

USH Board Meeting – December 13, 2022

Present – Eve Pech, Sarah McKenzie, Judy Sullivan, Paul Cipriano, Peter Meny, Tina Davies, Jon Covault, Dana Donovan

Absent – None

Guests – Janice and David Newton, Ste and Bev Spence, Stanley and Nancy Kemmerer, Laura Cipriano

6:35 – Check-ins

6:45 – Opening words from Eve

6:47 – Dana read the Board Covenant.

6:48 – Approval of Board Minutes from the November Meeting. Eve made the motion to approve the minutes, Dana Seconded.

Aye – 8

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

6:49 – Discussion of Ministerial search. Rev. Stephen Kendrick has offered to be an “Uncle” to USH in our search. Dana has made some additional edits to the UUA posting and will circulate the new version for review. Clarifications were made regarding contract vs. interim ministry, and shared ministry. We are looking for a full-time contract minister, with the thought that it would be a shared ministry which would be in close collaboration with the worship associates.

7:18 – Worship Associates – Eve, Peter, and Dana met with a group of the Worship Associates; they need more communication from the Board. Paul’s suggestions were – restart Board Under the Stairs and update the website with an easy way to contact the Board directly. Maybe also have Eve write a Holiday or End of Year letter to update the congregation. At the recent Caring Network meeting, a wish was voiced to get the Board Minutes sooner than we currently get them out. Maybe resurrect the eNews recap to get the salient points out sooner. Eve made a motion to reinstate Board Under the Stairs, we will make an effort to approve the minutes within a week of the Board Meeting to post them sooner, and then linked in the eNews, and try to provide a preliminary agenda a week prior to each meeting, and set up a board email contact address. Dana seconded the motion.

Aye – 8

Nay – 0

Abstain - 0

7:48 – Paul would like to propose a formal thank you token from the Board to Cressy Goodwin for his help with the safety and security meetings and consulting. Maybe a gift certificate or donation to UUS:E in his name or a certificate from the congregation.

7:51 – Weather policy – who will make the call and what criteria will be used to make a decision? Exec Committee of the Board will make the decision by 9pm the evening prior to the service.

8:00 – Dana brought forward the Interfaith Power and Light Grant as a possible opportunity for USH. David N will get a group together to explore if USH can benefit. Money in a larger bill for churches to use for energy efficiency.

8:04 – Acceptance of Council Reports (see attached) Peter spoke to Annie re: RE; we're averaging 7-9 kids and youth/week. Annie has also requested some funds for professional development through the UUA, either through her RE budget, or outside funds. Courses start after the first of the year. There is \$500 in the budget for professional development for RE staff, so no vote is needed by the Board. USH Social Justice is working with Fern Street on their food ministry and will soon open that up to the congregation. Paul got an email from Carolyn Carlson regarding Stewardship; she would like to know if the Board wants to set a financial goal, and if we have a vision for next year that she could put in as a part of stewardship. Jon indicated that we might want to shoot for about \$320,000 as a goal in order to be able to comfortably fund a full-time minister. Any other Stewardship suggestions, contact Carolyn. Additionally, Carolyn is looking for a theme for the drive. Peter made a motion to accept the council reports, Dana seconded the motion.

Aye – 8

Nay – 0

Abstain – 0

Guest Comments – Laura Cipriano feels strongly that we need to get our own house in order before we look beyond the congregation. What is the term of a contract for contract ministry, how is it renewed, etc...? Contracts are for a set term, and are usually renewable at the discretion and agreement of the parties. There is no set "term limit" for a contract ministry.

8:30 – Board went into executive session.

9:17 – The meeting was adjourned.

USH BOARD MEETING AGENDA -12/13/22 at 6:30pm –Zoom meeting

6:30pm Check in - 15 mins.

6:45pm Opening Words, Eve – 2 mins

...Thank you and appreciation to auction committee and Carolyn Carlson for Stewardship- music Sunday

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

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

6:51pm Status of minister search, Tina, Paul, Dana- 20 minutes.

... conversation with Rev. Kendrick

...final edits on UUA posting

7:00 pm WA requests - 10 minutes

...Paul's suggestions

...Meeting with representatives of WA

...Board minutes

7:10 pm - Audit committee yet per Security Task Force motion? -5 min

7:15pm- Snow closure policy- Tina- 5 min

7:20pm- Interfaith Power and Light grant: Dana- 5min

7:25pm Acceptance of Council Reports, Comments, Questions - 15 min

7:40 pm Guest comments – 10 min

7:50pm Executive Session

Council on Community Within

December 2022

Membership: In her short tenure as chair of this subcouncil, Laurie Kelleher has accomplished quite a bit. December 4 saw the first (in several years) Under-the-Stairs gathering aimed at welcoming newcomers and “UU-curious” folks, for general social interaction and answering questions.

The following week, December 11, Laurie convened Welcome Team regulars and semi-regulars. The group shared ideas and observations from their experiences as greeters, ushers, and welcome table volunteers. New volunteers are being sought, to bolster participation and also to highlight greeting as an easy (i.e. low-commitment, no great expertise needed) way for newer members or friends to become involved.

