

UU Westport — Board of Trustees

Draft Meeting Minutes September 29, 2026 | 7:00–9:30 p.m. | In-Person**

Meeting started: 7:06 PM

Attending: Felicia Keeton (President), Chris Aquino, Sari Bodi, Alison Smith, Mark Corcoran, Elena Rockman, Julyen Norman, Ben Chan, Rev. Terri Dennehy, and **Observer** (Eileen Belmont)

1. Welcome & Opening

- **Chalice lighting & reflection** offered by **Chris Acquino**.
- **Opening reminders** delivered by **Felicia Keeton**, including observer guidelines, process norms, and motion procedures.
- **Brief check-in** completed.

Consent Agenda

Items:

- Approval of **June and July meeting minutes** (presented by Sari and Alison).
- Motion moved by Ben
- Seconded by Julyen Norman
- Vote: unanimous approval

Approval of **Ministerial Housing Allowance** for Rev. Terri Dennehy.

Motion: *Be it resolved that the amount of the Ministerial Housing Allowance, as a portion of the total salary, for Rev. Terri Dennehy shall be \$48,000 per annum (\$1,846.15 per pay period), effective August 15, 2026. This allocation shall remain in place unless modified by the Board of Trustees.*

Outcome:

- Motion moved by Sari
- Seconded by Mark
- Vote: unanimous approval

Meeting Scheduling

Discussed penciling in one additional meeting per month for deeper-dive topics; Nothing was decided, but Julyen will coordinate dates if we have another meeting.

Reviewed Board Sunday welcomes and worship schedule update process.

Communications & Engagement

- Confirmed October & November Board Article deadlines; reviewed template and themes.
- Confirmed October Bagels with the Board, including food sign-up and purpose. Chris volunteered to bring bagels.
- Board discussed using its budget to fund future bagels with the board.
- Confirmed November 1 coffee hour logistics; will need a sign-up sheet, bagels and muffins and coffee.

There is another event scheduled on Nov. 1: Legacy/Stewardship pizza lunch at 11:30 a.m.

- Confirmed November 15 Member Meeting in the sanctuary. Purpose is to keep the congregation up to date on board goals and financial status plus Treadwell and COM will be reading out their road maps and status. Draft agenda will be published in Soundings. Proposed collaboration: Felicia, Alison, Chris + Mark or Elena.

UUA & Governance Coordination

- Reviewed draft rotational schedule for meetings with Hilary Allen (UUA).

Retreat Follow-Up

- Personality test: Proposed follow-up lunch with Jim Francek and Ruth Fontilla on Sunday, Jan 24, 2027 or January 31, 2027 at 11:30 a.m.
- Discussed check-in on Board functioning and collaboration.

Technology & File Management

- Reviewed Dropbox and Google shared drive structure, responsibilities, and best practices for email/text communication to streamline workflow. Google Drive for documents, Dropbox for archived materials

Monitoring & Reporting

- Reviewed Board proposed monitoring plan (what information is needed, when, and how).
- Confirmed monthly and bi-monthly reporting cadence:

Monthly (2nd Friday):

- Senior Minister report (Rev. Terri; format confirmed)
- Finance Committee
- Ops Council
- Safety / Interim Messaging (TBD)

Bi-Monthly (starting Jan 2027):

- Nominating Committee
- Committee on Ministry
- Legacy Giving, Stewardship, Treadwell (requested)
- Membership (TBD)

Quarterly:

- Endowment (aligned with financial statement schedule)
- Preservation Advisory Group

Committee rotation:

- October 27: Legacy, Stewardship, Treadwell
- November 17: Nom Comm & COM

Financial Matters

Overview of FY'27 Budget:

- Total income: **\$900,200**
- Total expenses: **\$919,817**
- Operating deficit: **-\$19,617** before other income
- Gap closed through **\$110,900 in Other Income**, primarily endowment distributions and reserve draws.

Discussion Items:

- Reviewed first draft of Board meeting scorecard.
- Scheduled Finance 101 session for Board and Rev. Terri — proposed dates Oct 20 or Oct 21.
 - Purpose: baseline understanding of financial data and Board responsibilities; overview of financial management structure (Finance Committee, Sue O'Meara, budgeting process).

Other Financial Topics:

- FY 25–26 Stewardship Match — strategies to encourage quicker payments.
- Financial audit — now a full annual review.
- Year-round Stewardship Committee — launched 9/15; pledge goal approx. \$600k.
- Legacy Giving Program — launch planned early 2027; warm-up on Nov 1.

- Treadwell Gift — Board committee scheduled with Rev. Terri; reporting to Board at Oct 27 Board meeting and Nov 15 Member Meeting.

Board Decisions (Tech Budget, Website Modernization, Interim Messaging)

A/V Equipment Fund Motion

To establish a restricted A/V Equipment Fund and direct that all surplus revenue from A/V-supported rentals be deposited into this fund for the sole purpose of A/V equipment repair, replacement, and maintenance.

Tabled. Meeting to be scheduled with Mark, Felicia, Ruth, Elena to review tech needs and rental income and to discuss how to fund AV immediate and future needs.

Website Modernization Motion (Amended)

To authorize a small team, led by Ruth Fontilla, to transition UU Westport's website to a modern CMS and to develop and execute a lean migration plan, delivering an initial functional release. Subsequent iterative releases will incorporate input from key stakeholder groups across the congregation—including Worship & Music, Faith Formation/RE, Membership, Communications, Pastoral Care, and Administrative/Operations—to ensure the website continues to evolve in alignment with congregational needs.

- Motion moved by Ben
- Seconded by Mark
- Vote: unanimous approval

Interim Messaging Framework Motion (Tabled until October)

Motion to establish a Board-appointed Interim Messaging Framework Committee empowered to develop temporary messaging for minister, staff, Board, and lay leaders until long-term messaging is created through the congregational visioning process. Committee to deliver interim messaging within 30 days; sunsets upon adoption of long-term architecture.

Retreat Follow-Up: Setting Ends & FY 26–27 Priorities

- Each sub team will meet and finalize desired outcomes and draft strategies in advance of the October 27th board meeting.
- October: Motion to formally adopt Ends & FY priorities.
- October: Confirm FY 26–27 priority programs and assign tiers/leads.
- November 15 Member Meeting: Announce Ends and launch Linkage process to prioritize strategies and tactics.
- November 17 Board Meeting: Review next steps in visioning roadmap.

Operations & Facilities

- Mark provided background on our challenge to ensure we manage the maintenance and preservation of our iconic sanctuary.
- Mark discussed the idea of moving the Preservation Advisory Group work under Endowment as a means of ensuring we have long term oversight of our iconic asset. This idea will be further evaluated.
- **Motion:** To stand up a board Preservation Committee that will include David Keeton, Mark Cocoron, Steven Grothwolh, Ben Chan and potentially a couple of local specialists.
- Motion moved by Felicia
- Seconded by Mark
- Vote: unanimous approval

- Ops Council update — Discussion tabled.

Linkage

- Reflections on Bagels with the Board.
- Julyen reflected that it was a great room. Mark got feedback that there was no room for questions. Mention was made that too much time was spent on Board introductions rather than hearing from congregants.
- Discussed Linkage + COM partnership vision. Rev. Terri said that the first step is to clarify the role of COM.
- November 17 Board Meeting: Update on Linkage Roadmap.

Process Observer Report

- Elena shared her thoughts.

Closing

- Closing reflection offered by Felicia.
- Meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM