

Board Communication Policy

Adopted 11/17/2015

Mission or Purpose:

- This policy seeks to provide guidelines for ensuring appropriate, accurate, timely, civil and thorough communication within and among the Board of Trustees of The Unitarian Church in Westport.

Face to Face Communication:

- Regular Board Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month at 6:30 PM.
- Any schedule changes (cancellations, date/time changes, additional meetings, etc), are to be communicated by the Secretary to all Board members. It is the responsibility of the Secretary and the Board President to ensure that all Board members are made aware of any meeting changes.
- If members of the Board determine the need for additional Board meetings to address imminent church business. Additional meetings will be noticed as above.
- The date and time (location assumed as church) of Board Meetings will be also included in the Sunday Bulletin (order of service) the Sunday before the meeting and included in each issue of Soundings.
- In the event of an urgent change (changes that occur in less than two business days prior to a scheduled event), the Chair will contact Board Members by phone or whatever instructions the Board member has provided. For example: meeting cancellations due to inclement weather or lack of quorum
- Town Hall and Constitution-defined congregational meetings will be posted on calendars contained in Soundings and on www.uuwestport.org, and noticed in two successive Sunday Bulletins on the last page of the order of service.

Electronic Communications Between Board Members:

Rationale

Electronic communication (email) is appropriate medium when there is no problem with time delays between the message's writing and all the responses from the recipients. Because not all recipients can read the message in the same timeframe, the chain of responses can become fragmented and viewed out of order.

Guidelines for Board E-Mail Communications:

- Email will be the preferred method of communication among Board Members. This vehicle will be used to communicate items such as, but not limited to, agendas, consent agenda items and reports, time and location changes, additional meetings, cancellations, any additional items for review, etc.
- All communication must be emailed to the Board Members at least two business days prior to the meeting. This implies that each Member must be checking their email accounts at least once every two days for any updates.
- In the event of an urgent change (changes that occur in less than two business days

prior to a scheduled event), the Secretary and/or Board President will contact Board Members by phone or whatever instructions the Board member has provided. For example: meeting cancellations due to inclement weather or lack of quorum.

- It is the responsibility of each Board Member to provide the President, with a current email account, a phone number at which they wish to be contacted in case of an emergency and a mailing address where they wish to receive mail. The President is also given permission to communicate any changes in contact information to all Board members.
- As a courtesy to the fellow Board Members, each Board Member is asked to notify the Secretary if they will not be attending a planned Board Meeting, at least one day prior to the meeting. This will avoid having situations where there is no quorum.
- As pertains to all electronic communication, Board Members:
 - Should communicate respectfully.
 - Reply to **all parties** in an email communication without deleting specific parties.
 - Do not forward email communication regarding executive session discussions to others not on the Board.
 - Do not forward email communication received from a fellow Board Member concerning TUCW or Board matters without the permission of the person who wrote the email.
 - Do not “blind copy” third parties when emailing a fellow Board member.

Should a Member stray from these guidelines, any Board Member who notes this is encouraged to gently remind the speaker or writer of our desire for civil and peaceful discourse.

Limitations of Board E-Mail Communications:

- Lengthy discussions of topics in preparation for a vote should not be conducted via email.
- Discussions of potentially sensitive topics - anything we would not want the public to read - should not be conducted via email.
- Electronic voting can be allowed to continue, within the above limitations.
- To avoid asynchronous email discussions, the Executive Committee is encouraged to conduct short ad hoc meetings via teleconference when quick decisions are required.

TUCW Board Communication Policy Acknowledgment

This Board Communication Policy will be distributed to all Board Members in advance of the June Meeting. At the start of each term of office, the Board Members will bring a signed the acknowledgment indicating the policy has been read to the June meeting of the Board. Board members are encouraged to regularly review this information.

**BOARD COMMUNICATION POLICY
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM**

I, _____, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Unitarian Church in Westport Board Communication Policy.

I understand that my signature below indicates that I have read and understood the

Communication Policy dated _____.

Name (Print)

Date

Signature