

UU Nashua Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes
May 14, 2013

Present: Ellen Fisher, Lance Pratt, Mary Licking, Jenn Morton, Pat Ladew, Kathleen Griffis, Kate O' Shea, David Hudson, Mike Wilt, Harry Purkhiser, Reverend Olivia Holmes Excused absence: Donna LaRue

Note: There are two vacant positions on the BoT. Ellen noted during the February meeting, and the BoT voiced no objection, that since Rev. Olivia and others had suggested that a 13-member Board might be too large and a bylaw change ought to be considered, and since the year was more than half over, the Nominating Committee could be notified that the Board has chosen not to appoint new members in mid-year.

Timekeeper for each agenda item of the meeting was Kathleen. Mike performed the chalice lighting. A Check In was performed during which a BoT member could share a word or two with the group. Some members did.

A motion passed made by David and seconded by Harry to approve the consent agenda. Pat abstained citing a conflict of interest. The consent agenda consisted of the April 9th, 2013 minutes and the appointment of Steve Ladew to the Investment Review Committee.

Mike gave the Treasurers Report. Highlights are as follows: The auction was down significantly, [likely] due to the move from spring to fall but this also may reflect the trend we are seeing with pledges. Early pledges are higher than planned. This money is for next year but we are fortunate to have it in the bank early. Fiscal year pledges are...on track with May electronic transactions still to go. User fee income is up, [from] an effort to get closer to market-rate fees for private events. Ferry Beach was a money loser...last year. [Attempts are being made to match up our income and expense this year]. Office machines and major maintenance on property were high this past year reflecting long-term investments in our facilities. Committee budgets for music and RE are under which helps the bottom line.

Olivia, David, and Mike gave an update on budget realities. Olivia identified ways the budget can be reduced based on publicly available data about UU Nashua that she organized into a one-page handout. Those ways are ones that require decision-making by the BoT on several fronts. Those ways also involve planning that must start now partly to stave off the spend-down

of available funds and partly to inform the Ministerial Search Committee's activities. David shared the experience of the Stewardship Committee regarding the fund raising campaign ended March 17th. He related the limitations regarding any plan to have fund raising as a strategy to bridge budget shortfalls. Mike imparted the necessity of operating within our means.

The BoT received reports from Working Groups (WG) (see below) with an emphasis on evaluation of current priorities and discussion of future priorities for the all-Church Social justice project (Jenn & Mike), and an emphasis on follow-up from last month's reports for 1) Improving Communications (Pat & Mary) accompanied by a Proposal [from Transition Team - Mickey Shepherd & Kathy Fletcher and introduced to BoT for first time at this meeting] for Covenant of Right Relations, and 2) Retaining Youth & Attracting Young Adults (Kathleen & David). One-half hour was spent regarding the WG report on the Social Justice project. Ten minutes apiece were spent on the other two reports. The WG reports will be add ons to these minutes, and the Board agreed that Ellen could also include them in her Annual Report to the Congregation.

Social Justice Project Report

The BoT had received a proposal for renewing and extending the All-Church Social Justice Project from the Ending Hunger and Homelessness Project Committee of the church. The proposal suggested that the Board endorse the idea of focusing the social justice priority on efforts in support of a Fund that would be used to provide housing for the chronically homeless, to be created under the auspices of Harbor Homes in partnership with the church. The BoT respectfully disagreed that such a focus would be in the best interest of the church. There were many reasons, but the members agreed that this focus would be too limited to allow each member or friend of the church, including children, to find his or her own most meaningful way to engage in social justice work under the broad umbrella of ending hunger and homelessness. There is a need for the language of the priority to be clear on the change the priority will make in the lives of those affected by it. This priority along with the other two priorities must be able to fit on one page.

Evaluation of Improving Communications (IC) Report

The following ideas received support from the BoT that were generated in the ten minute discussion regarding the IC report: Central to the report are

developing 1) a covenant of right relations and 2) an updated policy & procedure manual. There is a need for the priority to be clear on the change the language of the priority will make in the lives of those affected by it. This priority along with the other two priorities must be able to fit on one page.

Evaluation of Youth and Young Adults (EYYA)

The following ideas received support from the BoT that were generated in the ten minute discussion regarding the EYYA report: Developing the documents mentioned in the paragraph above regarding the IC report also applies to this priority. The change this priority will make in the lives of those affected by it must show in the final wording. This priority along with the other two priorities must be able to fit on one page.

