

## **Board Policies**

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### **UU Church of Greater Lynn**

*Adopted on May 19, 2008 for 2008 – 2009 Church Year*

*Revised September 22, 2008, October 24, 2009, May 24, 2010, and January 22, 2013, June 29 2016, July 2018 and October and November 2020.*

The congregation of the UU Church of Greater Lynn elects a board of trustees to function as its governing body and a parish minister to serve as its spiritual, programmatic, and administrative leader. The intended style of leadership will be consultative, collegial, and inclusive. Clarity about ultimate responsibility and authority will exist along with a democratic and egalitarian spirit. All church leaders are expected to practice transparent decision-making, healthy conflict management, and mutual support in their respective roles.

### **Mission and Vision**

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#### **Mission Statement**

Inspired by meaningful worship, faith development and fellowship, we are a welcoming congregation committed to spiritual growth and diversity, social justice, and serving the greater community.

#### **Core values**

We affirm and promote:

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person
- Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

#### **Vision of ministry**

The Vision of Ministry attempts to answer the question: How do we plan to change lives in new and different ways in the next 1-5 years? Our Vision of Ministry is attached as [Appendix A](#).

#### **Board governance**

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The board's focus will be on the long-term mission and well-being of the church, not on administrative detail. It will respect the distinction between board governance and

ministry leadership, and will avoid when possible making decisions that address only a single situation.

The board of trustees intends to govern primarily by:

- discerning and articulating the Church's mission and vision of ministry
- setting strategic goals and making strategic choices
- creating written policies to govern Church operations
- monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Church's leadership, including itself.

Board members will adhere to a high standard of commitment, ethics, and accountability.

Annually the board establishes a covenant setting out the promises the trustees make to each other and to the congregation about the way they will conduct itself as a board. Our Board Covenant is attached as Appendix B.

The president is hereby delegated the authority and responsibility to decide the board's agenda in accordance with these policies.

The board will appoint a Governance Committee to be responsible for keeping the board focused on its chosen role, to recruit and train board members, and to lead the annual board self-evaluation process.

## **Delegation**

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### **Delegation to Minister and Senior Staff Team**

The minister shall lead and direct the spiritual, programmatic and administrative work of the church, and is hereby delegated authority and responsibility to make operational decisions, adopt administrative policies, and allocate church resources except as specifically limited by these policies.

The minister shall share leadership with senior staff composed at present of the Business Administrator, Director of Community and Lifelong Learning (DCLL) and the Director of Music. The intended style of team leadership is consultative, collegial and inclusive. Each member is responsible for a major area of the church's ministry, and the team as a whole shall be accountable through the minister to the board. The minister shall represent the team at meetings of the congregation and board of trustees.

As leader of the Senior Staff Team, the minister shall be responsible for morale and productivity and for keeping the team's work aligned with the congregation's strategy and vision.

The Senior Staff Team shall direct the work of the church through additional teams of staff and volunteers responsible for achieving specific spiritual, programmatic and administrative results. The Senior Staff Team shall establish clear lines of communication and decision-making for itself, the ministry teams and volunteers. Operational decisions,

conflict management, and problem solving shall be the responsibility of the minister, the Senior Staff Team, and the ministry teams themselves.

### **Actions requiring special consultation or approval**

#### **Personnel decisions**

The minister and any other ministers are called according to procedures established in the church bylaws.

Prior to creating a new staff position, the minister shall consult with the board.

Prior to creating a new senior staff position, the minister shall report to and consult with the board prior to making a decision to proceed. The minister shall appoint a search committee which shall consult widely to determine the congregation's needs and preferences. The minister shall work with the search committee to identify and evaluate candidates, and consult with the remaining members of the senior staff team before making a hiring decision. The board, or its qualified representatives, shall assist the minister in preparing letters of agreement, contracts and terms of offer for all senior staff positions. The minister shall determine terms of offer for all non-senior staff positions in consultation with the Church Administrator when appropriate.

The board shall convene a group of 2-3 qualified individuals to prepare ministers' letters of agreement, preferably one member of the Ministerial Search Committee, one member who has working knowledge of UUA benefit/salary recommendations and one member with human resource experience or legal expertise.

The board shall seek expert or legal guidance for other contractual matters.

Prior to discharging a staff member, the minister shall consult with the board and its qualified representatives to ensure that the proposed decision adheres to accepted personnel practices and complies with applicable laws and board policies.

Personnel policies shall be reviewed annually by the minister, along with the Church Administrator, and recommendations for revision or new policy shall be brought to the board for consideration. (The minister and Church Administrator may solicit the assistance of an expert in the discharging of this duty).

Should an imminent need for a personnel policy revision or a new personnel policy arise, the board will form a task force of 2-3 qualified individuals, which will include one member of governance, to complete the task.

