

DRAFT Minutes of June 11, 2023, Annual Meeting
Please send any comments to secretary@uuwestport.org
(The following minutes will be presented for approval at the June 09, 2024, Annual Meeting)

**MINUTES OF THE 72nd ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION IN WESTPORT
JUNE 11, 2023**

Call to Order: Luke Garvey, President of the Board of Trustees (the Board) and Moderator for this meeting, called the 72nd Annual Meeting to order at 11:29 AM. This meeting was conducted in the Sanctuary, with a few members who had pre-registered for remote attendance participating virtually on Zoom. Sincere thanks go to Jim Cooper (our technical manager for the Zoom session), to Bruce McNair and the entire Tech Team for doing an excellent job keeping all technical elements running smoothly, to Ken Vogel, our Parliamentarian, to Kathy Roberts, Eileen O'Reilly, and Lindy Hennessy for assisting with member check-in and vote counting, to Trevor Cooper, who graciously agreed to babysit, and to all others who helped with this meeting. Thank you!

Opening Reflection: Senior Minister Rev. John Morehouse shared opening words as the chalice was lit.

Quorum Report: Stapley Emberling, Secretary for the Board, confirmed that the quorum had been met in accordance with our Constitution and that this meeting qualified as a Member Meeting. There were 99 members in attendance in person and 8 additional members who had signed in on Zoom, for a total of 107 members attending the meeting. Our quorum number for this meeting was 58 members.

Approval of Member Meeting Minutes: A motion was made and seconded to approve the Minutes for 3 separate member meetings, as displayed on the website and in the Call To Meeting:

- 1) June 12, 2022 (last Annual Meeting)
- 2) December 11, 2022 (1st vote on Name Change)
- 3) January 29, 2023 (2nd vote on Name Change)

A vote was called, and the motion passed unanimously. The Minutes for the last 3 member meetings were approved.

The Very Fine Lifetime Volunteer Service Award: Board member Ravi Sankar announced that the winner of the 21st Annual Very Fine Lifetime Volunteer Service Award is Anita Pfluger. Congregants expressed their joy and heartfelt endorsement by standing and clapping at length for Anita.

Appreciation and Gratitude: On behalf of the Board, Trustee Wendy Levy formally (and for the record) recognized the significant contributions of key members of our staff and congregation. The Board wishes to thank:

- 1) David Vita for his 18 years of service leading our efforts in Social Justice. The June 3rd party honoring David was a demonstration of the devotion and love he has inspired.

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- 2) The Rev. John Morehouse for his 8 years of service leading our congregation with his ministry, care, and dedication. Many stories were shared and praises given at the June 9th celebration and “All That Jazz” party for Rev. John and Francis Morehouse.
- 3) The Capital Campaign Committee – “made of up dedicated volunteers who helped us raise money for much needed upgrades and improvements to our buildings and grounds. This team included Kristen Leddy and Carol Seiple, as co-chairs, and Mary Jane Cross, Catherine Onyemelukwe, Anita Pfluger, and Rev. John Morehouse, with John Turmelle as facilities manager. Ulla Surland, Diane Melish and Jay Lubin served on the facilities team in the early days as well. This was a huge undertaking, and we are profoundly appreciative of all their work. What a labor of love! We have a new parking lot with appropriate drainage, newly pointed steps, fresh painted railings on the patio and balcony, an updated library and meeting house, replacement of old red carpet, chancel windows, and a leaky sky light. All because of these folks’ efforts: drawing up initial needs, getting feedback from the Congregation on priorities and possibilities, working with architects and engineers, and, importantly, raising over \$2 million dollars from our generous Congregation.”
- 4) John Turmelle, “for the unbelievable amount of time and expertise he has brought to us – as a volunteer, free of charge – to make our building safer, in compliance with codes and regulations, and yet maintaining its special beauty. This is hard work. We doubt anyone here can appreciate the **years** – really, since 2015 (that’s 8 years!) – that John has put towards this project. And he has done so delivering all this on time, on budget, and within the guidelines and specifications that were established. Incredibly, much of this work occurred during COVID, and enabled all our Sunday services to go on in the sanctuary – even the major Christmas services. The work is not done, and we’ll continue to discuss this in the future. But this seemed like a perfect time to honor John and his selfless work on our behalf, for our community at UUWestport.”

Board of Trustees Report: Luke Garvey, President of the Board of Trustees, gave the report for the Board. He gave a summary of the work of the Board over this past year, reporting on current and future goals. With the final vote of approval given at the January 29th Special Congregational Meeting, the Unitarian Church in Westport became the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Westport (although often still fondly referred to as “UU Westport” by many congregants and Westport residents). The full report is available in the 2023 Annual Report.

Gratitude to Andy Gundell: Although, in the heat of the moment, this item was accidentally overlooked at the meeting, the entire Board wanted to express its sincere gratitude to Andy Gundell, who is rotating off the Board this month after serving for a full 3-year term. The Board thanks Andy for his many contributions and for his continued support and wise counsel.

Financial Reports:

2022-2023 Pledge Report: Connie Rockman, representing the Year-Round Stewardship Committee (and standing in for Elena Rockman-Black, Committee Chair) gave some highlights for the year in Stewardship. Details are in the 2023 Annual Report.

Endowment Committee: Brian Lasher, Trustee, reviewed the income and disbursements from the Endowment. The Committee manages all capital funds of the Congregation “with the objectives of preserving assets and enhancing the long-term financial security and well-being of the Congregation.” These funds include The Endowment, which was established by our Constitution, The Bernhard Music Fund, and The Scouller/Nelson Fund for Family Faith Formation, though the latter two funds were established by Board Resolutions and are not part of the Endowment. Brian addressed several financial issues and clarified some confusion about how much financial support the Endowment was able and willing to give to the operating budget for next year. The Annual Report contains the written report from Mark Corcoran, out-going Chair of the Endowment.