Harry presented recommendations regarding proposed amendments to the UU Nashua Bylaws. The last one having to do with the minister's responsibilities and supervisory power was addressed by Rev. Olivia with more to come on that at the next meeting in May. Mary Licking indicated the need for two bylaws changes that may affect the work of the Clerk.

A discussion was held to consider changes to the Board of Directors meeting schedule.

A request was made for BoT members to give the welcome and announcements at the beginning of church services (see List #1 below).

A request was made for BoT members to advise on the agenda for the Annual Meeting (to be held June 6th) and to create the final wording for the priorities to be circulated to the Board by May 28th by serving on a subcommittee (see List #2 below). The suggestions by Rev. Olivia two meetings ago are to be given consideration in the final wording of the priorities: Becoming a more welcoming congregation. Create a covenant of right relations. Fund raising policies and a policy book in general.

The next scheduled BoT Meeting is Tuesday, June 11th, 2013 (see List #3 for other important near term dates).

Rev. Olivia gave the closing words and extinguished the chalice.

Lists #1 through #3

List #1

Church Service

Welcome & Announcements:

May 19	Mary
May 26	Harry
June 02	David

List #2

Agenda for Annual Meeting and Priorities Final Wording (a Subcommittee)

1. Pat
2. Ellen
3. Kate

List #3

Upcoming Dates

EXTRA BOARD MEETING NEEDED, May 28th

Thursday, June 6th, Annual Meeting

Tues., June 11th and August 13th, Next Regular Board Meetings

//original signed//

Mary Licking,

Clerk, Unitarian Universalist Church of Nashua,
New Hampshire

Attachments:

1), 2), and 3) below are appended to this set of minutes. 4) is in a separate electronic file.

- 1) IC Report with Proposal for Covenant of Right Relations (Transition Team)
- 2) EYYA Report
- 3) Social justice project Report
- 4) Hand-out from Rev. Olivia

DRAFT

2013 – 2015 Communication Priorities

Communication within the church community is a two-way street. Church groups should be responsible for widely communicating information about their activities, both in reporting what they have done and inviting others to participate in future events. Church members and friends, for their part, should be responsible for keeping up with communications coming their way.

- Over the course of the next year, the BoT will work with the congregation to develop and adopt a Covenant of Right Relations. The purpose of this covenant will be to guide us as we strive to relate to each other and all of our stakeholders and constituents in a conscious, ethical manner.
- Develop a Policy and Procedure manual to clarify how the congregation will implement its communication goals. The manual may include some of the following:

Current Successes

- UU Nashua's website <http://www.uunashua.org>
(When asked how they find us, some visitors credit referrals from friends, some say they saw our sign, but our biggest source of visitors is the website.)
- UU Nashua's Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/groups/UUChurch.Nashua/>
- E-mail
 - UU Nashua announcement e-mail list
 - UU Nashua's "UU Cares" e-mail list
- Occasional "snail" mailings – they get people's attention
- Ads in the *Hippo Press*, *Nashua Telegraph* and *Hudson-Litchfield News* - they have brought in more visitors.
- Bulletin Board in the dining room where we post the BoT's monthly minutes.
- Members of the BoT welcoming people from the pulpit at the beginning of every Sunday service.

- “Opportunity Table” in the dining room that gives news of events, projects and opportunities for members and friends.
- Nominating Committee led the committees in publicizing roles.
- Advance notice provided for congregational meetings.
- Continue our successful communications with our larger greater Nashua community.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Continue to encourage committees to contribute articles to the newsletter and submit events for the weekly Announcements page. Membership coordinator to contact each committee chair at least twice a year with a reminder.
- Make an effort to get accurate e-mail address from church members and friends who want to receive information via email. Place a yearly reminder in the newsletter and in a prominent place on the Opportunity Table that states one must “sign up” to be placed on one of the e-mails lists.
- Although it is very difficult to obtain articles in the local press, continue efforts to “pitch” story ideas to *The Telegraph* and other media. Make sure church services and events are listed accurately in *The Telegraph’s* Religion section every Saturday.

Additional Possibilities

- Make better use of the sign out front. Consider using the “Wayside Pulpit” messages (they are free <http://www.uua.org/worship/wayside/27210.shtml>).
- Review what is included in our Welcome Packet. Consider replacing individual flyers for selected groups with a one-page listing of all committee/social “opportunities.” Include contact names and phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses.
- In addition to posting BoT minutes in the dining room and submitting articles to the newsletter on a monthly basis, the BoT might consider ways to work with the Executive team to provide updates to committee chairs about decisions made in BoT meetings, as appropriate.

