

USH Board of Directors – October 11, 2022

Present – Eve Pech, Dana Donovan, Jon Covault, Tina Davies, Sarah McKenzie, Peter Meny, and Judy Sullivan (in person); Paul Cipriano (via Zoom).

Guests – Laura Cipriano, Jim Venneman, David Newton, Janice Newton (all via Zoom).

6:46 – check-ins while Jon tried to get Zoom up and running.

6:53 – Meeting called to order, Eve offered a reminder of all the positive updates and progress that have happened recently. This is the first in-person official Board meeting since March 10, 2020.

6:55 – Dana read the Board Covenant

6:57 – Approval of September Board Minutes - Motion made by Tina, Dana seconded

Aye – 8

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

6:58 – Status of Minister Search: Paul provided an updated background document to post to the UUA website for the minister search. Still needs some updating prior to posting.

7:03 – Update on Governance Committee: The Constitution may be amended or revised at any properly called meeting of the society. A quorum of at least 25% of the eligible voting members must be present at any such meeting, and the amendments must be approved by at least a three-fourths majority of those voting. Nothing has happened on the Governance Committee since June; Eve will reach out to Rob about targeting the Annual Meeting in 2023 for the vote.

7:12 – Security Update: Initial workshop was held this past Sunday; a lot of useful information was available to members who attended. There is a second workshop scheduled for October 23 after the service. Equipment arrived last week, Paul C. and David N. got it set up. There are water, heat, and cold sensors. If those are tripped, the monitoring company calls the USH contact persons. If the emergency pull is activated, the monitoring company will call the police, assuming an active shooter. We do need to make sure that someone has a very serious talk with the youth about the emergency pull. USH should also investigate purchasing an AED (automatic external defibrillator) and a basic first aid kit with some of the grant money. As far as we know, the building has no smoke detectors. There is a carbon monoxide detector in the boiler room, but it is unknown if it is currently operating.

7:27 – Auction Update: Ginny Hedrick and Michael Michaud have been making phone calls and talking to people in person regarding auction donations. Auction is scheduled for November 13 after the service, Bob Hewey will be the auctioneer, and John Bengtson has agreed to move Soup Sunday to that day as well.

7:30 – Council Reports: (see attached reports)

Social Justice – GHIAA is having a large assembly on Wednesday Dec 7 to announce the new actions they are undertaking. Judy has been working on UU the Vote with postcards and text banking. 50-50 giving is going well, over \$1,100 was raised for SIRI in September, seems to be increasing the weekly donation amount as well.

Community Within – Things are starting to come back. There is a Meetinghouse Presents concert here next Thursday 10/20. Laurie Kelliher has agreed to become Membership Chair. Administration – Security has been the focus recently, tough to keep up with everything. Paul talked to Michael Michaud, and they split the remainder of the list that Ginny hadn't contacted. Rumor has it that the Hockey Puck may be one of the items in the auction. B&G to do list is located at the end of Paul's report, there are quite a few items that need to be done around the building.

Finance – Knox has been more timely paying their water usage this year, we are drawing down the endowment less than planned due to not currently paying a minister. We have not gotten our money back from the fraudulent check yet.

Spiritual Life – encouraging signs from RE, 8-9 kids a week are attending somewhat regularly. A small choir has started meeting on Thursday evenings, Sam also hopes to pull in choral scholars from Hartt School of Music. Sue Smolski would like to make sure board members volunteer for welcoming on Sundays. Annie and Sue met and discussed Time for All Ages, which has been on hiatus. They would like to continue keeping TFAA on hiatus, Annie really likes having the extra time with the kids.

Motion to accept Council Reports was made by Peter, and seconded by Judy

Aye – 8

Nay – 0

Abstain - 0

7:54 – Guest Comments? Peter expressed his enjoyment of the new lighting. Dana expressed thanks to Carol Simpson and Susan Barlow for last week's service.

7:55 – Board will take a brief break and then go into executive session. Board will put a retreat on the back burner and not trying to wedge one in before the holidays.

USH BOARD MEETING Draft AGENDA -10/11/22 at 6:30pm, USH Library and Zoom

6:30pm Check in - 15 mins.

6:45pm Opening Words, Eve – 2 mins.

6:47pm Board Covenant, Dana - 2 mins.

6:49pm Approval of September Board Minutes, Sarah - 2 mins.

6:51pm Status of minister search, Tina, Paul, Dana- 5 min.

6:56pm Update on Governance Committee -5 min

7:01pm Security at USH update -10 min

7:16pm USH Auction- 5min

7:21pm Acceptance of Council Reports, Comments, Questions - 15 min

7:36pm Guest comments – 10 min

7:46pm Executive Session

## ***Council on Community Within*** **October, 2022**

**Membership:** Good news — Laurie Kelleher indicates she will chair the Membership subcouncil, and will begin by reviving the First Sunday Under the Stairs conversations effective November 6. Several others may be, or are, willing to act in support capacities (administrative, organizational, etc.) which will be helpful. In the meantime, Carolyn Carlson have gone through relevant portions of the website and listed specific changes (corrections/updates); Carolyn is producing a summary for the web gurus to tackle.

