

UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF HARTFORD
Board of Directors Meeting
Date: July 22, 2014

Members Participating: Martha Bradley, John Clapp, Tina Davies, Virginia de Lima, Patrice Fitzgerald, Louise Schmoll, Mike Winterfield (Bill LaPorte-Bryan was not present.)
Others Participating: Ed Savage, Janice Newton, David Newton, Marye Gail Harrison, Ginny Allen, Diana Heymann

Members Absent:

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at

Subject	Discussion	Action Required/Responsible
Opening Words	Diana lit chalice while Virginia read Board Covenant. See note at end.	
Public Comments	None	
Minutes	June 09, 2014 minutes circulated	Minutes approved unanimously.
Job Description for Youth Advisor	Job Description for John Bengtson – he has never had one. Ginny reported there are two different documents. Virginia did a comparison of the documents and streamlined latest draft. Ginny points out no signature lines; needed. Somewhat unclear about what hours are contemplated for the amount involved.	Approved unanimously. Ginny will go in to USH office tomorrow to follow up and get signed. Helen will be there.
Covenants	Virginia reminded us that all groups are supposed to be covenanted	
Report of Task Force on Conflict Resolution	<p>Primary Summary, details in appendix</p> <p>The group felt the proposal made by the ad hoc committee was good and important for the congregation to implement; however, there was concern that the process was, or would be perceived as being, too bureaucratic and dwelling on past issues. Also, using the word “conflict” seemed to stress the negative. Martha said that conflict exists in all aspects of life and recognizing that is actually very positive. Members of the committee reminded us that the UUA had a major initiative to address conflict management in all congregations and that this had been a prime focus at GA. Many congregations already have such processes in place or are working to create them. It seems appropriate to begin this process before transitioning to new ministers.</p> <p>After lengthy discussion, the group crafted the following statement for immediate release to the Congregation:</p> <p><i>The Board is committed to enhancement of healthy and productive relationships among all members and friends of the congregation and will work to underscore the worth and dignity of all members and friends. To this end, an ad hoc committee on healthy relations was created by the Board and submitted a proposal. This proposal recommends a multi-layered process, beginning with education for the congregation, and providing resources to help manage conflict if it were to arise. The Board has committed to beginning the educational aspect of the process and will make use of resources available from the UUA. The Board will continue its work on the proposal over the next several months, with input from the congregation, and decide next steps by the end</i></p>	

of the calendar year.

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John moved to accept this version. Patrice seconded. It passed unanimously.

Misc.

Next meeting at Martha Bradley's home, Tuesday, August 5. 5:30 for potluck, 7:00 for Board Meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20.

Respectfully submitted by Patrice Fitzgerald, Secretary

The covenant may be accessed here: <http://www.ushartford.com./covenant0314.html>

Appendix: Detailed discussions

Subject	Discussion	Action Required/Responsible
<p>Report of Task Force on Conflict Resolution</p>	<p>Martha pointed to Bill LaPorte-Bryan’s comments. She felt it shouldn’t be characterized as just about the Seven Principles. Doesn’t want it to seem as though we are somehow failing as a church. Mike: healthy to acknowledge a problem. Patrice: frame it as normal and a good thing to set up, but not something created because we are a problem church or in crisis. Virginia: We want to avoid making people think we are somehow talking about the same old issues that they are “sick of talking about.” Should it be introduced with a “needs” statement. Tina: has been skeptical about this effort – “attacking a mosquito with a flamethrower.” Smacks of a politically correct tribunal. Louise: Doesn’t like the term “Conflict” at all. Ed: Timing was so that congregants could get a chance to see a good relations policy go live in advance of the new ministers coming. Mike: Started out with a lot of ambivalence regarding this effort. He thinks we won’t have another “perfect storm.” Gave an example of a fractious meeting recently. Martha: Said there would always be conflict; this won’t avoid that. Patrice: Are we expected to digest, amend, and agree to this tonight? Virginia: That would be ideal. Would we have done this if we hadn’t gone through our recent troubles? Marye Gail: We would have if we called new ministers. A healthy, vibrant congregation has a process for handling all of this. It’s based on a document that was in use at Cathy’s former church. Marye Gail was originally quite uninterested in being involved in such a process...but she has done a total about-face having gone through the process. John: Thank you to the folks who did this. “Nipping it in the bud” is the way to go with conflict. Question: Would the committee be acting as an ombudsman? Martha: Essentially, yes. Someone from the committee would respond and first ask if the parties had talked to each other. There would be some ground rules. If there was still a grievance, then it would go to another step. Eighty-ninety percent of the time it wouldn’t go further. Martha, Marye Gail: This would serve to let people be heard. Ed: Something in the enews about what we are calling “Healthy Relations.” Marye Gail: This could be a framework approved as a draft by the Board, and be amended as we go. Also, if we find we are so trying to be nice that we can’t express ourselves, that wouldn’t be the goal at all. We don’t want to be coerced. This whole issue has made me tune in to tensions that may always be here. It’s just making us more aware of these things. Virginia: If we need to have a constitutional amendment, that’s making it seem like a big deal. Martha: We don’t want it to be too cumbersome. Tina: Starting with the education piece and easing in sounds like a more welcoming prospect. Virginia: Maybe we could start with the first outer ring. Louise: Likes the terminology from the outer ring. Mike: The whole program is important and makes good sense. I’d be comfortable moving ahead with the whole thing. Okay with constitutional change. Patrice: What’s our task tonight? Virginia: Bill wanted us to agree to this process as a whole. Virginia thinks the sense of the Board tonight is that we might start with commitment to education piece. Virginia: Natural time for a constitutional vote would be at spring annual meeting. Ginny: Three terms: Conflict Resolution (has baggage). Right Relations (the term that is currently “in,” but too black/white). Healthy Relations gets a thumbs up from her. The Board agrees that we should get rid of term “Conflict” in title. Patrice: What is our position with regard to this document? We accept it as a framework, a draft, or what? Virginia: We accepted the Report at the June meeting. Marye Gail: The core of this is that this needs to be a policy moved forward by the Board. What are the next steps? Partial implementation sounds good but do we have a commitment from the Board? Mike: What if we have a conflict in the dark days of winter? Do we have something in place? Virginia: What if we do it more informally first? Patrice: Are we making it even more complicated with layers of committees and different levels of commitment over time? Martha: What if we accept this as a draft or a starting point now? Ed: Our initial report suggests inviting a UUA representative to come speak, and also include Fern St. and</p>	

Manchester if they are interested. Martha: Only Bill LaPorte-Bryan can ask UUA for that. Louise: Is the committee who wrote this not the best body to educate USH about this? Marye Gail: How does the Board implement policies? Louise: Most policies have been set up because a specific issue has been indentified, usually by Brian Mullen. This is a little different. General lack of understanding of specifics of how the Board implements policies.