

Attending: Luke Garvey, Beth Cliff, Stapley Emberling, Steve Grathwohl, Jen Gerometta, Brian Lasher, Wendy Levy, and Rev. Alan Taylor (ex-officio)

Absent: Deb Garskof, Ravi Sankar

Observers: Jon Gage, Felicia Keeton, Mark Corcoran, Anita Pfluger

Guest Speakers: None

Agenda/Topic	Discussion	Motions & Votes (M/S/V); Actions
Opening	L Garvey presided over the meeting and called it to order at 7:12 pm.	From 6:00 – 7:00 pm (before the Board Meeting), Board members who will be retiring in June, as well as members who are remaining, and the 2024 Nominees who will join the Board in June (if elected), plus Rev. Taylor shared discussion, conviviality, and pizza.
Check-In & Opening Reading	B Cliff lit the chalice and read an excerpt from Maya Angelou. Board Members and Observers Checked In	
Consent Agenda	<p>Approval of Minutes for the April 16, 2024, Board Meeting; B Cliff and others raised the point that the lengthy discussion of the new budget seen in the April Minutes, while an accurate description of that discussion in April, does not represent the changes and refinements that were made to the budget in May, partly in response to feedback from congregants and partly due to S Grathwohl’s ongoing work with Rev. Taylor and the Board to work out details. A motion was made to accept the Minutes but to add a caveat to explain that the budget continued to evolve after the April meeting. Passed.</p> <p>For the written record, the Motion that was passed by e-mail on April 24, 2024, was added to the Consent Agenda for confirmation. Octillo Law’s fee will be \$4,500, which, thanks to diligent and persistent persuasion by S Grathwohl, will be entirely covered by TUUCW’s insurance (with Church Mutual).</p> <p>At a Board Meeting via Zoom on May 14, 2024, the Board further discussed and then voted to approve the proposed budget for 2024/2025. The new budget, which was introduced and discussed with the Congregation on May 5, 2024, and subsequently amended before being approved by the Board on May 14, will be brought to the Congregation at the Annual Meeting for approval.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) M/S/V PASSED: Approval of Minutes for Board Meeting on April 16, 2024, with caveat added. 2) M/S/V PASSED: Confirmation of the following Motion that was passed by e-mail on April 24, 2024: “To approve the recommendation of the Board’s research team [S Grathwohl, L Garvey, D Garskof] to engage the law firm Octillo Law in a contract to strengthen our cyber security protection (in accordance with the Statement of Work Agreement and the Engagement Letter, both dated March 21, 2024), to help TUUCW acquire the Breach Response Services to which it is entitled and upgrade its cyber security protection.” 3) M/S/V: Confirmation of the following Motion that was passed on May 14, 2024: “To approve the proposed budget for 2024/2025 as written – but allowing S Grathwohl, Treasurer, a chance in the next day or two to clarify and

		<p>finalize the category titles of two small items.” APPROVED.</p>
<p>Meeting House</p>	<p>Rev. Taylor reported on possible uses for the Meeting House. He noted that R Fontilla and e Belmont [sic], at his request, have submitted an application (with fee enclosed) to the Town of Westport’s Planning & Zoning Commission to be granted permission to rent the space out, on occasion, if we choose to do so as a means of revenue. The application also asks permission to use the Meeting House as a parsonage. Such permission would give us flexibility and options. Up until now, zoning restrictions have limited our use only to our own educational activities.</p>	
<p>Sr. Minister’s Report/Monitoring</p>	<p>Rev. Taylor gave a comprehensive report to the Board, covering many topics. See his May 2024 Report on the website (or on the BOT’s bulletin board in the foyer) for details.</p> <p>Tech Team Update: Rev. Taylor reported on his meeting with Rob Laug regarding requests from the Tech Team for more money next year to upgrade and maintain our digital capabilities. R Laug had explained that the Team has few regular members and the burden of keeping up with the tech demands on Sundays as well as responding to multiple requests from several different committees for technical assistance covering weekend events, meetings, etc., has been onerous on the Team, which is why there is now a suggested fee for video or audio services, for at least some Team members. However, Rev. Taylor did point out that some of the expenses, such as new mics and cables, can be covered out of the money already budgeted for Worship Services.</p> <p>Security Measures: There was some discussion about getting a camera that would show the front entrance on a screen in the Tech Room (to the left of the sanctuary). W Levy, Chair of the Safer Congregations Committee, commented that this was a priority security recommendation from the SCC.</p> <p>Choir Director: Given the recent announcement from Rev. Thompson of his approaching retirement, there was discussion of forming search committees, and who</p>	

	<p>would serve on these committees, to search for an Interim Choir Director and/or a half-time Music Director, and whether the two recent hires in the Music Department (Lexi Fonda and Nick Barra), intended to relieve some of the burden from Rev. Ed Thompson’s shoulders, could expand their responsibilities in the meantime.</p> <p>Transitional Ministry: Rev. Taylor reported on the status of his Transition Team, saying that he had asked his Team to continue in their advisory role for another year.</p> <p>Summer Worship: Rev. Taylor noted that the schedule for Services throughout the Summer is nearly complete, but that there are still a few holes, and he has been in conversation with a couple people who have exciting ideas to offer. He expects to have the Summer schedule fully booked very soon.</p> <p>Article II at UUA’s GA 2024: Rev. Taylor held his second congregation-wide discussion about Article II on May 19, which was well attended and inspired lively discussion, both pro and con the proposed changes expressed in Article II. He would like to meet with TUUCW’s chosen Delegates for this year’s General Assembly to discuss how their votes could best represent the mixed feelings in our Congregation toward the changes suggested to the language for our UU Principles.</p>	
<p>Bagels with the Board</p>	<p>W Levy and J Gerometta reported on the most recent event, held on April 28 outside on the side lawn. 17 congregants came to the table to engage with Board members W Levy, J Gerometta, S Grathwohl, and R Sankar. The discussion topic was: What do you love about worship at TUUCW? What would you like to change? There were lively discussions, and congregants seemed to appreciate the opportunity to give feedback and be heard.</p>	
<p>Conflict Transformation</p>	<p>B Lasher reported on the work of the Committee formally known as Conflict Transformation (temporarily calling themselves the No-Name Committee). Committee members C Dixon, R Burnham, L Donahue, M Garrison, J Gerometta, B Lasher, and led by L Lubin, have been attempting to apply Rev. Terasa Cooley’s wisdom and teachings to identify patterns of conflict and tension within our Congregation and, among other insights, hope to better</p>	

	<p>understand the greater obstacles that face people of color in our society. At TUUCW, a few current tensions and conflict patterns observed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Tensions quickly escalate from latent to overt conflict without negotiation in between. This results in scapegoating, cutoffs, and division. 2) Lack of transparency around decision-making contributes to conflicts - small groups initiate things without input. 3) Tendency towards work avoidance and conflict fatigue since the organ crisis has led to avoidance of addressing issues. 	
<p>Marketing/PR/ Membership</p>	<p>B Cliff gave some initial thoughts on spending for marketing work, leading to a brief strategic discussion on the advantages of using the \$20K now since the Endowment had already agreed last year to put aside that money for the purpose of revamping the website vs. putting that money toward next year's budget. J Vogel, Chair of Membership, has many suggestions for how that money could be used next year to attract new members. B Cliff, J Vogel, and Rev. Taylor have met and will continue to discuss the options.</p>	
<p>Proposed edits to HR Manual</p>	<p>Over the last month, S Emberling and B Cliff did a thorough review and copy-editing of the HR Manual and the suggested updates made by D Garskof and K Fuchs. They commended the extensive work done by Fuchs and Garskof to align the HR Manual (a/k/a the Employee Handbook) with current UUA and Connecticut State employment guidelines and with the Board's own Policy Manual, and they recommended that the Board approve the current updated and edited version. The Motion to approve carried, and the document will be given an Approval/Adoption Date of May 21, 2024, and be our official Employee Handbook. B Cliff made a Motion to formally recognize the tremendous work done by Kim Fuchs and Deb Garskof behind the scenes to update the Manual.</p>	<p>M/S/V PASSED: To approve the current updated version of the Employee Handbook (a/k/a, the HR Manual). APPROVED.</p> <p>M/S/V PASSED: To find a way to formally recognize and show appreciation for the work done by Kim Fuchs and Deb Garskof on the Employee Handbook (a/k/a, the HR Manual).</p>
<p>Treasurer's Report</p>	<p>S Grathwohl gave the May report, which is available on the website and on the bulletin board in the foyer. Following the introduction of the proposed budget to the Congregation and the feedback received at the open discussion on the budget on May 5, S Grathwohl and Rev. Taylor, with input from Board members and the Endowment, made some final adjustments. The revised budget was brought to the Board for review and approved by the Board on May 14. The revised budget is on the website and there are links in SOUNDINGS so congregants can examine it. There will be a Congregational vote at the June 9 Annual Meeting.</p>	

