

BOD Notes 2/23/26

BOD Meeting February 26

Unitarian Society of Hartford Board Meeting

February 26, 2026

Quorum NO____YES__X_

Board Attendees	Guests	Regrets
Nina Elgo		
Virginia de Lima		
Laura Cipriano		
Paul Cipriano		
Jon Covault		
Laurie Kelliher		
Rocco Orlando		
Judy Sullivan		
Michael Michaud		
Rev. Bob Janis		

Orders of Business

6:30 p.m. Nina called the meeting (held on Zoom) to order

Chalice lighting and opening words with Nina Elgo.

Approval January 26,2026 BOD Minutes All in favor. Minutes accepted.

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

Laurie Kelliher will take notes for this evening but a process will be decided in near future to cover Gloria's position.

Item: Rev Bob shared that long-time member Betty Cornish has entered hospice care. Betty has been a resident of Seabury and has had many USH friends there as well. On a very different note Board members congratulated Rev Bob on the announcement of his engagement.

Rev Bob expressed our shared concern of ICE activity in our Hartford area and commented on the CT faith leaders' prayer gathering and the First Amendment which confirms the rights of speech, religion and assembly among others where individuals are protected from government interference.

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

The 2027 endowment contribution is expected to increase by ~\$15,000 (FY25/26 60,830 should rise to \$76,019 for FY 26/27).

The pledge goal for FY26/27 \$375,000 would cover 72% of anticipated expenses. Other sources of income include \$32,000 in rentals (\$25,000 received thus far), and \$3000 from Paycheck Protection.

Jon reviewed outgoing monies associated with the RE program (\$1500-2000/yr for youth retreats, Health Care Savings Acct for employees along with 3% cost of living raise for employees and an additional \$3000 to the music program for the Schola performers.

Of note, the increase of 2.7% to the upcoming budget is in line with the national increase in the cost of living.

Please refer to the detailed "Treasurer report Feb 23,2026" which Jon submitted to REALM for the comprehensive picture of USH finances

Item: Rocco Orlando (Finance) reports that the Stewardship planning is moving forward with robust contributions from the committee. Deanna David is creating this year's logo with an emphasis on displaying the value of contributions. She will also create a graphic representation of pledges received.

Rocco will give the March Board message with an emphasis on the giving campaign which is expected to kick-off March 15th. Cottage meetings will start after that day. Kudos to Jim Venneman for his detailed map of congregant residences which will be an excellent resource for those gatherings.

Virginia commented that one aspect of the campaign will emphasize the rise in USH's cost of living

Further details are found in the written Finance report in REALM.

Item: Paul's report on the Administrative Council opened with discussion of "sight and sound" issues in the sanctuary. Particular emphasis is noted on the choir's crowded situation. At issue is how to create change within a historically recognized building where Victor Lundy's vision is honored and maintained. The sight lines from the pews are interrupted by the TVs, the organ's position is not optimal while people on the chancel are "blinded" by some of the lighting.

Other outstanding issues include repaving the parking lot, heating and cooling the Meeting House and the electricians' estimates that changing the lighting could cost upwards of \$50,000.

Paul's full report is filed in REALM and includes security issues and rental policies.

Item: Shahan Islam, RE Director, reports that teacher volunteers are improving the program. Two families of 4 children have relocated which has diminished the number of children in the RE program. Soup Sunday has the highest attendance and the kids are very motivated on that monthly event. Unfortunately several youth events were cancelled due to snow.

Several curriculums have been used (Spirit Life, Soul Matters) but teachers and kids have not found them compelling. Rev Bob notes that a successful curriculum would address social justice, community and spirituality.

Item: Laurie Kelliher (Membership) trusts that there's a charm and the Volunteer Fair will not be snowed out as has occurred on the last two dates. Leaders representing the Sunday Service Team (previously the Welcome team) seek volunteers for Greeter, Welcome table

and Ushers, candle lifters and the book table. All of these roles occur on Sunday morning. Karolina will help congregants access the USH communication program (REALM) which will replace Sign Up Genius as the avenue to claim a volunteer date.

Refer to REALM for the details of the Membership meetings,

Item: Judy Sullivan updated the Social Justice report on REALM. Work continues with the Hartford Deportation Team which is identifying “neighborhood nodes” for sending ICE alerts. The north end of Hartford a particular focus. Another training will be held 3/15/26.

Peter Meny has 11 new tutors signed up and more are interested to participate in this long-standing program at Noah Webster School. Judy’s Social Justice report in REALM details the many activities aimed at food insecurity