Caring Network: Owing to various conflicting meetings and activities, the Network missed several months of meetings, but their services continued to be in demand and, thus, offered. Rides, cards, phone calls continued. Following Richard Groothuis’ death, the group was asked to help locate a minister and musician for the memorial service (Rev. Stephen Kendrick and Pi-Hsun Shih, both of whom knew Richard and Jean, were able to respond on short notice, on the day before Thanksgiving).

The Caring Network has, for several weeks now, stationed itself at a Coffee Hour table each week, and people are stopping by to ask questions or simply say hello. Their presence has drawn favorable notice.

Programs: We are gradually regaining ground. Four Connection Circles met this fall (including the Creative Connection Circle, an offshoot of the Artist’s Way group). Monday morning yoga sessions have developed a following. The Lunch Bunch, despite being deprived of its restaurant meeting place, has lunched monthly in Fellowship Hall with a bring-your-own-lunch arrangement. And monthly Pizza-and-Movie nights have been a success: pre-Covid movie devotees, plus recent additions (including some new to USH) — **and** a few people are bringing friends or relatives.

~ Christina Davies, Chair

Social Justice Report December, 2022

The committee met on November 15 via Zoom. We have been concentrating on working with community organizations participating in the **Good Neighbor Offering (GNO)** program. The new policy of "Share the Plate", which divides the Sunday donations equally between USH and the organization (unless otherwise designated), began in September.

The donations to the organizations show an increase from last year:

- September – CIRI (CT Institute for Refugees and Immigrants) = \$1020.00
- October – Hawkwing = \$1086.00
- November – CT Foodshare = \$1046.55

The USH share has been less than the organizations share, but still higher than last year.

Louise Harmon, Dana Donovan, Sherry Manetta and I participated in the **Fern Street Food Ministry's** Saturday Food Pantry program on November 19. They work with CT Foodshare and other area resources and manage 5 different programs:

- Foodshare Truck – every other Monday
- Community Kitchen – with Foodshare Truck – hot breakfast
- Have a Heart Sandwiches – once/week deliver sandwiches to House of Bread
- Backpack Program – weekly backpacks filled with nutritious food to WH Public School students for weekend food support
- Food Pantry – 3rd Saturday of every month

Louise and I are meeting with Katherine Wilson on December 23 to learn more about the backpack program.

Beth Brigham, representing the Food Ministry programs, will attend the next Social Justice committee meeting to discuss opportunities for USH to participate with West Hartford Universalist Church. The meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 20 at 7pm via Zoom. The congregation is invited to attend.

Fifteen USH members attended the **Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA)** Power Summit on December 7 at Weaver High School (several more attended virtually). This was the launch of the new campaigns with public commitments from legislators and other public officials to work with GHIAA for specific goals for the coming year. The 2023 Issue Slate includes:

- Mental Health
- Environmental Racism
- Educational Equity
- Housing and Homelessness
- Gun Violence

GHIAA is comprised of 48 diverse faith communities throughout Greater Hartford organizing together for justice. USH is proud to be among its' founding members.

Several members of the committee have undertaken the task of updating the SJ section of the **USH website**. We have been in touch with Laura Cipriano, who will make the changes in the actual website.

Respectfully Submitted,
Judy Sullivan
Chair, Social Justice Sub-Council

Treasurer's Report – December 13, 2022

Financial Status/Cashflow

The USH financial status and cashflow remains healthy. Pledge payment response remains excellent with 60% of pledge dollars collected by end of November (42% of year).

Can we afford posting for fulltime contract minister?

For remainder of current year -definite Yes. FY 22-23 budget includes \$47,000 for half-time contract minister's salary/housing allowance. This would support a fulltime salary and housing for 6-months (additional \$15,000 / 6-month for insurance, FICA, pension and professional development can be provided using funds originally budgeted for part-time choir director). This salary + housing (\$94,000 per year) is consistent with UUA guidelines for churches of our size.

For 23-24 budget year a full-time minister (assuming current staffing levels continue without COLA, including RE coordinator and not RE director) would require an increase in operating budget of \$45,000 which could be satisfied by an additional 2% endowment draw (total 6%) together with 8% increase in pledges. An additional \$28,000 will be needed to replace PPP funds included in the current 22-23 budget which represents an additional 10% in pledges (a 4% COLA would require approximately \$10,000 or 3.5% increase in pledges). We have a reserve of \$38,000 available from prior years' accumulated surplus that could be drawn on to offset some of these expenses. **So, the answer for 23-24 is a qualified yes,** with moderate increase in pledges and small increase in endowment draw. (20-21 pledges \$224k receipts \$276k; 21-22 pledges \$275, receipts \$289k; 22-23 pledges \$293k receipts to end Nov \$177k). For 24-25 budget we would need approximately 18% increase in pledge dollars compared with 22-23 budget.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jon Covault, USH Treasurer