### **Programs:**

- **Yoga** — Lu Giammatteo’s Monday sessions have been successful; people are expressing hope for continuation, and this will be explored with Lu.
- **Lunch Bunch** — will meet on its usual third Tuesday to see what options might exist for a suitable restaurant/meeting place.
- **Movie Nights** — “Dinner and a Movie” is now “Pizza and a Movie”; the kick-off gathering is this coming Friday, with 20+ people signed up. The hope is that those, among the group, will agree to undertake discrete pieces of the process — reservations, food ordering, set-up, etc. — so the load may be distributed among regulars.
- **Connection Circles** — Three Connection Circles, plus one spun off from the Artist’s Way group, are filling nicely.
- **Ongoing groups** — Book group continues; the Artist’s Way is starting for the year 10/17; SingAlongs have continued.

**Meeting House Presents:** the year’s inaugural concert, a co-production with the Welsh Society of Western New England, takes place Thursday, October 20. The Welsh-based band, **Calan**, is a lively blend of styles from folk to jam band to Celtic. Not well known on this side of the Atlantic, **Calan** has a big following in Britain. MHP has two additional events lined up in November and December.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christina Davies, Council Chair

## Social Justice Council

October, 2022

The Social Justice Council did not meet in September due to a conflict with GHIAA for the original date, and then my conflict with a stubborn virus, which continued until the end of the month.

Dana Donovan, Diana Heymann and I took part in the GHIAA assembly for the current research teams. Diana is part of the Education Team and Dana and I are on the Mental Health Team. This was the initial team meeting to discuss research strategy and will be followed by a large **GHIAA action inviting all GHIAA congregations on Wednesday, Dec.7, 7 to 9pm at Central Connecticut State University.**

UU The Vote:

Postcard campaign: this week is the target date for mailing postcards to registered by infrequent voters. We have several hundred mailed and more on the way.

The Unitarian Society of New Haven has invited USH to the Connecticut UU the Vote Gathering October 12 7PM via zoom. It is both an opportunity to exchange ideas and a text training session taught by the Center for Common Ground, working with UU The Vote.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Judy Sullivan  
Chair

## Administration Council Report October 2022

There is a lot going on this month in the Administrative Council. The USH Auction is fast approaching and thanks to the efforts of Ginny Hedrick, Jon and Mike Covault, Michael Michaud the auction promises to be a success again this year. Bob Hewey will be again our auctioneer this year. Rumor has it the hockey puck will be one of the items up for sale and is sure to cause a bidding war of epic proportions.

Other events of note some of the security equipment from Church Mutual has arrived. We received the water and heat sensors and the base receiver along with the Police pull alarm. The next steps are to register the alarm system with the Hartford Police and install the equipment at the Meeting House. We are still waiting on the smoke alarm monitor which we hope will be shipped soon. But the other equipment can be installed regardless.

The first session of the Emergency Planning Workshop will be held this Sunday 10/9. The Workshop will be held in the sanctuary, streamed live, and will also be recorded so it can be viewed by those who were unable to attend but are interested. The second session will be Sunday October 23. We extend thanks to Larry Lunden for suggesting Cressy Goodwin from UUSE to help us develop our plan. Thank you to the Board for the support of this important initiative.

The two sessions will be different, the second will build upon the first. The first session is discussing what the planning process is and what the priorities of participants are, what constitutes an emergency and the level of response required. The second session will come up with a plan of action which will enable USH to respond to said emergencies in a cohesive fashion.

I have been working on the document for the UUA Minister Search Application and shared a rough draft with Eve and she made some suggestions which I have incorporated and attached to this report for your review and suggestions.

The Office Administrator search is in progress. So far, all the applicants have been on the Indeed website not the UUA. We have some promising candidates we hope to interview next week.

I strongly urge that we act on the Governance Board Task Force recommendation to add two Board positions for Stewardship and Membership. I have been giving

the Auction minimal attention with all the other items I have been working on. It is only on track through the efforts of Jon and Mike Covault, Michael Michaud and Ginny Hedrick. Thanks again to all of them!

Building and Grounds Co-Chair David Newton reported that hockey puck was removed from the sanctuary completing the final piece of the lighting project. The USH request for a grant to move forward with being added to the register of National Historic Places was approved for the full amount requested and no matching funds requirement.

Building and Grounds also has a list of projects that need doing around the Meeting House and they are listed below that they are seeking help with from members of the congregation:

October 2022 Building and Grounds to do list:

1. The part of the memorial garden to the west of the exiting buttress needs to be planted with minimal care blooming plants. We need to preserve the fall ageratum, and perhaps other items that are already there. We need to kill any remaining English Ivey.
2. We need to order some more stone to fill in the lower areas where we corrected the drainage problems in the library bay and the next bay over, more or less, Classroom A. In each case the new stone needs to be carefully deposited and any plastic sheeting showing needs to be covered. It will deteriorate in the light, but last for years when protected from the light.
3. Two sickly Kusa dogwood trees nearest Bloomfield Ave. should be removed as they are eyesores at this point. The original damage to all the trees in the lawn area was done with string trimmers. We have reasoned with the lawn crew about this and they have been good in the last few years. We could probably plant some new ones in the vicinity of the old ones but far enough away to avoid root hassles.
4. We need three diggers to excavate the pipes under the chapel overhang and correct the drainage situation as we have successfully done with the library bay and classroom

A bay.

