

OUUC BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 14, 2017

OUUC – Classroom 3

We are a liberal religious community that opens minds, fills hearts and transforms lives

Board Officers Present: Linda Selsor, President; Don Melnick, Vice President (acting Recording Secretary); Wendy Tanner, Treasurer

Members-at-Large Present: Jim Anest, John Tafejian, Michele Hendrickson, Martha Nicoloff

Ex-Officio Member Present: The Rev. Eric Posa

Members Absent: Helen Henry, Secretary; Fritz Wrede

Congregation Members Present:

Bobbie Adams	Pat Sonnenstuhl
Emily Ray	Jim Lengenfelder
Otto Buls	Celia Witcher Tobin
Mikel Young	Jo Ann Young
Cheryl Hanks	Susan Lawson
Selden Hall	Leslie Romer
Ann Yeo	Linda Witcher
Jerry Guerrero	Christine Guerrero
Mike Murray	Bobbe Murray
Dan Donahue	
Jeff Goltz, Co-Chair 2018 Pledge Drive	

7:00 Opening Welcome/Check-in

7:05 Review Agenda: Two changes were noted; one in the Agenda order and the second the addition of a brief Executive Session, both of which are reflected in the Minutes that follow.

7:10 Board Covenant: Read aloud by board members

7:15: Congregational Member Concerns & Comments: A letter of concerns dated September 5th (Appendix A attached) had been forwarded before the board's September 9th fall retreat because the authors had hoped it could be considered at that time. But, as had been earlier indicated to them via email, this was not possible since the retreat agenda was already full. Never-the-less the board definitely wanted time to review the letter thoroughly before responding and had set aside time at the upcoming 4-hour work session to do so.

Two Congregants also read letters of personal concern and these are contained in Appendix B attached.

In response to two questions posed of them spokespersons for congregants attending clarified the following:

- Though the three individuals whose names appeared on the September 5th letter had been the primary authors many of those attending shared similar concerns.
- The Section of the September 5th letter titled "Policy Points Relevant to Expectations of the Minister" contained responses to assertions the authors of the memo understood to have been made by board members during the three question and answer sessions held following Rev. Perchlik's resignation earlier this year.

Congregants attending were thanked for the hard work they had done in compiling their letters and assured that the board would be responding once it had completed its review. (See Appendix C attached)

7:25 Stewardship/2018 Budget Increases? Goal? Pledges First the Treasurer's draft comparison of the 2017 Budget and the projected outcome for this FY was reviewed by the board as was the draft FY 2018 budget. This work is being coordinated closely with the Finance Committee and should be finalized very soon. The board was then briefed on the Stewardship Committee's planned FY 2018 pledge drive. The theme this year is "Living our Covenant". Board members were asked to complete their pledges by September 21st since the campaign will officially start on September 24th. The goal is to have the drive sufficiently complete so that the board can review the results at its November meeting. Jeff Goltz and Chris Parke are co-chairing the pledge drive and Riley McLaughlin and Martha Guilfoyle have been instrumental in creating the visual promotional materials for it.

7:45 Consent Agenda

Board Minutes 8/10/17

Financial Report 2017

The following motion was adopted: **Consent Agenda items are approved.**

7:47 Decision Regarding the Length of Interim Minister Term The board had been informally contemplating this issue for some time but had wanted to wait until the Rev. Posa completed his initial congregation assessment and had reported on it before deciding. Since he did so at the September 6th retreat a decision could now be made. Initial thinking had been that the sooner the search for a new settled minister could be gotten underway the better. But further in depth discussion of the matter yielded a different conclusion for the following reasons:

- Recruiting a new settled minister within a one-year timeframe would have meant that the Search Committee had been able to start in April of this year, which of course did not happen; search for a minister within a year and a half timeframe (the next available opportunity) would have meant selecting from a significantly smaller candidate pool and, given all that had transpired this year, Rev. Posa questioned the readiness of our congregation to start a recruiting effort now. He made clear that this was his opinion regardless of whether or not the board opted for him to continue for a second year.
- Though a small portion of the recruiting expense will go in the 2018 FY budget, coming up with an estimated \$22,000 in the near term to cover the total recruiting expense would be impractical short of using reserves. Also the lesser expense of having an interim minister for the second year, as opposed the expense of a settled minister, would reduce financial needs in the near term.

