UUFH BOARD MEETING

August 18, 2026

Attendees: Jim Ammerman, Liza Burby, Susan Peters, Allyson Barish, Jon Nielsen, Valerie Scopaz, Karen Finkenberg, Ann Scolnick, Melissa Dinsman

Absent: Rev. Israel Buffardi

Lighting of the Chalice (Jim)

Covenant: Read by the Board

Consent Agenda: July Minutes - Unanimously approved. Labyrinth Ministry Charter – Unanimously approved.

Minister's Report: Rev. Israel's report was discussed, including his recommendation for a communications group and updates on childcare candidates. The Board identified issues with the current aesthetics committee's process and agreed that such major changes should go through proper governance channels rather than direct Board involvement, facilitated by Israel.

New Security Grant (Liza): Liza discussed a recently awarded state grant for security improvements, with Bryce responsible for managing the project and responding to the state by August 31st. Liza noted that an ad hoc committee will likely be needed to oversee the three-year grant process, and she plans to follow up with Bryce in the coming week to discuss next steps and potential support from the safety committee.

African American Museum issues: The Board discussed supporting the African American Museum's relocation and the Social Justice Committee was tasked with writing a support letter.

New Chair purchases (Jon): The Board discussed furniture updates for the facility, focusing on chairs and tables for the social hall and main hall. Jon explained that after measuring current chairs, they determined the preferred chairs would stack too tall for storage in the closet, leading to a decision to purchase 10 test chairs first before ordering more. The long wooden tables that are difficult to move due to their age will also be replaced. Susan mentioned that the main hall chairs from 1984 need replacement, though the exact specifications for ordering matching chairs are no longer available since the original purchasers are no longer with the organization.

Finance (Allyson):

The Board discussed three membership and pledge-related issues: who should explain pledging to new members, who should follow up with members who haven't paid their pledges, and how to identify and reconnect with members who may have dropped off radar. Allyson raised concerns about coordination between the pledge drive and membership committees, suggesting these responsibilities should be clearly defined rather than distributed among multiple committees. Valerie proposed that a joint approach involving ongoing communication between committees would be more effective than assigning specific tasks to one person or committee, and suggested bringing interested parties together with Board representation to establish clear responsibilities and processes. This will be discussed at the Executive Board meeting.

Pledge Collection and Membership Challenges: The Board discussed challenges with pledge collection and member engagement, with Allyson reporting that while most pledges are on track, there are 28 people with outstanding payments that need follow-up. The Board agreed that handling these cases requires coordination between membership, pledge drive, and pastoral care teams, with Liza volunteering to lead this effort once Israel returns.

Current status of HIHI: The Board discussed HiHi's financial crisis, with Melissa explaining that the program has been in financial trouble for some time and was never meant to be a long-term solution for homelessness. The Board determined that Family Service League needs to develop a budget and specific funding request before the congregation can make decisions about continued support.

Replacement Committee Chairs: Valerie raised concerns about the rapid turnover of committee chairs after a three-year term, suggesting a need for better leadership transition planning. The Board discussed implementing a co-chair system and staggering terms to avoid such sudden leadership changes. Liza acknowledged the communication issue and agreed that chairs should be encouraged to groom their successors, with the nominating committee being involved earlier in the process. The Board discussed implementing a strategic planning forum as promised to the congregation, with Liza emphasizing the importance of understanding future expenses to plan effectively. Susan and Ann agreed to create a list of major capital expenditures and their replacement timelines based on information in the building's owner's manual, which will help inform future planning and fundraising efforts. Susan will scan and send the equipment list to Jim and Ann to review against the existing manual.

Building Maintenance and Retreat Planning: The Board confirmed details about the upcoming retreat scheduled for October 23-24, with Jim noting that individual conversations with Erin, the retreat facilitator, would help her understand Board members' needs and perspectives. Liza committed to sharing previous retreat reports with new Board members to provide context about the retreat format and structure

Next Board Meeting: 9/15/2026 on Zoom

BOT Meetings for 2026: 9/15/26, 10/20/26, 11/17/26, 12/15/26

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Hocevar