Financial Results & Proposed Budget: Steve Grathwohl, Treasurer, discussed the 2022-2023 Profit and Loss (P/L) statement for the year, and presented the proposed Budget for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. He also observed that our current financial situation is very like last year’s: From a Balance Sheet perspective, we are in good financial shape (strong asset position, no mortgage and almost no liabilities, lots of positive equity, and a healthy endowment). However, from an Annual Operating Budget perspective, we are still operating with a significant Budget Gap, which will continue next year. The full report is available in the Annual Report.

Motion: To Approve Spending up to \$150K of Unrestricted Funds, to be Requested from the Endowment, for the Operating Budget in 2023/2024. Brian Lasher made the Motion, which was seconded, and, after discussion, a vote was called. The Motion PASSED, with 2 votes opposed.

Ratification of the 2023-2024 Budget: A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2023-2024 budget as presented. There was lengthy discussion and several questions raised. The uncertainty caused by Rev. Morehouse’s departure this month and not knowing how long TUCCW would be without a Sr. Minister had raised questions for some regarding the proposed new budget and where that “saved Minister’s salary” would be allocated. Steve Grathwohl and Brian Lasher answered questions, explained our current financial situation, and clarified points about the budget. Finally, the Question was Called. **A new Motion was made and seconded: To stop further discussion of the budget and to vote now on the original motion.** 59 members in the room and 7 online voted YES (a total of 66 YES) to stop further discussion and vote on the budget as presented. 19 members in the room and 0 online voted NO. The Secretary incorrectly believed a passing vote required a 2/3 majority of the members in attendance at the meeting (and since the attendance was

initially 107, that would therefore require 70 votes to pass). However, our Parliamentarian, Ken Vogel, explained that, in the Constitution, for a single vote (as opposed to an item that requires 2 votes at 2 separate member meetings to be ratified), a passing vote is 2/3 of the members present and voting. There were 85 votes cast in total, so the YES votes would need 57 (or more) to pass. The Motion PASSED: To stop further discussion of the budget and proceed with the vote on the budget. The original Motion to approve the proposed 2023-2024 budget was put to a vote, and PASSED by a vote of YES from 59 in the room and 6 online (total of 65 YES) to 9 votes for NO. (A passing vote here is 50 or more.) **The 2023-2024 Budget is approved.**

Elections: Jim Cooper, Co-Chair of the Nominating Committee (with Joann Coviello), thanked the members of the committee for their hard work and presented the following slate of nominees for election to office.

- **Board of Trustees**
Jennifer Gerometta (1st term to 2026)
Beth Cliff (2nd term to 2026)
Ravi Sankar (2nd term to 2026)
- **Endowment Committee**
Ken Vogel (term to 2028)
Terri Laug (2024 – completing term; eligible to run again in 2024)
- **Committee on Ministries**
Lisa Donahue-Olivieri (term to 2028)
Melanie Allen (2026 – completing term)
- **Nominating Committee**
David Raymond (2025)
Emily Sherwood (2025)
Jerusha Vogel (2025)

A motion to approve the slate of nominees was made and seconded and the vote to approve was unanimous. **The 2023 slate of nominees was approved.**

Installation of New Board & Elected Committee Members: Luke Garvey, President of the Board, welcomed the newly elected Board and other Elected Committee members, charging them to serve the Congregation to the best of their abilities, and charging their fellow committee members and the Congregation to support them in the work they are taking on.

#MeToo Resolution and Gender Equity Report: Rev John Morehouse reported on TUUCW's progress to date on the directives of the 2018 Congregational #MeToo Resolution and noted highlights of the work done by the Gender Equity Team (GET) this past year. The GET also acts as a resource to educate other TUUCW groups and committees in broadening

their perspectives and awakening awareness and responsiveness to minority voices and sensibilities in our community and beyond that may have been previously ignored. This work has been meaningful in the lives of individual women in the Congregation and powerful in inspiring leaders to rethink the words they use and the ways TUUCW can be more inclusive and welcoming. Rev. Morehouse also mentioned that this is the last year, according to the terms of the 2018 Resolution, that a report is required at the Annual Meeting on the progress of being done at UU Westport to comply with the Resolution.

Report on the Anti-Racism Resolution: Rev. John Morehouse reported on TUUCW's activities and initiatives in support of the Anti-Racism Resolution, passed by the Congregation in June 2021.

Committee on Ministries (COM) Report: July Norman, Incoming Chair of the COM, reflected on the COM's role in support of the Ministry and mentioned goals he and his team have for the upcoming year. The full report from Jenna McPartland, Outgoing Chair, is in the Annual Report.

New Business:

- 1) Jim Francek requested a few moments to be heard. He thanked the Board for its hard work this past year, and asked a question of the Congregation: What are we going to do to create a culture of healing and resilience? He commented that our whole system needs to be reexamined. We need a clear way of understanding who makes decisions and how authority gets shared. When adversity comes, our culture spins out. We also need specific ways to recognize and express appreciation for work well done. There's a tendency to criticize and focus on what has not gone well, but very little attention given to what did go well. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) builds on affirmations and can be very useful. He thinks we all could use training on how to give feedback to others. He suggests a Town Hall meeting in the fall to discuss some of these matters.
- 2) David Vita made a Motion: **To require the Board President and the Sr. Minister to continue to report at future Annual Meetings how well UU Westport is living up to the principles outlined in the 2018 #MeToo Resolution and what work is currently being done to make more progress toward those ends. The Motion was seconded and PASSED by vote.**

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made, seconded, and unanimously passed. The meeting was adjourned at 2:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Stapley Emberling,
Secretary for the Board of Trustees
For June 11, 2023