These factors all pointed towards opting for a two-year interim minister period and the board adopted the following motion: **There will be a two-year period within which to call the next settled minister.**

8:05 Proposed Annex Sale Follow-up Informal congregant feedback indicated that, because of end-of-summer activities, scheduling a Special Congregational Meeting in September would run the risk of reduced attendance. Since it is critical that this decision be made as soon as possible the possibility of delaying the meeting until October was discussed and the following motion adopted: **The date for the Special Congregation Meeting to consider sale of the Annex will be moved to Friday October 20th at 7:00PM.** Periodically between now and October 20th, between first and second Sunday services, board members, John Tafejian and Don Melnick will answer congregant questions about the Annex in the Commons.

8:10 Retreat Follow-up The following topics will be discussed during the board's work session on Saturday September 23rd:

- Policy/Procedure process
- Discussion of points raised by concerned congregants
- Consideration of how sale of the Annex can support our Ends

8:15 Executive Session Regarding Congregant Covenantal Concern The session 0was held.

8:25 Closing and Adjournment

Next board meeting: October 12, 2017

Agenda planning meeting: October 3, 2017 @ Panorama

Linda Selsor, President

Don Melnick (acting for absent Secretary)

Appendix A

TO: Linda Selsor, OUUC Board President
Members of the Board of Trustees
Interim Minister Eric Posa

FROM: Interested Congregants

DATE: September 5, 2017

SUBJECT: Expectations for finding a new minister

Linda graciously promised our representatives a spot on the agenda of the September 14 Board Meeting. As you are holding a retreat on September 9, you are likely to make important decisions that impinge on our deeply felt concerns. We want you

to know our concerns now, before your retreat, so you can give them full consideration. Our spot on the September 14 Board Meeting will then become your opportunity to give us specific responses.

Background

The sudden “negotiated resignation” of our recently settled minister caused a lot of conversation. The issues of process and transparency were uppermost. These issues were independent of whether individuals very much liked that individual, or whether they were lukewarm about his performance. Conversations then moved to how we can help a new settled minister succeed.

Eventually, three meetings were held which involved interested congregants of the Congregation. These meetings were the means of clarifying our concerns and proposing solutions. What follows are suggestions which arise out of our loving commitment to OUUC. We commend them to your attention.

Relationship Between the Board and Congregation

Key points (in no particular priority):

- The members of the Congregation are stakeholders; the Board is accountable to us.
- Need to have clarity re the responsibility of the Board to the Congregation. Congregants need to be educated as to their role and responsibilities.
- Board minutes and agendas should be more complete. The Board posted detailed notes from the June 17 meeting; we hope this model continues.
- Although as a private organization the OUUC Board is not bound by public meeting laws, morally and ethically the Board’s decision-making process should be transparent.

- Reinststate the "Board Minute" which used to follow the Sunday service in order to highlight key issues/concerns for all present.

Ministerial Search Process

The actual search process is where OUUC goes public with its needs and wants for a minister. Much groundwork must be laid before the search can begin. The survey done prior to the search for the recent settled minister was satisfactory. Did that survey information feed the job description? The seeds for success and failure are planted with the search. Our participants did not recall seeing a job description from the Search Committee regarding what was being looked for in a candidate.

- That survey is now more than a year old, and a new effort to survey members, in person or in writing, should be launched as soon as possible.
- At this juncture, the Board (or the Search Committee?) should sponsor more meetings to refine what OUUC wants in a minister. It appears there might have been a disconnect between the Search Committee and the Board regarding expectations.
- The extent to which a minister should hold administrative duties has arisen. What is the optimum balance between administrative duties and spiritual leadership at OUUC? Are there congregations of our size which successfully combine both types of roles in one minister?
- A workshop with the subject, How Can We Help the New Minister to Succeed? would be a way for all members to brainstorm ideas. Ideally, the Board could sponsor such a workshop. Alternatively, a subgroup of congregants (such as ourselves) could sponsor it.
- Congregants should know the expectations of the new minister, and be able to review the job description. Ideally, the desires of the Congregation will be reflected in the tasks and relative priorities of the job description.
- The candidates and the Congregation must know how ministerial success will be measured.

- Congregants should have an opportunity to see the candidates in action when they come to the region to preach.
- Staff of the UUA/PNWD should be considered valuable resources, but OUUC should weigh denominational advice against local needs and concerns.