- Consider permitting the BoT member who is welcoming the congregation each Sunday to make a maximum of two pre-approved announcements from the pulpit.
- Keep the Opportunity Table as part of our “mix” of communications methods, but consider its placement and corresponding effectiveness.

SOURCES

March 15, 2013. Interview of President, UU Nashua, Ellen Fisher, by Mary Licking.

March 14 and March 17, 2013. Interview of UU Nashua Membership Coordinator, Sherri Woolsey, by Mary Licking.

March 19-20, 2013. Interview of UU Nashua Membership Coordinator, Sherri Woolsey, by Pat Ladew.

March 20, 2013. E-mail from Mike Ballentine to Pat Ladew.

March 29, 2013. E-mail from Bill Kennedy to Pat Ladew. (On a scale of 1-10, Bill estimates the PR committee is at a 7, while the church as a whole is at a 6.)

September through March 2013. Eyewitness accounts of UU Nashua communications efforts. Pat Ladew, Mary Licking.

Proposal for creating Covenant of Right Relationships

Mickey Shepherd/ Kathy Fletcher April, 29, 2013

History

The Transition Team has held several forums for members to discuss their experiences as part of our church community. Interestingly, one theme which emerged from these conversations was that members feel that there is lack of expressed conflicts within our community and that conflicts which *are*

expressed, are not resolved well. Additionally, Bob Sampson alluded to periods of rocky transition as each new minister has been settled. With that knowledge, the Transition Team proposes that the Board assemble a “Right Relations Team” in anticipation of calling a new settled minister in 2014.

What are “Right Relationships?”

Right relationship might be defined as an, “appropriate, healthy position in relation to others. [In right relationships,] people can relate to each other in relationships characterized by honor, respect, love, and care. Right relationships are creative, mutual, and generative.” (Sellon and Smith, 2005)

Unitarian-Universalism is a covenantal and not doctrinal faith. Our behaviors and relationships are not prescribed by scripture or mutually shared traditions. A Covenant of Right Relations would lay down the principles by which we all agree to work and be together in community.

What do we Propose?

We propose that the Board put together a team of interested folks to develop a written Covenant of Right Relations. This team would read the literature on right relationships in faith communities. The team might ask for help and input from the District or, run a workshop with a right relationship expert for guidance. Ultimately, the team would produce a congregational covenantal agreement and recommend it for adoption at the 2014 Annual Meeting.

The Transition Team also proposes that the work of the Right Relations team might continue after the adoption of the Covenant. In the 2014-15 church year, the team would ask each committee of the church for time to introduce the Covenant, training them in the principles of right relationships.

Ultimately, the Transition Team proposes that the Right Relations Team could act as conduits to other relationship building practices within the congregation and District (e.g. hosting workshops on non-violent communication or conflict resolution skills.)

DRAFT PRIORITY 2013 – 2015
Retain Youth & Attract Young Adults
May 2013 – Kathleen Griffis & Dave Hudson

Introduction

Kathleen and I found the task of rewriting the board’s youth-related priorities to be a challenge. We have reached out to various stakeholders for their input, but the task is non-trivial and easy solutions elusive. Indeed, Rev. Holmes noted in a reply that, “the Board needs to have a thoughtful conversation with the stakeholders who may be expected or asked to help fulfill the priority.”

Further, with the benefit of hindsight, we wonder if the board’s previous goals were too prescriptive (solve the problem THIS way) and too “top-down” (here is OUR recommended way).

In short, we have no doubt that more attention needs to be focused on this area, but think the process of goal setting, vis-à-vis specifics, may need to be reworked. To that end, we propose the following format and approach.

Overview

OBSERVATION: The board has noticed that we do not see a great many young adults at Sunday services or at other church events, nor are they likely to see us at one of their gatherings. We also believe our church would be an attractive spiritual home for young families, yet we do not see as many joining the congregation as we might hope. We acknowledge that engaging 18-35 year-olds will be challenging, but we believe more could be done to attract and retain youth and young adults.

GOAL: We would like our young people to feel welcomed into our church community. We would like the young people that grow up in our church to share an enduring sense of acceptance and belonging to this place wherever the wind may take them. We would also like to create an attractive and enticing atmosphere for youthful newcomers and young families, drawing them in and smoothly integrating them into our church family.

SUCCESS: We would like to be more engaged in the lives of our young people and have them be more actively engaged in the life of the church, from attending events to taking an active role in church governance. We would like to see more young people and young families join the church.

