA system for no cost to us.

Phil G proposed that the Board authorize an initial NTX (not-to-exceed) shortfall guarantee of \$1,000, and then have Chris W gather info on past ticket sales/costs, attendance #s, revenue targets for the season, etc... in order for the Board to more fully contemplate the full requested NTX \$5,000 and vote on the full amount at the September Meeting. - VK seconded
VOTE: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays Motion Passes (7 voting members present)

Meeting House Presents will come back to the Board with a proposed plan and budget, as well as some assurances that there will be sufficiently greater attendance, and hopefully earn more than in recent years. The Board would like to see a robust proposal, including information as to how the events will be promoted in the community, and who will take the lead on promoting events.

7:00- Board Learning, discussion of chapters 5&6 Governance and Ministry:

The Board continues to read Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss, and at each meeting, discusses concepts presented in the assigned chapters for that meeting, and how they might apply at USH. This is part of our goal of enhancing governance at USH and better understanding the role of the Board. This will be an ongoing Board learning process throughout the year:

Chapter 5 (Sherry)- the job of the board: What is the overarching role of the board? Fiduciary responsibility (short term and long term); Board needs to think independently from the congregation. We don't represent congregation, we take their views and wishes into account when making decisions.

Who owns the congregation? - the mission is the owner of the congregation, how does board serve the mission?

Board is accountable to the members to make sure to follow the mission

- duty of care, understand all aspects of what is going on as USH

- duty of loyalty, what we're doing is for USH and for the mission, and not any of our personal interest

- duty of obedience, understand constitution, by-laws, etc... of the organization, operate within local/state/federal law and the covenant. All respect consensus of the group in voting

How do we execute on our duties?

- govern through partnership with the co-ministers

- govern by conversation, communicate early with the congregation on critical issues

- govern by policy, follow the existing framework

There is an opinion that IF a Board member abstains from voting, perhaps the question of "why" should be put to that abstaining Board member.

Re: communication to the congregation, SHM will write a short blurb on Board Meeting discussion for the e-news (probably around the same time as the minutes go out).

Chapter 6 (Phil) - effective Meetings, keeping to schedule, organizing the agenda, making sure all backup information required for the consent items is included with the agenda prior to the meeting.

HRS posed the question: how we can make Board members more visible to the congregation for more open/clear communication?

VK - are we all in agreement that the mission is the owner? What is the mission? (on p 3 of board book)

SB - how do we even know IF something is serving the mission? -perhaps this question needs to be a more in-depth Board conversation.

VK - seems like we all don't have a firm handle on the by-laws, and they are also a bit outdated, and perhaps too wordy. HM - Do the by-laws serve the mission? Perhaps also a more in-depth Board conversation regarding the by-laws is also warranted.

7:43 - Strategic Planning follow-up

Sherry - we're at the stage where the Strategic Planning Committee needs more input from the sub-councils. Council chairs have been asked to select date options for meeting with Strategic Planning Committee, in order to: a) obtain input from Councils/Sub-Councils on the Strategic Plan (3-year plan) as a whole; b) obtain input on those areas of the Strategic Plan that fall within the primary areas of responsibility for each respective Council; and c) identify specific FY 2018 goals that will help us achieve the longer-term goals.

Using these meetings with Council/Sub-Councils as a way to convene multiple points of view into one meeting in re: the Strategic Plan as a whole. The Strategic Planning Committee can't meet with each sub-council separately, it would be too cumbersome, so the committee tried to come up with a way to consolidate, doesn't matter that each sub-council doesn't have the same internal goals, the whole point is to discuss the overarching plan, and trying to get more concrete for the next FY. Sherry would like responses to date options by September 6. If councils have outliers, they can be folded into other meetings if necessary. The Revs. would like the final dates for meetings to be published in the e-news so as to make sure that anyone who may not be captured by the council/sub-council structure, but who are interested, can be included. It also lets the congregation as a whole know that these meetings are happening, and that the opportunity is there for their input. (List of scheduled meeting dates is attached)

7:52- Rev. Cathy follow-up on Stewardship

Peter Meny has stepped down, Kate Busch Gervais will take on the position of Chair of the Stewardship Committee.