Evaluation of the Minister

Our current Bylaws say the minister must be evaluated by the Committee on Ministry (COM). Under Policy Governance the responsibility for evaluating the minister is vested in the Board. Interim Emily Melcher suspended the COM, saying that interims are not subject to evaluation. The COM should have been re-instated once we had a settled minister. There were a number of comments supporting some kind of intermediary group between the Board and Congregation.

How to Help the Candidate Succeed

- An important role of the Minister is to hold firm and nurture the values of the Congregation.
- Performance should be evaluated at regular intervals—such as three months, six months, nine months. Even if the Board is responsible for the formal evaluative process, the Congregants need a way to feed information into that process.
- Some form of a COM is necessary to provide an avenue for identification and early resolution of irritants or difficulties.
- The Minister should have the benefit of a “team” that helps the minister in practical ways, to smooth the first year of service in a new community with its unique culture.

“Resignations”

- The process for dismissals, negotiated resignations, or any other euphemism must be an open one and occur only after there is broad consensus that the Minister’s performance does not advance the goals

and needs of the Congregation. Resignations of the sort we experienced represent a failure on the part of leadership.

- It must be understood that just as the Congregation calls a settled minister, the Congregation is the body that drives the firing, release, or terminating of a Minister, with the Board acting in the negotiating role.
- The UUA Ministers Association guidelines state that ministers should not propose or accept an arrangement whereby the terms may not be disclosed. Lack of disclosure is unhealthy for the entire Congregation.

The Interim Between Settled Ministers

There was strong but not unanimous feeling that the interim period should be limited to one year for a couple of reasons. Cost was one. The other was that we can't move forward decisively with new initiatives without knowing they will be sustained. With a two-year interim, OUUC will be impacted by almost five years without a settled minister.

- The Board should clarify the job description of our current Interim Minister. What role does he play in the search process?
- During the Interim Period, no policies adopted by the Congregation should be dropped or changed without a vote by the Congregation.

The above is the essence of our conversations about these issues. We welcome follow up and further conversations with the Board, our Interim Minister, and other members of our congregation. We highly recommend an open meeting as soon as possible this fall for others in the congregation to provide input and guidance for helping our next settled minister to succeed.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We are seeking further understanding.

For further questions, contact:

Emily Ray, EmilyRayJimLengenfelder@msn.com

Cheryl Hanks, scinlogs@msn.com
Pat Sonnenstuhl, cnmpat@comcast.net

Policy Points Relevant to Expectations of the Minister

STATEMENT: The Minister reports to the Board.

FACT: The Minister reports to the Congregation on anything “ministerial.” UUA emphasizes that under any chosen form of UU governance, the minister is the employee of the congregation, and as such reports, in a performance-sense, only to the congregation. The Board acts as the negotiator of the employment agreement, salary, and (if necessary) the terms of the negotiated resignation in representation of the congregation.

STATEMENT: Policy Governance requires that the Minister be the Chief Executive.

FACT: Under Policy Governance, if a church is large enough to need more than one minister, that church may choose to delegate executive responsibilities to the Senior Minister. Any church, regardless of size, may choose to have a lay executive, an executive team, or to leave the executive authority in the hands of the Board.

STATEMENT: Under Policy Governance, The Committee on Ministry(ies) is disbanded.

FACT: UUA recommends that the Committee on Ministry(ies) be disbanded during the term of an interim minister. However, this has nothing to do with Policy Governance. The Interim Ministers Manual says the interim minister is to reinstate the Committee on Ministry(ies) before leaving office. UUA’s recommendation under Policy Governance is that the church disband the Ministerial Support Team, and substitute a Committee on Ministry(ies). Our By Laws state we have a COM, but currently that is not the case.

STATEMENT: The Board appoints the members of the Committee on Ministry(ies).

FACT: The congregation appoints the members of the Committee on Ministries by whatever mechanism it deems appropriate. Our bylaws are silent on this mechanism. UUA recommends the Committee on Ministry(ies) not be staffed by recent Board members. The Committee on Ministry(ies) represents the link between the congregation and the Minister, and does not report to the Board (although it may report to the congregation *through* the Board).

STATEMENT: The Board evaluates the performance of the Minister.

FACT: Under our Bylaws, the Committee on Ministry(ies) is to evaluate the minister annually.