Implementation

OWNERSHIP: This priority will require the resources and energy of several church committees, including the RE Committee and the Membership Committee. Given the necessarily broad nature of this priority, we believe the Executive Team should be charged with implementing this priority.

TIMELINE: We recommend focusing on this priority over the next 24 months and using the following implementation timeline.

6 months – The Executive Team (or its designated assignee) will provide the board with objectives and evaluation criteria.

12 months – The Executive Team (or its designated assignee) will provide the board with an interim update and self-assessment.

21 months – The Executive Team (or its designated assignee) will meet with board representatives in preparation for a joint review and final evaluation.

RESOURCE USAGE: We do not believe work on this priority will have a significant budgetary impact. While we don't think any additional resources need to be allocated at this point, we understand this may change as the stakeholders dig in.

SOME IDEAS: The following list of ideas was discussed during the development of this priority. The board shares these thoughts in the hopes that they might serve as a starting point for additional brainstorming. These ideas should not be viewed as requirements, merely possibilities.

- What if we formed a “student council” type of system run largely by young adults that helped organize their own events?
- Interested high school students reaching the age of eighteen (18) will continue to be formally welcomed into the church as members, with a youth-focused (?) ceremony and celebration.
- Encourage active young adult participation and inclusion in social justice projects and on all committees.
- Find ways to integrate young people into the church, and non-parents into youth experiences.
- Ask every church committee to consider ways this priority may impact them and ways they might contribute to its success.
- There is some anecdotal evidence that young people consider joining a religious community after having children. We wonder if more could be done to reach out and target this group.
- It has been observed that Sunday service is designed for adults. Does engagement of young people require us to design an entirely different type of service held on Sunday at 9 PM via Twitter or Skype or something else so cool we don’t even know about it?
- The 2014 GA will be held in Providence, RI. Could we send a youth delegation?
- Admitting that many young people go away to college at 18, is there a way we can stay at least somewhat engaged with them while they are away.
- What existing things are working so well that we might consider capitalizing on them?
- Are there ways to give teenagers a more active role in services, perhaps inviting them to light the chalice, present a children’s time, or some serve some other “leadership” role? Could the auction committee, for example, find a young person to be an auctioneer for some portion of the evening?
- Are the communication “needs” of young people different than those of older adults?
- How often are young people, young adults, young families, older families, and seniors all in the same room?
- What might we learn from the ways other organizations involve and attract young people?

Other thoughts

Our challenge is not unique. Young people often drift away from institutions at all levels when they graduate from high school or college, returning only when they begin families of their own. For our existing under-18 members, we must ask how we (a) prevent that separation, (b) reduce the distance drifted (by keeping in touch, for example), or (c) reduce the duration of the separation. For young people who had no relationship with us prior to 18, we must ask how we (a) create an atmosphere that would entice them to engage with us, (b) provide ‘services’ they need and (c) let them know we’re here.

We are reminded that many social organizations are facing declining enrollment and support across all ages and backgrounds as larger societal forces tug at us all. We move more often, change jobs more often, settle further from home, travel more, and have more involved children. In addition, there are more things vying for our attention than ever before and our young adults must surely feel these pressures too.

In terms of focusing on young adults, we really have two groups: those that still live at home (youth under-18) and those that don't (young adults 18-35). Two of the sub-priorities clearly focus on the 18+ segment, this is precisely the group we have the hardest time reaching. At 18 or 19, many of our young people are away at college, tied up with their first job, or out exploring the larger world. It's possible that our best success may come by focusing on our under-18 demographic in the hopes of building stronger ties that last longer or lead them back sooner.

We wonder if we've asked the right questions and focused on the right things. Have we prepared our young adults (functionally, culturally, etc.) to serve on committees by providing them leadership positions at an earlier age? To Olivia's point, have we engaged them and integrated them into our church life in such a way that extending their connection with us beyond age 18 feels natural? Do we want them here because of what they represent or would we miss them because we are somehow diminished without them?

In terms of reaching young people who have left home, there are lots of different segments. The difference between a 35-year old and a 39-year old may be negligible, but the difference between an 18-year old and a 22-year old or 26-year old can be huge. What's of interest to a 22-year old, may not be what draws in someone younger or older.

Review of Priority "All-Church Social Justice Project"
Respectfully submitted by Mike Wilt & Jenn Morton

Original text of Priority adopted by BoT, 1/31/2012

All-Church Social Justice Project Involve all church members and friends, including children, in the "Ending Hunger and Homelessness Project," as formulated by the Social Justice Committee. This project has 4 parts: education, advocacy, service, and financial support.

