

BOD Meeting 4/27/26

## Unitarian Society of Hartford Board Meeting

April 27, 2026

Quorum NO \_\_\_\_ YES \_\_X\_\_

| Board Attendees                                                                                                                                                           | Guests                                    | Regrets |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------|
| Nina Elgo<br>Virginia de Lima<br>Laura Cipriano<br>Paul Cipriano<br>Jon Covault<br>Laurie Kelliher<br>Rocco Orlando<br>Judy Sullivan<br>Michael Michaud<br>Rev. Bob Janis | MJ Thoms<br>Janice Newton<br>David Newton |         |

### Orders of Business

6:30 p.m. Nina called the meeting to order

**Chalice lighting and opening words** with Nina Elgo.

**Approval March 26, 2026 BOD Minutes** Rocco Orlando set motion to approve minutes. Virginia seconded. All in favor. Minutes accepted.

**Item:** As noted in the previous meetings Gloria Mengual has resigned as the Secretary of the BOD due to health.

Laurie Kelliher will take notes for this evening pending the next BOD elections

May 2026

**Item:** Rev Bob opened Matters of the Heart with the sad news of Don Hope's death and heartfelt condolences to Susan and his family. Rev Bob will officiate Don's memorial service to be held May 16, at USH.

Best wishes and messages of speedy recovery are sent to Joe Rubin and Michael Michaud who have had recent successful surgeries.

**Item:** Minister's report: Servetus is being re-configured to become a permanent Zoom Room. Meetings and discussion groups are increasingly using both in-person attendance and Zoom participants. Several technologies are smoothing the transition with both visual and auditory advances. One such is the OWL system which rotates 360° toward speaking participant for both auditory and visual at a cost of ~\$1000. Rev Bob and Paul Cipriano will take the lead on exploring this and other options.

**Item:** Rocco Orlando (Finance) reports that the Stewardship planning is moving forward with received pledges ~250,000. The Stewardship Committee will be meeting to develop plans to reach

**Item:** Religious Exploration (RE) ideas and suggestions were a common topic at the cottage meetings. Many members expressed concerns that the RE program is invisible. Families arrive and head downstairs to the classrooms leaving the sanctuary with no sense of the youth. Rev Bob proposes a short opening directed at children on the chancel steps for the Sunday service.

**Item:** Jon Covault (Treasurer) highlighted several aspects of his Treasurer report

found on REALM. The budget is in good balance at 1% below target expectation. The FY 2027 will be dependent upon the final outcome of the stewardship drive. The Schwab account holds a \$70,000 cushion and covers prepayment of funds such as youth soup, music program. The endowment is in good shape and should be available for upcoming improvement plans for the clerestory and parking (see B&G).

**Item:** Laurie Kelliher (Membership)

Volunteer of the Year:

Laura Cipriano suggested that "new member volunteer of the year" be an additional category and the BOD quickly agreed that Deana David be so named.

Ballots for Volunteer of the Year were distributed and tallied.

2026 Volunteers of the year will be Helen David, Fred Louis and Evan Williams and will be announced and celebrated at the Annual Meeting 5/31/26.

**Item:** Nominations for the 2026/2027 new members of the USH BOD will be Ellen Erway Treasurer and MJ Thoms Secretary.

Social Justice Chair and President Elect remain open.

Judy Sullivan has encouraged SJ participants to consider taking the lead but thus far no volunteer has stepped forward. Many SJ members want to continue in their current “silo” but not take on oversight of the entire committee.

Suggestion was made to reconfigure the role such that the lead would call the meeting, create an agenda and be in an oversight position but not propelling any actions which would then be up to the individuals involved. Two areas for attention would be continued relationship with GHIAA and naming the monthly GNO recipient.

Of concern, but less pressing is the USH BOD President-Elect who would work in tandem with the BOD President. Outreach continues for that role.

The role of an “At Large” BOD position is also considered with the possibility that the role of Social Justice oversight could be included. The “At Large” position would sit on the BOD but not have a specific area of oversight.

Michael Michaud proposed that the At-Large position be created and Paul Cipriano seconded. The motion passed with one vote in opposition. Virginia will write a draft proposal for the Snnul Meeting.

Nina Elgo will finish her term as President July 1, 2026 and would like to then work on reviewing governance issues for USH. The last Constitution revision was May 21, 2023.

**Item:** Clerestory repairs presented by David Newton B&G. For details of repairs see B&G “Update on Clerestory Window Situation” which explains the complicated engineering story for repairs of our uniquely structured Meeting House. Consultants have worked with John Bengtson and Kevin Girouard and feel that these long-time custodians of the MH are best suited to address the need repairs. Proposal to cost-out repairs and moving forward with Bengtson and Girouard made by Jon Covault and seconded by Rocco Orlando. Measure Passed.

**Item:** Parking lot repairs. Again, refer to the B&G Minutes 4/12/26 on REALM.

“Repairing the upper parking lot”. B&G requests that an anticipated expense of \$140,000 be accepted without having BOD approval for every step of the way. Repairs may expand to include the lower parking lot, the crumbling drive to the kitchen, consideration of more handicapped parking and repair of the “mud hole” entering the Knox Gardens. Consensus of the BOD was to include the lower parking lot because holding off repairs in addition to the risk of liability will only add to the final total. Lower parking lot repairs are expected at an additional \$83,500.

**Item:** USH has a group looking at rental fees which have not been formally reviewed since 2016. Some rentals do not have written agreements. The rental committee suggests renters receive a bridge year for changes but that they be made aware that more formal agreements are being discussed. Special arrangements may be made for non-profits.

**Item:** The Paul Bissaci Concert was a roaring success. The USH Music Fund increased its account by ~\$9000. Note was made of the significant discrepancy in music funding between USH (~\$50,000) and Fern Street UU (\$137,421).

**Item:** The Annual Retreat will return to St John's Church possibly between 7/26 and 8/2. A facilitator will be considered for this year's retreat.

**Item:** Events to come...

TBA: Yard Goats game with other UU churches

June 27 West Hartford Pride USH will share a booth in the WH Town Hall parking lot.

**Item:** The defibrillator training will be held May 11, at 1 PM. Many thanks to Rocco Orland who has donated a defibrillator to USH.

Meeting closed with final thanks and closing words from Nina Elgo.

**Submitted:** Laurie Kelliher (Acting) Secretary