STATEMENT: The Board may dismiss the Minister or initiate a negotiated resignation.

FACT: Only the congregation may dismiss the Minister. This is clearly stated in UUA policy (regardless of Policy Governance or church size) and our bylaws. A negotiated resignation is *almost always* initiated by significant and well-known dissatisfaction in the congregation regarding the Minister's performance. A negotiated resignation is then recommended to the Minister by the Board as a means of protecting the Minister's employment record and transition to a subsequent appointment. Independent initiation of a negotiated resignation by the Board is only to occur in extreme circumstances.

STATEMENT: A negotiated resignation is almost always a "mutually agreed upon" resignation.

FACT: See above. The implication in the phrase "mutually agreed upon" is that the resignation is amicable. Clearly, the terms of the negotiated resignation are mutually agreed upon. However, they usually amount to no more than what was agreed upon in the Minister's employment contract. A negotiated resignation is almost always a forced resignation wherein the Minister is given the choice between the negotiated resignation or a potentially career-damaging congregational vote to dismiss. On rare occasions, a respected Minister who wishes to resign for personal reasons may be offered a negotiated resignation by the Board as a mechanism of giving him a "golden parachute."

STATEMENT: The terms of the negotiated resignation are part of employee confidentiality, and cannot be revealed to the congregation.

FACT: The UUA Ministers Association gives guidelines to Ministers being dismissed or resigning under negotiation. One line item says the Minister is not to sign any termination agreement that is to be held confidential.

Appendix B

UU Board Meeting

September 14, 2017

I've been asked to make a few comments , I believe, because I'm a newer member of the congregation and may have a different perspective than long- term members. Cheryl Hanks, a signer of the cover letter, will also say a few words.

Over the last few months, 3 meetings were held to discuss the process surrounding the resignation of our minister. All told, about 30 members attended, at least, one meeting. This represents 10% of our congregation.

Whether or not Thomas should have been retained is not our focus tonight.

Thomas arrived after a lengthy search. He was compelled to resign after a surprisingly brief tenure!

We believe the board was well-intentioned in all these matters; and, we understand it was a very stressful time for the board. We also believe the silence, secrecy, and lack of transparency, surrounding his resignation has fueled confusion, ill feelings, and many questions.

For example: Policy governance can take many forms. What was the job description of the minister? How was the new (to our church) policy governance model interpreted in relation to Thomas; how is it viewed today? What has the board learned from dealing with Thomas' resignation?

Regarding the details of the negotiated resignation: During a feedback session, we were informed we had no right to know details because it was a personnel issue. There was no reference provided to support the statement at that time, or since.

The congregation was deeply involved in personnel issues before Thomas was called. The congregation, by survey, indicated what type of minister they wanted. The congregation was involved in a detailed procedure to select a search committee and, of course, the congregation pays the salary of the minister. All personnel issues.

The board should function with complete transparency in all matters. If, for some reason, details of a major decision can't be revealed, the board should accept the burden of fully justifying their action with detailed references.

We want to look forward! When I drive in unfamiliar areas, I use Google Maps. When I make a wrong turn, or I'm forced to detour, I soon hear "recalculating" , after a few times this is annoying. However, it is also reassuring... because I know the program is still attempting to guide me toward my original goal. If it was silent... I would be concerned!

The board has been silent in the matters mentioned above. It would be reassuring to us and, I believe, others in our congregation, to know if, and how, the board is recalculating. We suggest a general meeting of the congregation to address these issues.

Thank you!

Dan Donahue

I am Cheryl Hanks, one of 38 members on the mailing list that resulted in this presentation. Thank you for your work on the Board. I have attended OUUC for 14 years with 11 years as a member. I have supported OUUC with my time, energy and resources. Selden and I have attended UU services in 4 other states and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Like many of you my life has allowed me to both live, work, and meet people throughout the US and the world. This year we visited Guatemala, the Polynesian islands, and now Russia. As a professional I worked 40 years in the private sector and for the federal and state governments. I do not resist change!

Until 2014 I served as member and chair of the Committee on Ministry. I do not want to serve on COM again. **However, thru COM** we had an effective tool for evaluation of all ministries as well as a conduit between Congregational members and Board members.