Phil - Stewardship came in well this year, did not have to touch carry-over fund, came in with \$6K surplus.

Rev. Cathy - goal is for the Board to set budget goals for the '18-'19 Fiscal Year, Stewardship Drive starts in February, 2018. Would like to get goals and budget set earlier than we have in the past in order to give Stewardship time and space. Would like the Board as a whole to start thinking about the FY '18-'19 budget goals, rather than just the finance committee.

Mark Ewart previously recommended that we work with a consultant on the stewardship in re: annual budget drive (roughly \$4,000). Board consensus (all voted no) is that we not spend that \$ THIS year. When we look at a capital campaign, we will DEFINITELY use a consultant.

Board brainstormed - WHAT DO YOU SEE IS MOST IMPORTANT IN FULFILLING OUR MISSION (as relates to the budget)

- Community involvement - partnerships with other local organizations (religious and otherwise), increase public face of USH
- Become a social nexus for people with progressive ideals
- Attract people not necessarily interested in worship
- Replace roof
- open up conversation re: what social justice issues are important
- Resolve direction re: building and future use (consultant might be needed)
- Something FUN!
- Fair compensation
- Ministers' Assistant
- Nourishing spirit and recognizing all of the 6 sources (acknowledge judeo-christian heritage as well as humanist)
- Offer worships (or other formats of service, or lecture series) that are appealing enough to attract a wide audience. Increase awareness in community of different types of service.
- Membership staffing
- Rev. Sabbatical
- MORE FINANCIAL RESOURCES/STABILITY (building issues, fair compensation, we are very lightly staffed, etc...)
- Improve fundraising
- Intern Minister, become a teaching congregation
- R.E. stuff, retreats, OWL funding, field trips

8:20- Capital Campaign/Endowment follow-up

Capital Campaign will require a consultant

Sherry has been reviewing endowment policies and meeting with finance.

8:21 - Minister's report provided in writing (attached)

8:22 - President Transition Plan

When Katherine Ann gives birth, she will step down and Sherry will step up, Katherine Ann believes that Sherry will need to be formally elected by the Board, and the Board will vote on the transition of Sherry to President at the September Board Meeting. Sherry and John working with nominating committee to find a new "President-Elect" to be also voted on by the Board at a later date. Sherry will fulfill the remainder of Katherine Ann's term, no final decision as to what will happen at the end of Katherine Ann's original term, which is normally when Sherry would step up as President and a new P-E voted on by the congregation.

8:25 - mid-year Board Retreat? (doesn't have to be an overnight at Senexet House) Katherine Ann asked for response to a doodle as to interest, perhaps a ½ day local retreat.

8:28 - Let Sherry know what your availability for potluck

8:29 - **update on roof RFP:** Hank - RFP has been stalled, Hugh S volunteered to take it on, got swamped at work, unable to get to it. Hank will contact Hugh to see if he can help. Hopefully RFP can go out, so Board can review Proposals. It is getting a little close to snowfall at this point (don't know how long it will take for contractor inspections and proposals to come in, and be reviewed and voted on by the Board).

8:34 - Guest comments - Ed looking for volunteers for Concert committee.

8:35 - Executive Session - the Board came out of Executive Session at 8:45

8:45 - Closing Words - Katherine Ann

For 9/19 Board Meeting: read chapters 7&8; Katherine Ann will summarize Chapter 7, and 8 will be done collectively. - Stephanie will provide opening and closing words for 9/19. Chris W & Sherry will join Katherine Ann on 9/24 for the September Board-Under-the-Stairs
Meeting was adjourned at 8:48 pm

Strategic Planning Discussions—Invitation to **All** USH Members

It's September (oh, my!) and we want to hit the ground running with the USH Strategic Plan. Your help is very much needed and much appreciated.

A series of meetings, organized by Councils, will be held beginning next week to solicit congregational input in further developing the USH Strategic Plan. While there will be additional meetings over the course of the next few months, e.g., Board Under the Stairs on Sundays, we encourage you to attend at least one of these meetings as ***the time is now*** to provide input.