1. Within the next 18 months we will make at least 4 major efforts (events, publications, or the like) which will serve to educate our church members and friends, as well as the wider community, about this project and the underlying issues. This education will include information about how individuals can become involved in solving the problems that contribute to hunger and homelessness.
2. Within the next 18 months we will find a way to track the number of volunteers associated with our church working in the associated organizations and the hours spent volunteering, and will double both numbers.
3. Within the next 18 months we will donate, as a church, at least \$10,000 to the associated organizations.

Follow-Up/Review:

Significant progress toward this priority has been achieved. However, the #2 listed piece was met with difficulties that seem too overwhelming to overcome.

1. Within the next 18 months we will make at least 4 major efforts (events, publications, or the like) which will serve to educate our church members and friends, as well as the wider community, about this project and the underlying issues. This education will include information about how individuals can become involved in solving the problems that contribute to hunger and homelessness.

Efforts supporting this part of the priority include, but are not limited to:

- Sunday Service - Dedicated a March 2011 service to the EHH Project
- Web Page and Informational Materials – Created a web page (off UU Nashua) for EHH Project and informational materials for newsletter and other communication opportunities.
- Singer-Songwriter Event – Organized a Singer-Songwriter event and donated the proceeds to the Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter.
- “Bingo” Activity – Set up a Bingo activity in church with a card containing EHH activities that promoted a lot of discussion.
- Many Collections – Collected hats, coats, and other items for the Community Supper guests; collected holiday gifts and checks for Meals on Wheels, Nashua Children’s Home, and Nashua Soup Kitchen; collected sweaters for Davis Funeral Home project; had additional collections organized by Simple Gifts Coffeehouse, White Wing, UU Meditation Group, and book club for area organizations.
- Community Neighbors Book Sale (Hannaford- Nashua, NH) – Jamie Ryfsnieder arranged for Hannaford to donate the proceeds from one week of their used books sales to the EHH Project.
- Advocacy – Members of the EHH Project worked with GSOP (Granite State Organizing Project) to advocate for the residents of Bronstein Housing Project; wrote letters to the Editor and met with Bronstein residents.
- Nashua Housing Meetings – Members of the EHH Project attended Continuum of Care and Nashua Housing Authority meetings to stay abreast of Bronstein plans and other issues regarding homelessness.
- Community Suppers – Organized 3rd Sunday of the month community suppers with many church volunteers.
- Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter – Made casseroles/served dinners monthly for the Soup Kitchen (UU Nashua has a long history with these commitments).

2. Within the next 18 months we will find a way to track the number of volunteers associated with our church working in the associated organizations and the hours spent volunteering, and will double both numbers.

This proved to be the most difficult piece of this Priority to achieve. In Spring of 2012, a survey was circulated to the congregation asking for responses concerning individuals' volunteer hours. There was very poor response. Feedback from congregants was neutral to negative in tone. We have not accomplished this part of the Priority.

3. Within the next 18 months we will donate, as a church, at least \$10,000 to the associated organizations.

- In actuality, we surpassed our goal: Outreach Collections – Dedicated Outreach Collections to Front Door Agency (\$5,722), Lamprey Health Care (\$2,877), Southern NH Fuel Assistance (\$4,149), and DCYF (\$2,821).

Suggested change/revision of this Priority:

All-Church Social Justice Project Involve all church members and friends, including children, in ending hunger and homelessness. This project has 4 parts: education, advocacy, service, and financial support.

1. Within the next 2 years we will make at least 6 major efforts (events, publications, or the like) which will serve to educate our church members and friends, as well as the wider community, about this project and the underlying issues. This education will include information about how individuals can become involved in solving the problems that contribute to hunger and homelessness.
2. Identify and work with individual members of the congregation who may have resources or are able to access resources that could be applied to the goals of this project. ***This is a replacement of the previous #2 part. This focuses the congregants to think of how each individual can help. Gives empowerment to each person to bring their talent/time to the task.
3. Within the next 2 years we will donate, as a church, at least \$15,000 to the associated organizations.

Information gathered reflects input from EHH Project Committee (Ellen Barr, Bob Keating, Hilary Keating, Jerry Ross, Elaine Thomas, Sarah Widhu) as compiled in their report (published in the ??? 2013 UU Nashua Newsletter) and discussed at the May 7, 2013 EHH Project Committee Meeting.