Recently a number of us have experienced being discounted and our concerns about current changes in the process of finding a settled minister are rationalized. We have written letters and talked to Board members. Personally my energy to give time, energy, and resources has diminished.

I am still imbued with our Covenant and principles. It is incumbent and imperative that we all use the intellectual powers and life experience of our members to make changes and promote social justice.

Here are some of our recommendations:

- For transparency: clarify with the stakeholders, the optimum balance between administrative duties and spiritual leadership at OUUC. Develop and disclose the prospective settled minister's job description.
- For transparency and inclusion: clarify the job description of our current Interim Minister. What role does Eric have in the search process? With a two-year interim, we will be almost five years without a settled minister.
- During the Interim Period, policies previously adopted by the Congregation will not be dropped or changed without a vote by the Congregation.
- Board minutes and agendas will continue to be timely, more complete and available on line.
- For transparency and inclusion: the Board (or the Search Committee?) will conduct a new survey and sponsor future

meetings to refine what OUUC wants in a minister as well as to educate OUUC members about policy governance.

- For transparency and inclusion: candidates and the Congregation will be informed as to how ministerial success will be measured.
- Finally conduct a workshop on How Can We Help the New Minister to Succeed.

September 14,

2017

Appendix C

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members in attendance at the Sept. 14th board meeting--Bobbie Adams, Otto Buls, Dan Donahue, Jeff Goltz, Christine Guerrero, Jerry Guerrero, Selden Hall, Cheryl Hanks, Susan Lawson, Jim Lengenfelder, Bobbe Murray, Mike Murray, Emily Ray, Leslie Romer, Pat Sonnenstahl, Linda Whitcher, Celia Whitcher Tobin, Ann Yeo, Jo Ann Young, and Mikel Young

FROM: Linda Selsor, President, on Behalf of the Board of Trustees and Rev. Eric Posa

DATE: September 25, 2017

SUBJECT: Response to Memorandum entitled "Expectations for Finding a New Minister"

Introduction: Thank you for all the thought and preparation that went into your documents and presentation to the Board of Trustees at its meeting Thursday, September 14th. The board held a four hour work session Saturday, September 23rd in large part to discuss the concerns raised in your documents, respond to those concerns and articulate plans moving forward. Once you have reviewed our memorandum, representatives of the board can be available to meet with those interested.

Each section of your memorandum was addressed and our responses are outlined below. We have called out a particular section on Policy Governance and Minister as Executive as related points that appeared in several different sections of your memorandum. Points that addressed the success and evaluation of the minister were also raised in several sections and will be addressed in the section on Evaluation of the Minister.

What the board found in reviewing the document was considerable agreement with many of the points raised. Indeed some of the recommendations have been under consideration already by the board.

Policy Governance and the Role of Minister as Executive: While not separated out in its own section in your memorandum of September 5th, there are references in several sections to concern about the role of Minister as Executive and the need for

education about the respective roles of the board and the congregation. It has been some time since the congregation approved transition to the policy governance model. We concur with the suggestion that education about the roles of the Minister, board and congregation under this model would be helpful. It could give us a baseline for further discussion of the desired role of the minister we seek. In our recent past the ministers have served as head of staff. What more does it mean under policy governance when we use the term executive? Without clarification, we each approach the role informed by our own experience or understanding of the term.

To help address this, the board has scheduled an informal session lead by Rev. Posa for Tuesday, October 24, 2017 from 7 – 9 PM. It will be open to all members and friends and will provide an overview of the key principles of policy governance and a discussion of what that means regarding the role of an executive. Our Interim Minister is currently serving in that capacity and can provide his perspective on the role and model how that might work in a congregation our size during his tenure with us. This experience will also provide input for the search process.

Relationship Between the Board and Congregation: The relationship between the board and the congregation is clearly articulated in OUUC bylaws, Article 5, Section I., A. and B which state:

- A. The board functions on behalf of, and is at all times subject to the will of the membership. The board shall act in the best interest of the congregation.
- B. The business, property, and affairs of the Congregation shall be the responsibility of the Board. The board is vested with the moral, ethical, and fiduciary duty to execute the purposes of the Congregation, except the Congregation shall approve the following business: [goes on to articulate those 6 items of business that require congregational approval]

Thus, the congregation, when it votes on board members, elects representatives to carry out the business of the church. The congregation's formal action is limited to the 6 items outlined in the bylaws.