Governance	B Cliff and Rev. Taylor reported that the new Governance Team of Lyn Kobsa (lead), Deb Garskof, Tom Hearne, Sharon Poole, Sudha Sankar, and Ken Vogel will meet on their own to get started. Available Board members will also meet with the Team via Zoom on May 29, 6-7 pm, to define the charter and the scope of work, discuss plans and expectations, and to make sure everyone's goals for the project are aligned.	
2024 Annual Meeting	S Emberling gave a status report on preparations for the June 9 th Annual Meeting: The Call-to-Meeting went out to the Congregation on May 18; Rob Laug will handle overall audio/visual in sanctuary on June 9, and Fiona from the Tech Team will manage the tech for the Zoom participants; Announcements have been posted reminding congregants that remote participation and voting requires pre-registration by Saturday June 8 at noon; Ken Vogel will serve as Parliamentarian; Speakers have been lined up to give the committee reports; Aki and Miya Lasher have graciously agreed to provide childcare during the meeting; W Levy and J Gerometta have volunteered to serve as the Zoom team, monitoring the chat line and counting remote votes; J McPartland and her team will provide a vegan buffet; L Garvey is working on the Report from the Board President and Board members have offered to help edit his draft.	
Very Fine Award	In R Sankar's absence, S Emberling reported on the nominations submitted by congregants and the results of the votes by Board members. The remainder of the discussion was moved to Executive Session toward the end of the meeting, where, after a final vote, a winner was selected.	
Administrative Business	S Emberling mentioned a few topics that will be addressed at the June Board meeting so that Board members have time to give the items some thought before the next meeting: 1) There will be a discussion about the officer positions and elections for Board officers; the current President and Treasurer will be rotating off the Board in June; the current Secretary has held the position for 4 years and would welcome the opportunity to train another Board member to take over the position. 2) The Board needs one of its members to manage the scheduling of all Board activities, preferably using Doodle Polls.	

<p>Information Reports</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 75th Anniversary. B Cliff confirmed that the party date will be November 9th. In conjunction with the Anniversary, a new Photo Directory of all current members will be created, with Rob Zuckerman as photographer. 2. Mini Board Retreat. B Cliff had suggested that with 4 current Board members retiring this June and 4 new Board members up for election at the Annual Meeting, next month's newly formed Board could benefit from some time to get to know each other, review current policies of governance, and to informally discuss upcoming issues. While there will still be a regular Board Retreat planned for late August or September, an informal 3-hour gathering and discussion over dinner was set for June 21 for the new Board. 3. TUUCW's 2024 Delegates for GA. S Emberling announced the names of the congregants who have volunteered to be Delegates for TUUCW this year. After discussion, the Board voted and approved the following Delegates: Cheryl Dixon Paul, Brian Lasher, and Kathy Roberts. Later, by email, Angi Haen and Ken Vernon were also approved as Delegates. All 5 Delegates have registered to attend GA. Rev. Taylor said that he planned to speak with the Delegates in order to communicate how best to represent TUUCW with their voting. He said that his 2 discussions with the Congregation (April 14 and June 19) about Article II revealed a very mixed reaction to Article II. 4. Rev. Ed Thompson's Retirement. Some details were discussed in Executive Session. The Music Committee wishes to handle plans for putting together a celebratory event. 5. Roles of the SCC, the COM, the Board, the Ministers, and the Pastoral Care Chaplains. A brief discussion was moved to Executive Session regarding how best to respond to a disturbed congregant. All agreed that new protocols are needed to clarify the roles of these leadership bodies and to decide on best practices. New, clear guidelines are needed. In striving to respond as a Board to individual complains with fairness, compassion, efficiency, and effectiveness over the last few years, some Board members acknowledged that countless numbers of hours were spent trying to help a single unhappy congregant. There was general 	
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	agreement that the Board, as a whole, is not best suited to addressing individual congregants' grievances. That is not the role of the Board. However, there is a need for this service, and there must be further discussion to determine how best to meet this need.	
Process Observer	J Gerometta reported that meeting was well run and kept as nearly as possible to allotted times.	
Closing Reflection	S Grathwohl gave a reading from the UUA's website on the topic of Gratitude for Our Time Together.	
Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.	
	Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, June 19, 2024	

Respectfully submitted,
 Stapley Emberling,
 Secretary for the Board of Trustees
 May 26, 2024