UUFH BOARD MEETING

September 15, 2026

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

Lighting of the Chalice (Jim)

Covenant: Read by the Board

Consent Agenda: August Minutes – Unanimously approved with corrections to the minutes, including a spelling correction for Ann's name and a request to clarify wording about committee chair turnover.

Minister's Report: The Board discussed challenges with finding childcare for RE, noting that despite contacting multiple candidates, no candidates showed up for scheduled interviews, leading Israel to consider seeking guidance from the RE committee on alternative solutions.

The Board discussed challenges with tech volunteers, particularly for memorial services and committee meetings. Israel noted that while the current situation isn't a crisis, they may need to consider hiring someone or finding more volunteers as Jim Monnier and Debbie Hocevar are working hard to fill tech spots.

The Board discussed and approved Israel's proposal to engage Emily Starks for website development, with the project estimated to take a couple of months and cost $10,000. The Board confirmed that the necessary budget approval had already been completed, and members expressed support for the project, particularly noting Starks' experience with UU congregations and her ability to create simple, maintainable websites

UUFH GoFundMe for HIHI: Allyson explained that while Jennifer Hildreth's GoFundMe for HIHI is outside our policy, it is technically allowed by GoFundMe as long as the charity is registered and receives direct payments. The Board discussed that Family Service League is reluctant to take ownership of the fundraiser due to political concerns, and that at least 10 congregations have dropped out of HIHI due to immigration issues. The Board agreed that the key decisions needed are how to prevent similar situations in the future and how to communicate fundraising policies to membership. The Board decided to let the HiHi fundraiser run for one more week or until it reaches $3,500, whichever comes first, with a definite shutdown date of September 22nd. They discussed the need to better support Jennifer, the HiHi representative, who has been feeling isolated in her role. The Board agreed to update the policy regarding fundraising to prevent future issues and ensure new committee chairs are aware of the policy, with plans to address this at the chairs meeting.

Financial Update: Allyson reported that approximately $10,000 in pledges remained outstanding for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, with about $5,000 considered collectible, though she indicated the congregation was in good financial position regardless of collection outcomes. The Board discussed implementing a process to review the entire membership directory every three months to identify and reach out to members who may have fallen through the cracks, with Liza coordinating a meeting with various committees.

Allyson presented the end-of-year financials for 2025-2026, reporting a surplus of $39,167,000 due to 99% of expected income being achieved and 90% of expenses being spent. The Board discussed potential uses for the unspent funds, with Susan suggesting allocating some to building maintenance, including washing and painting the building for which she will get estimates. The Board agreed to table further discussion about specific projects until their next Board meeting

Groundskeeper Hiring Discussion: Allyson proposed moving the gardener from 1099 contractor status to part-time groundskeeper, with Valerie providing details about his background as a graduate student in educational administration and his current work in gardening and maintenance tasks. Liza expressed concerns about communicating the decision to the congregation, particularly explaining why they need a groundskeeper when they already have a landscaper, and emphasized the need for a clear job description and background check process. The Board agreed that Valerie and Allyson would meet to develop parameters and budget details for the position, with the option to vote on the decision via email rather than waiting for the next meeting.

Timely notices (Liza): Liza raised a concern about the communications policy regarding announcements of a member passing suggesting a simpler approach of first notifying the congregation that someone has passed away, followed by details about memorial services if families provide consent

Chair purchase (Jon): The Board also reviewed chair purchases, with Jon reporting that 10 new chairs and 5 tables had been acquired, and discussed plans to purchase an additional 30 chairs to reach close to 100 total.

The Board noted upcoming meetings including a volunteer call after service on September 27th and a Board Retreat scheduled for October 23-24.

Next Board Meeting: 10/20/2026 on Zoom

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

Respectfully submitted by Debbie Hocevar