This is not to say that the business of the board is carried on in a vacuum. The board relies on feedback and input from members directly through linkage meetings, ongoing communication with members, and through our pastor and ministry structure. Recent examples include linkage meetings to flesh out our ends, meetings to review findings of the Annex Task Group, ongoing e-blast communication and clarification regarding committee work on operational policies and procedures.

It is clear to us that this is insufficient. The board spent time at its June retreat brainstorming ways in which we can be more transparent with the congregation. We are in the process of implementing some of those. For example, members of the board were in the Commons last Sunday to answer questions on the upcoming Annex vote. We will be reviewing the format of the minutes to determine if we can place decisions made in context so that they help inform our membership and provide historical perspective for future reference. The minutes are legal documents and not posted until approved. This results in, at minimum, a month's delay in posting. We are working on getting regular monthly summaries of board meetings in the e-blast similar to the summary of our June retreat that you referenced. We have been providing updates on

critical decisions as they occur i.e. the Interim Search process, annex updates, selection of the Transition Team and the recent decision regarding a two year interim period. We are not at this point planning on adding a board minute in the service as this seems counter to the purpose of worship. We are considering ways that the board can be more intentionally available in the Commons and/or via informal monthly sessions on Sundays for conversation, input and questions from members. While not bound by public meeting laws, the board has been following the principles—posting agendas, posting minutes, providing e-blast announcements, etc. All meetings are open with the exception of Executive Sessions. And, time is reserved on each agenda for input from congregants.

Ministerial Search Process: Rev. Posa will prepare a recommended search process for calling our next settled minister that will be available for review by congregants in late November. The board will schedule an informal meeting after a November service open to any members to discuss the proposal, answer questions, address input. Then the board will vote to approve the schedule at its December meeting so that the process can begin right after the first of the year. This 17 month schedule will outline the steps we will take including the groundwork that is part of the search process. Indeed the need for extensive groundwork informed the decision to have a two year interim period. OUUC will utilize the UUA search process. It has evolved over the years from much experience and feedback from ministers and congregations. It is our best resource for identifying candidates. Their process includes valuable guidelines and tools to help congregations achieve the best possible match. For example, gaining member input from a survey and/or cottage meetings. We concur that it is important to repeat this step given the time, congregational growth and recent experience since the last survey and set of meetings. There are some aspects of the process that we can tweak; however, one aspect is not negotiable. Inviting members to see candidates in action when they come to the area is fraught with problems. It can create factions supporting one or the other candidate. Not all members may attend all sermons by candidates introducing an unbalanced perspective. It could result in the final candidate starting a ministry with a built in disadvantage—those members who preferred another candidate. Probably the most critical reason for limiting review of candidate sermons to Search Team members is the likely impact it would have on candidates. Ministerial candidates would quite likely withdraw from a search process that included such an option. The UUA provides a Transition Coach for the Search Team whose role is advisory. They assist in the process; they do not have any authority or input on the selection of specific candidates. In addition, UUA Regional staff from around the country is available to provide references and perspective when narrowing the candidate pool. They were invaluable during our recent search for an Interim Minister. Our desired attributes and expectations of a new settled minister will be outlined in our search application. Job descriptions are a different matter. They are provided for staff hired by the church. The minister is not hired; the minister is called. The minister's duties are broadly outlined in a contract as opposed to a job description. Our bylaws currently state "The Senior Minister has overall responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the Congregation and for the conduct of worship services. The Senior Minister serves as head of staff." The minister is given considerable latitude in fulfilling the role and

expenditure of time which may vary considerably week to week given emerging needs of members, issues facing the congregation, etc.

Evaluation of the Minister: There is a reference in the bylaws that states the minister's "performance is assessed on an annual basis by the Committee on Ministry" (COM). This reference is an anachronism. It was the only reference in our former bylaws to the COM and was missed when the COM was retired. The previous COM was established in Governance Policy not bylaws and answered to the Board of Trustees. Its members were selected by the board based on recommendations from the COM. The COM was eliminated in the updated and current Governance policies. This happened to coincide with our last Interim Ministry. Typically during interim periods, a Transition Team is established to provide assistance and feedback to the interim minister. In order to avoid duplicate efforts, COMs are placed on a hiatus during an interim period. Ours was not reinstated at the conclusion of the last interim as the authorizing Governance policy had been eliminated because we had moved to the policy governance model. [Both the current and former versions of the Governance Policy are available on line for reference purposes.]