#### **Financial Decisions**

The minister, together with the senior staff members in their areas of responsibility, shall be responsible for day-to-day fiscal decisions as guided by the budget adopted by the board, church bylaws, and restrictions of the trust and endowments, subject to the following:

The minister and senior staff may not, without obtaining board approval:

- Exceed the total budgeted spending for the year.
- Exceed budgeted spending in any top-level budget category by more than \$10,000.
- Spend more in a year than the church receives in operating revenue (including amounts withdrawn from church investments), unless the Board has adopted a deficit budget.
- Incur new debt on behalf of the church. The Board may approve credit cards, lines of credit, or other ongoing borrowing in advance.
- Accept any gift that is restricted by the donor as to use or purpose.

### **Compensation**

Annually, after a period of evaluation and goal setting the minister shall bring all staff compensation recommendations to the board for approval as part of the annual budget process. Compensation changes for consideration outside of the annual budget process shall be discussed with the Governance Committee and brought to the board for approval.

The board shall review and determine the minister's compensation annually, taking into consideration such factors as merit in meeting or exceeding expectations, increases in cost of living, changes in the cost of benefits and the financial means of the congregation, subject to any contractual requirements in the minister's agreement with the church.

The board will record an annual vote on the minister's housing allowance.

### **Delegation to others**

The charges to committees of the Board that are not under staff direction (e.g. the Investment Committee) are attached as Appendix C.

## **Fiduciary policies and Stewardship of resources**

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### **Financial Controls**

Appropriate safeguards will be observed for the handling of cash.

Two persons will count and sign for any cash collections.

Accounting, record-keeping & document retention will be the responsibility of the church Business Administrator. The Business Administrator will provide financial statements, which include the budget and the balance sheet, to the Finance Committee quarterly. The treasurer will make a report to the board on the church finances quarterly.

Annually, the Finance Committee shall engage a qualified professional to conduct an audit of the church's financial records, including the Minister's Discretionary Fund. The

auditor's report on the financial statements will be made available to the board and to any member of the congregation upon request.

The congregation shall maintain adequate insurance to protect against property losses and liability for injuries to others.

### **Capital Reserves and Endowments**

It is the church's policy to spend endowment funds within the legal constraints stipulated by the donors.

The church's investment objectives for endowment and other church funds are to:

- Preserve the real (after-inflation) purchasing power of the principal;
- Provide a stable source of perpetual financial support to the church's annual withdrawals (set forth below); and
- Incorporate the values of the church in the investment process.

The church withdraws from its investments amounts that, together with pledges, donations and other sources, is used to fund church operating expenses, grants and scholarships, ministry and programming, and other activities.

It is the current policy to withdraw each fiscal year an amount determined during the budget process described below, not to exceed 3.75% of the trailing 3-year average December 31 balance of the endowment (in addition to investment fees, which are deducted directly from the endowment balance). However, if it is determined that this level of withdrawal impairs the long-term purchasing power of the endowment, the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the Investment and Finance Committees, reserves the right to change this spending level.

### **Budgeting**

In conjunction with the annual goal-setting process, the Church Business Administrator and the Treasurer shall convene a budget team to prepare the budget in consultation with appropriate staff and lay leaders, including the minister. The Finance Committee shall review the proposed budget and advise the board on whether it is realistic and financially prudent and the minister shall affirm his/her belief that the budget represents a realistic plan for accomplishing the Vision of Ministry. The board shall make the final decision on the budget.

The budget shall be presented to the board no later than May 30 for the coming fiscal year.

**Grants and Scholarships.** The Board Policy and Procedures for Grants and Scholarships are attached as Appendix D.

### **Care for Persons**

**Personal safety** – Our Safe Congregations Policy can be found through the Church Governance link on our website.

**Grievances** – Our employee Grievance Policy is attached as Appendix E.

### **Goal-setting**

Each spring the board shall adopt a Vision of Ministry (see above, under "Strategy and Vision.") The Vision shall be a major focus of the board's work throughout the year, and shall reflect wide consultation with staff, lay leaders, and the congregation. The Vision of Ministry may be for one or more years; goal-setting and budgeting shall cover the same period as the Vision of Ministry.

After the board approves the Vision of Ministry, senior staff shall make plans and goals for itself that will support the VOM, and coordinate goal-setting by the rest of the staff, volunteer leaders, and ministry teams. The minister shall summarize the results of this goal-setting process in writing to the board.

#### Monitoring and evaluation

The staff, ministry teams, committees, and board of trustees shall engage in a continual process of monitoring and evaluation. The purposes include:

- Fostering excellence in ministry work by encouraging open communication and regular feedback among all whose work contributes to achieving the church's mission.
- Helping the church to focus on its goals as adopted by the Board.
- Ensuring that all church leaders adhere to Board policies.

### **Reports to the Board**

The Senior Staff Team shall produce written reports to the board that cover financial performance compared to budget and highlight significant financial or operational issues. Financial reports shall be provided to the Finance Committee quarterly, for its review and for the treasurer to submit to the board. The board shall devote a major portion of its time to learning and reflection on major areas of the church's mission, such as worship, religious education, social justice, membership development, and stewardship of congregational property and wealth. To maximize the value of these meetings, the board may call on the minister, senior staff, or church members to report more fully on the church's work in a given area, and to contribute expertise, information, and leadership.

From time to time, the board may inquire into specific questions of policy compliance, organizational concerns, or other serious issues by appointing a committee or outside consultant to assess some aspect of church program or organizational functioning.

## **Performance evaluation**

At least once a year, board members shall evaluate their individual and collective contribution to the church's mission.

The Senior Staff Team shall be responsible for creating and carrying out an annual cycle of evaluation that will produce, at minimum, a written evaluation of each staff member by his or her supervisor, which shall be available for review by the board or its authorized representatives. The primary purpose of staff and program team evaluation is to recognize achievement, build morale, identify improvement areas, and enhance communication and working relationships.

Each spring, as part of the creation of the Vision of Ministry, the minister and board shall together review their mutual progress in the light of the annual ministry goals.

## **Minister - Monitoring and Reporting**

Monitoring ministerial performance is directly linked to monitoring organizational performance against board policies, by-laws and the Vision of Ministry. The board monitors performance throughout the year according to a set schedule and process.

*Monthly, the minister shall report to the board:*

- New and ongoing initiatives, projects and programs
- Minister's leadership activities
- Pastoral care
- Update on staff activities
- Update on ministry team activities
- Staff leadership development
- Personnel issues
- Significant issues between or among staff, ministry teams and members

*The minister shall provide the following metrics to the board in September, January and June:*

- Attendance at worship services
- Attendance for faith development classes

*Annually, no later than May 30 for the coming fiscal year, the minister shall present to the board for approval:*

- The Senior Staff Team's goals to support the Vision of Ministry for the upcoming fiscal year.

Reports shall be in writing and provided to the board according to established timelines. Metrics shall be in graph format and provided to the board according to established timelines.

### **Minister's triennial performance review**

Every three years, the board and minister shall together appoint a Triennial Review Committee of three persons respected by the congregation and mutually acceptable to the board and minister. The committee shall facilitate a review of the minister's performance, gathering data and feedback from the congregation and other sources, and producing a written report. The report, together with a written response from the minister, will be published to the congregation.

The goals of the triennial review are to call the congregation's attention to the mutual, relational nature of ministry and the respective responsibilities of all who contribute to its success; to assist the minister to remain motivated, creative, and flexible; and to equip the minister and board to correct any problems and maintain an effective partnership in the future.

### **Minister sabbaticals**

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn offers a sabbatical to its minister. Commitments regarding the sabbatical may be outlined in the agreement letter signed by the minister and the church at the time the minister is called. The plan for each sabbatical should be the outcome of a discussion between the minister and the board. While a relatively broad degree of flexibility is implicit in the process to accommodate a wide range of potential circumstances regarding the needs of the church and the minister at the time of each sabbatical, the board and minister should adhere to the following policies:

- 1) Sabbatical leave accrues at the rate of one month per year of service, with leave to be taken only after six years but before eight years of service. No more than six months of sabbatical leave may be used during a twelve-month period. While on sabbatical leave, the minister shall continue to receive full salary and housing allowance, and benefits. Professional expenses may be adjusted.
- 2) The dates of the sabbatical plan must be approved by the board of trustees at least one year in advance. The specific dates of the sabbatical leave will be established by mutual agreement between the minister and board.
- 3) It is expected that the minister will not combine sabbatical leave with vacation or study leave so as to absent from the pulpit more than six months consecutively. Sabbatical leave will not be allowed for less than three months.
- 4) Sabbatical leave is for professional development. The minister shall develop a sabbatical program in keeping with his/her needs at that time including advanced study, travel, writing or other types of experiences and activities that will enrich the ministry. The program shall be made known to the board at least six months in advance of the sabbatical leave. Unless serious reservations exist on the part of the board about the appropriateness of the

sabbatical program, the board shall approve the sabbatical program as presented by the minister.

- 5) The sabbatical leave program will be presented to the congregation.
- 6) During the period of the sabbatical leave, the minister is not expected to perform any ministerial duties. Where the board and minister agree that it is essential for the minister to return to provide some functions and the minister is out of town, the church will provide reimbursement for the expenses of the trip.
- 7) The minister with the assistance of the church leaders and board will make arrangements for the provision of essential ministerial services during the term of the sabbatical leave.
- 8) The minister pledges to continue full-time service to the congregation for a minimum of one year following the end of each sabbatical leave.
- 9) The congregation agrees to take no action on ministerial tenure during a sabbatical leave.
- 10) The minister will report to the congregation concerning the sabbatical within a reasonable period of time upon return to regular fellowship duties.
- 11) Every fiscal year the congregation will consider sequestering sabbatical funds for use in funding the congregation's additional expenses during the minister's sabbatical leave. Sabbatical funds are set aside for the purposes of hiring and accommodating temporary staff and/or speakers to cover the responsibilities of the minister on sabbatical. Other expenses of the minister associated with the sabbatical, such as travel and professional development expenses, should be reimbursed within the minister's annual professional expenses budget in accordance with the church's professional expense reimbursement policy.
- 12) This sabbatical fund will be property of the congregation.