Pick the Council you are most interested in, if you can, but please attend! The Council themes provide a basis for organizing the discussion, but we expected the discussion at each meeting to be broad-based.

The scheduled meetings are:

1. Spiritual Life: Tuesday 9/12 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Youth Group room.
2. Social Justice: Thursday 9/14 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Servetus
3. Community Within: Saturday 9/16 12:30 to 2:00 p.m. TBD

Copies of the USH Strategic Framework are available at the Adult Program table, attached to the July 2017 Board minutes on the website, or can be obtained by emailing Sherry Manetta at s.manetta@comcast.net.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Your Strategic Planning Committee and Council Chairs

Dated: Sunday September 10, 2017

Subject:	[Boardonly] Ministers' Report
From:	Rev. Cathy Rion Starr (revcathy@ushartford.com)
To:	boardonly@ushartford.com;
Date:	Sunday, August 27, 2017 7:49 PM

Ministers Report for this week's board meeting

Theme for this year: **Collaboration and Joy**

- Collaboration and Joy are our themes for our ministry this year. We will weave them into worship and invite you, as well as our many sub-councils, to consider intentionally and creatively collaborating and cultivating joy this year. We invite you into this practice as well!

Staff updates:

- We held our second annual retreat for core office staff (the Revs, Linda Clark, Rayla Mattson, and Sam Moffett) at Hartford Seminary. It was a day of deepening our relationships with one another and planning for the year ahead
- Sam Moffett has begun as our Director of Music Ministries (DMM). We are thrilled to have him on board and integrated into our staff team in a way that's not been possible with our super part time music staff in the past couple years. Please introduce yourself and welcome him! You can find his bio in the E-News, and his first Sunday will be September 10th
- Crystal Acevedo-Cruz, our Sunday Sexton is pregnant. Please congratulate her! Rev. Heather is working with Crystal and Phil Gardner on a plan for her parental leave this fall in accordance with our HR policies

Revs summer update

General Assembly was an amazing experience that I'll preach about on September 10th - come hear about it! We enjoyed some wonderful vacation and family time, and I am relieved that we had a successful DMM hire. Though we were out of the pulpit this summer, we were not as fully "off" on vacation and study leave as we've been in past summers due to the DMM hire, catching up from parental leave, working with board leadership, and other ongoing work. Thanks for your patience as we balance planning, governance, worship, ministry and work to weave more study time into the church year this year.

Appreciations

Many thanks to the many many folks who keep things not just running, but thriving, here at USH. Here is an incomplete list to uplift right now:

- Sue Smolski & Martha Bradley for coordinating summer worship, as well as all of our worship leaders, worship associates, sound and setup volunteers for wonderful summer worship
- Rayla Mattson, Stu Spence, and the many others who've worked to install the playground - already being thoroughly enjoyed by children and adults alike!
- The DMM Search Committee, who worked diligently and hard in July: Sue Tenorio, Kim McClain, Edith Savage, & Caron Lanouette with Rev. Cathy
- Janice Newton and Nancy Reed for leading Adult Programs for several years and are stepping down
- Peter Meny for leading Stewardship for the last few years and is stepping down, and Kate Gervais who has agreed to be the new Chair
- Linda Clark and office volunteers for "holding down the fort" this summer

With much joy and hope for a wonderful year ahead:

- Rev. Cathy, on behalf of both of us

--
Rev. Cathy Rion Starr
Co-Minister
Unitarian Society of Hartford
860-233-9897x103
RevCathy@USHartford.com

"Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." ~ Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman

I share this position with Rev. Heather and we both serve half-time. Please call or email me if you'd like to schedule a time to chat. I am most available for daytime meetings and conversations on Thursdays and sometimes Tuesdays. I am offline from Sunday evening through Monday evening for my Sabbath.

Due to the volume of email I receive, I don't get a chance to read all of it. I sometimes miss important messages. If your email is time-sensitive, and you haven't heard back from me, please feel free to call me at 860-233-9897x103

Boardonly mailing list
Boardonly@ushartford.com
http://ushartford.com/mailman/listinfo/boardonly_ushartford.com

Attachments

- 2.txt (160B)