Several of the key functions of the COM became tasks of the Board under the policy governance model--evaluation of the overall ministries of the congregation as a whole and evaluation of the minister. Those are both now responsibilities of the board. The board evaluates the minister in relationship to adherence to our Governance Policies and fulfillment of our Ends. This is done through a monthly monitoring schedule that allows for feedback and collaboration on an ongoing basis and provides opportunities to reassess the need for policy changes and revision of ends policies. The congregation's input comes via participation in linkage sessions, surveys, and other informal mechanisms. It is the board's role to address and resolve irritants or difficulties; however, as appropriate, the board will redirect concerns to the minister or related ministry whenever possible. Clearly the board will step in if efforts at direct resolution are unsuccessful.

Establishment of a team to assist the new minister in settling into the life of our congregation (similar in concept to the Transition Team) would strictly be at the request of the new minister. Indeed it is all of our responsibilities to help insure the success of our new settled minister.

Resignations: Rev. Perchlik and the board agreed to use of the term "mutually discerned resignation" because it more accurately described the process we went through together. Negotiated resignations are typically preceded by fairly divisive circumstances and often are done to eliminate the necessity for a congregation vote to recall the minister. This is what occurred during the rancorous division in the congregation leading up to the negotiated resignation of Rev. Sandra Lee. The term did not apply in our situation as we had concluded together that we did not have a good match. The confidentiality agreement was arrived at mutually in deference to the upcoming interim search process; while stated previously it bears repeating—we did not wish to impede Rev. Perchlik's ability to find an interim position.

The congregation clearly has the authority to call and recall a minister; however, the board is not prohibited from accepting a resignation. We had the authority and an obligation to act in what we considered to be "the best interests of the congregation." And, it was not done without input from members of the congregation. This may not

sync with what individual congregant's perceive to be their own best interests but is clearly part of our charge as set forth in the bylaws.

The Interim Between Settled Ministers: The decision and rationale for a two year interim period was shared with the congregation in an e-blast on Wednesday, September 20th. Cost was indeed a factor in recommending a two year interim. It would be very difficult to raise the full search budget in less than a year's time. A second year of Interim Ministry may actually save us a bit as the settled minister will likely be hired at a higher starting compensation package. The interim Minister's duties are set forth in contract. We can share relevant provisions of the contract with the congregation. The Interim Minister plays a vital role in helping to prepare the congregation for a new settled minister by helping to process issues, clarifying expectations, etc. The minister provides advice, clarification to the search committee but does not weigh in on specific decisions regarding specific candidates. We do not agree that initiatives and policy decisions be placed on hold during this interim period. This may have been the case in our prior interim but we are under a different set of circumstances. A new settled minister will need to take us where we are and provide leadership from that starting point. We are a strong congregation and need not be dependent on pastoral leadership to take action, make justice decisions and formulate policy. Indeed action on our part is a strong recommendation to potential pastors. The proviso that no policies be formulated or dropped without a vote by the congregation is frankly unprecedented and inconsistent with our bylaws. Policy decisions have long been the purview of the board. We are concerned that some governance policy decisions in the recent past may have been made without adequate, clear communication with the congregation. We will make every effort to address that in future governance policy considerations.

It should be noted that operational policies and procedures are the responsibility of the Minister and the Accountable Persons Team. As this is being written, operational policies and procedures are under consideration by several working committees of the congregation. As a result, congregants are having input in policy decisions. Operational policies and procedures do not require action on the part of the board. This gives considerable latitude to members acting in their various roles as committee and team members and leaders. It is one of the most empowering aspects of the policy governance model.

Success of New Settled Minister: Our biggest job over the coming months is to support and inform the search process. This includes feedback on desired attributes of search team members, consideration of individuals that might make good candidates. Once the search team is established, participation in all opportunities to give feedback and input on what we desire in a settled minister. Our candor will mean a more accurate application process and assessment of issues, concerns and opportunities the candidates will face if interested in joining us.

How we integrate and welcome a new minister and pave the way for the best possible match and outcome is ongoing work. We have an opportunity to practice that as we welcome and relate to our Interim Minister. For now let's make sure we have a successful Interim Ministry together and build the foundation for our call in 2019.

