

UU Westport Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Date: May 26, 2026

Time: 7:07 PM – 9:25 PM

Location: West Wing and online

Minutes: Sari Bodi

Attendance

Board & Minister: Beth Cliff, Mark Corcoran, Jon Gage, Dayle Brownstein, Julyen Norman, Sari Bodi, Rev. Carlton, Ravi Sankar (on zoom), Felicia Keeton & Alex Marshall (absent)

Observers: Alison Smith, Ben Chan

Other Participants: Treadwell Committee: Sharon Poole, Randy Burnham, Bob Welsh

The meeting was called to order by Beth Cliff at 7:07 PM

Following a reminder of observation protocols by Beth, the Chalice was lit, and Beth shared a reading.

Consent Agenda

- Motion: Approve minutes from 04/28/2026
- Moved by: Jon
- Seconded by: Mark
- Outcome: Passed unanimously

Introducing new candidates

Beth introduced Ben Chan and Alison Smith as new candidates for the board and asked them what why they were interested in being on the board.

Alison, relatively new to the congregation, has been an observer of the board for the last six months. She has an administrative background. She was intrigued that the process for looking for a settled minister had not allowed our congregation to look for a contract minister at the same time. She wanted to understand the politics of the UUA better.

Ben, a longtime Unitarian, is relatively new to UUWestport. His work on the Ops Council with Randy exposed him to a lot of folks and a lot of needs, He's eager to help, wants to be more involved in the life of the congregation.

Treadwell Committee

Sharon, representing the Treadwell Committee, presented an update on the progress of the seven-member committee which will determine ideas for how and when the congregation will disperse the \$800,000 given by Nancy Treadwell. Nancy's parents were founding members of the church. The committee is meeting once or twice a month for 90-minute sessions.

- The committee's job, as they see it, is to honor the Treadwell's' desires.
- Provide stewardship in support of the long-term benefits of the congregation.
- Ensure that the fund enhances programs, rather than to be used for the operating budget.

The committee intends to work within the intent of the trust as much as they can, which they see as "taking a current and future view of the Church school and the library." To this end, they are:

- Researching the Treadwell's as well as faith formation and library program possibilities. The old library used to be a sacred space and was used more than it is today. The school was different then as well. For one thing, there were more students.
- Determining approach for congregational engagement
- Beginning to form specific recommendations for the gift.
- Look to the Scouller/Nelson and Bernhart funds for guidance.

There followed a general discussion among Board members that encouraged the Treadwell team to be sure to use the Decision-Making process, which was stipulated in their charter: their work is to design a process for the congregation to decide how to use the money - not for them. They were encouraged to avoid making decisions themselves, for example, that instructed the money be used strategically for long-term programs, and not to be used for the operating budget, as an example. (see 3 way above.)

It also encouraged the team to get in front of the congregation soon - not with specific plans, but with some open meetings and dialogue so that the congregation could begin getting comfortable with the work, the potential restrictions, and some ideas the team has for how the process will work. In the absence of those conversations, congregants could begin making misinformed assumptions about how to best spend the money - assumptions that could even be legally implausible given Treadwell's will. These meetings could be informal, open-ended: a chance for the Treadwell team to hear from people, and for people to begin owning the conversations so that they aren't surprised down the road.

The team understood this advice and agreed to the Board's guidance. They will continue their work and keep the Board updated.

Budget

Beth said that we need to give the congregation the budget soon, then set meetings for the board to discuss it with them.

- The budget we have just passed now has a surplus of \$12,000. \$15,000 had been allotted to Rev. Terri's moving expenses but wasn't needed because Terri lives locally.
- \$3,000 was deducted for the Senior Minister's professional expenses.
- \$41,700 will go to the general reserve fund as well as to buildings and grounds. These funds are not specifically for 2027, but for future expenses.
- Beth said that since our budget has been bare bones for years, perhaps we could use some of these funds to give to social justice, faith formation, public relations or the website.
- Mark said that we need to be careful of how we spend the money because some of it will come from a matching grant which we won't receive until 2027. Also, we can't depend on future windfalls as something like this might not happen again.

Motion

Beth made a motion to make the two changes in the budget, which are striking the moving costs for Rev. Terri, and adding \$3,000 for the senior minister's professional experiences. The rest will go to the general reserve fund. Mark seconded the motion. The motion was approved by all.

Ops Council report

Ops Council submitted a written report. They are working on quite a few things, including building and grounds maintenance and researching vendors for creating a new website. They set up a work brigade of volunteers. Ben said six new people have come forward. They sent out an RFP to five website vendors. They extended the deadline for decision making to June. Reverend Carlton will meet with the Kleins to discuss their involvement.

Motion

Beth made the motion: We ask endowment to spend up to \$200,000 to cover the costs of repairing the balcony for safety and maintenance reasons, using contractors recommended by the preservation advisory committee and the operations council. The recommendation would be that this work begin as soon as is feasible.

Jon seconded the motion. All were in favor. A copy of the motion will be sent to Ken with a copy to the Ops Council and Mark.

Minister Search

Beth suggested we start thinking about onboarding Rev. Terri who will start on August 15th. We need to make sure her office is comfortable, that she has an opportunity to meet people, and that maybe we have a party for her. The board doesn't have to do everything, but they can assign people. Reverend Carlton can help us.

Board Meeting with the congregation

Suggestions for the end of the year meeting on June 14th. Who will announce the Fine Award? Also, who will tell the congregation that the board size will be reduced from 9 to 7 members?

Motion

Beth made the motion that since we passed the motion reducing the board from 9 to 7, we need to revise the constitution article 8 section 6, to read; five voting members shall constitute a quorum for the meeting of the board.

Sari seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Four members leaving the board

Ravi and Jon shared their thoughts about their time on the board. Beth gave a handout discussing her ideas about the board moving forward. She suggested we find ways to take some of the pressure off our minister so she can focus on the things she went to seminary for. Alexa Marshall will also be leaving the board.

Closing words. The meeting ended at 9:25 PM.