5. A larger job of the same nature remains for the Socienus Bay. We believe the leaking into the electrical room adjacent to the kitchen may be thereby corrected.

6. The lilac in the grassy areas between the upper and lower parking area needs to be straightened out and made to stay that way. Or in the alternative cut down while encouraging straight regrowth.

7. We need to secure several bids on the west entrance pavement extending up both the north and south drive. We want to build in a slight diversion at the bottom of both driveways directing the water onto the grassy areas on the south drive and toward the catch basin at the bottom of the north drive. In both cases the desire to significantly reduce the amount of water descending on the one catch basin in front of the west entrance. Also, any contractor must be made to understand the finished pavement may be no higher than the current pavement as we have only, literally, about an inch of fall to the catch basin from the front door. The fall must be preserved or increased to the catch basin. Also, we will need to do the north drive, then after the appropriate interval, the south one and the front of the Meeting House thus providing continuing access to parking, etc.

8. The north drive sidewalk is overrun with plant growth. We need to trim the path clean for pedestrian passage.

Paul Cipriano

Administrative Council Chair



## Spiritual Life Council Report October 2022

### Worship Associates

The Worship Associates continue to create and lead worship services. Services have been planned for the rest of the calendar year and into 2023 since it is unknown when a new minister will start. The theme for this quarter is 'Love in Action.'

Sue Smolski had a recent conversation with Annie Witzler about a Time for All Ages (TFAA). Due to the sparse attendance by children and youth last year, it was decided to put TFAA on hold this church year. So far, no members have asked Sue about TFAA. Annie also likes the extra time it gives her with the children when it is not a part of the service. As a result, we will continue to move ahead without TFAA in the service.

In the meantime, Annie and the Youth group teachers will be given info about upcoming services so that if there is a topic that is of interest to the Youth, they can choose to attend. In addition, Sue has asked Annie to let all parents of USH children know that children are always welcome to stay with their family for the service, in its entirety or for a part of the service.

Sue has been listing the theme for the next four upcoming services in the ENews as well as in each Sunday's Order of Service.

Sue has been recruiting volunteers for Sunday service Greeters, Ushers, and Welcome Table. She will continue to do this for the foreseeable future and asks that people sign up on the SignUpGenius website we use for this purpose.

### SpiritLife

*The first UU SpiritLife* Conversation of the year was held last Saturday. A group of thirteen online participants discussed an article about the spiritual quest of Thomas Merton. Two more sessions are planned for November and December.

### R.E.

Annie reports we are averaging about eight to nine children, and youth per week. The Youth Group is thriving and the elementary age group is developing. A handful of little ones in the nursery have also been present. Annie is grateful for the volunteers whose help has been key in the resurgence of the children's RE program

**Music Ministry** – Sam reports that the rebuilding of the choir has begun. Weekly rehearsals are being held on Thursdays.

## **Treasurer's Report – October 11, 2022**

### **Financial Status/Cashflow**

The USH financial status and cashflow remains positive. Pledge payment response remains good. Quarterly giving statements are being mailed this week. We have received a few additional pledges over the past 3 months.

### **Budget revisions/variance –**

The budgeted funds for a part-time interim minister of \$47,000 may or may not be used this budget year. I have suspended the monthly draw from the endowment (annualized at \$47,665) pending budget needs in view of the current bear market and the uncertain need for use of these endowment funds this budget year.

The board recently voted to seek applications for a 30 hour/wk Office Administrator with benefits including 80% cost of a UUA health insurance plan. The estimated total expense of \$53,285 for this position is \$12,000 more than currently budgeted for office staff. The board agreed that the shortfall should be covered by forgoing hiring a part-time choir director this budget year.

Rental income has been greater than anticipated but one of our long-term rental agreements with The Church of Devine Light, will not be continuing.

Knox Inc. has been timely in paying for their share of water usage - \$9,395 for May-August.

Our ongoing expenses for the terminal portion of Rev. Terry's contract for salary/housing ended September 4<sup>th</sup>. We have now also satisfied payment for unused vacation time per her resignation agreement.

### **Checking account closed and new M&T Bank checking opened.**

Much effort has been expended past month transitioning to a new checking account for USH required following a fraudulent check was paid from our former account at People's. Several vendors required check replacements as previously mailed checks on our closed account were returned to vendors unpaid. We are waiting for the Bank of America and M&T (bought People's Bank) fraud departments to respond to our filing of paperwork documenting a fraudulent check presented to BoA in order to restore the funds to our account. People's Bank staff originally indicated the process would take at least three weeks, but the merger of People's into M&T seems to be slowing the process. Recently the I met in person with the new West Hartford M&T branch manager October 4 to request status of the process, we are waiting for an update from her.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jon Covault, USH Treasurer