



The First Unitarian Universalist Society
of Burlington, Vermont

Board of Trustees Policy Handbook

April 2017

Note: Policies will be reviewed on a yearly basis by the Board of Trustees of the FUUSB.



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I. Vision of Our Society

I A. Mission

We are united in our commitment to live out our mission to inspire spiritual growth, to care for each other and our community, to seek truth, and to act for justice.

I B. Values

In addition to the seven principles of the Unitarian Universalist faith, we are guided by our values:

Love — *Nourishing lives with love, caring and compassion,*

Service — *Building a community for justice, equity & empathetic action,*

Openness — *Celebrating the wonders of life and spiritual transformation with boldness, joy, courage and openness, and*

Respect — *Engaging all with kindness, understanding & mutual respect as faithful democratic stewards of all we hold dear.*

I C. Ends

We lead to see our global ends are actualized:

Justice & Outreach: *FUUSB uses its power as an organization and faith community to work for social, economic and environmental justice.*

Worship & Music: *FUUSB's welcoming worship, supported by powerful and diverse music and art, acts as a magnet that fosters spiritual growth, compassion, introspection and impetus to action.*

Caring & Belonging: *FUUSB is a compassionate community, offering all who engage in its ministries a profound sense of welcome, belonging, and spiritual care through life's joys, struggles, and sacred passages.*

Spiritual Growth & Learning: *FUUSB provides diverse opportunities for transformational spiritual growth, faith development and personal discovery promoting life-long learning for all ages and stages of life.*

Stewardship & Resources: *FUUSB generously stewards our mission and strongly supports ministries, activities and an historic building and spaces.*

II. Governance

II A. Philosophy of Governance

Governance at FUUSB shall support our shared ministry, reflect our UU principles and release the full potential of our people. The Board of Trustees, under the leadership of the Board Chair, will be responsible for leading the governance of the FUUSB.

Our elected, representative Board of Trustees will engage in ongoing, meaningful conversations with members of the Society to continually focus the work of the board on the well-being of our congregation, our mission and our vision for the future, not on administrative detail.

The board will govern in a manner that:

- Focuses on governing by policy;
- Clarifies accountability, authority and responsibility so that staff, volunteers and the congregation are to reach their full promise in pursuit of our mission;
- Is flexible and always improving;
- Expects all leaders to practice open decision making, healthy conflict management, and mutual support in their respective roles;
- Encourages creativity and examination of the larger picture;
- Strives for excellence but recognizes that true excellence is often a stepwise process of continual monitoring and refinement;
- Strongly connects the congregation and its leadership;
- Keeps the board in covenant with one another and with the congregation.

II B. Board Covenant

Each year the Board will review and confirm a covenant to guide their work and participation in leadership.

Please see Appendix A.1 for Board Covenant.

II C. Board Development and Reflection

Board Development

Each year the Board will craft a plan to expand their understanding of the Society and work to be done. The Board will monitor progress against the plan on a monthly basis.

Open Questions

Each year the Board of Trustees will set a series of Open Questions to guide deliberate and purposeful reflection.

Committees of the Board

Each year the Board will set time aside to review work of the committees of the Board via written reports to the Board and at Board meetings.

Policy Review

Each year the Board will review the policies and revise them accordingly. The Board will develop a plan to assure that the policy manual is reviewed in its entirety every three years.

Board Agendas

Time will be set aside specifically for Board development at Board meetings with focus on items 1 through 4 above.

III. Governance Process

III A. Global Governance Commitment

The Board of the FUUSB will act on behalf of the society's congregants to promote the accomplishment of the society's mission and prevent unacceptable activities and conditions within the society.

III B. Governing Style

The Board will govern with an emphasis on (1) outward vision rather than internal preoccupation, (2) encouragement of diversity in viewpoints, (3) strategic leadership more than administrative detail, (4) clear distinction of Board and Senior Minister roles, (5) collective rather than individual decisions, (6) future rather than past or present, and (7) proactively rather than reactively.

Accordingly,

a. The Board will cultivate a sense of group responsibility. The Board, not the staff, will be responsible for excellence in governing. The Board will be the initiator of policy, not merely a reactor to staff initiatives. The Board will use the expertise of individual members to enhance the ability of the Board as a body rather than to substitute individual judgments for the Board's values. The Board will allow no officer, individual, or committee of the Board to hinder or be an excuse for not fulfilling Board commitments.

b. The Board will direct, control, and inspire the organization through the careful establishment of broad written policies reflecting the Board's values and perspectives about ends to be achieved and means to be avoided. The Board's major policy focus will be on the intended long-term effects outside the organization, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those effects.

c. The Board will enforce upon itself whatever discipline is needed to govern with excellence. Discipline will apply to matters such as attendance, preparation, policy-making principles, respect of roles, and ensuring continuance of governance capability. Continued Board development will include orientation of new Board members in the Board's governance process and periodic Board discussion of process improvements.

d. The Board will monitor and regularly discuss the Board's own process and performance.

III C. Board Job Description

The job of the Board is to represent the parishioners of the FUUSB in determining and demanding appropriate organizational performance.

Accordingly,

- a. The Board is the link between the ministers, staff and parishioners.
- b. The Board shall not operate without written information sharing procedures (see Appendix A.).
- c. The Board will produce written governing policies that, at the broadest levels, address each category of organizational decision:
 - Ends: Organizational products, effects, benefits, outcomes, recipients, and their relative worth (what good for which recipients at what cost).
 - Executive Limitations: Constraints on executive authority that establish the prudence and ethical boundaries within which all executive activity and decisions must take place.
 - Governance Process: Specifics of how the Board conceives, carries out, and monitors its own tasks.
 - Board-Senior Minister Linkage: How power is delegated and its proper use monitored; the Senior Minister's role, authority, and accountability.
- d. The Board will assure the Senior Minister's performance.

III D. Board Leadership Roles

- a. The Board **Chair** is the key communication linkage with the Senior Minister and is responsible for planning and facilitating Board Meetings. The President is an elected officer of the Board of Trustees, elected for a 2-year term. Duties of the President include setting the agenda and running Board meetings, representing the Society, and serving as a signatory for official documents. The President works with the Senior Minister and Vice President as an Executive Committee to help coordinate the governance and ministry functions of the Society.
- b. The **Vice-Chair**'s role is to assume the duties of the Chair when they are not available, to work with the Chair and the Senior Minister as an Executive Committee to help coordinate the governance and ministry functions of the Society, and to perform other duties as are delegated to them by the Board Chair. The Vice-Chair is an elected officer of the Board of Trustees, elected for a 2-year term.
- c. The **Secretary of the Board** is responsible for the integrity of the Board's documents and their dissemination, including timely minutes of all Board meetings. The Secretary is an elected officer of the Board of Trustees, elected for a 2-year term.

III E. Agenda Planning

The Board will follow an annual agenda that (1) completes re-exploration of Ends policies annually and (2) continually improves Board performance through Board education and enriched input and deliberations.

III F. Board Task Group Principles

The Board may establish committees to help carry out its responsibilities. Committees will be used sparingly and ordinarily in an ad hoc capacity to preserve the Board functioning as a whole and will never interfere with the delegation from the Board to the Senior Minister. Accordingly,

Board committees may not speak or act for the Board except when formally given such authority by the Board for specific and time-limited purposes. Expectations and authority will be carefully stated in order not to conflict with authority delegated to the Senior Minister.

IV. Executive Limitations

IV A. Global Executive Limitations Policy

The Senior Minister shall not cause or allow any organizational practice, activity, decision or circumstance that is either unlawful, imprudent, or in violation of commonly accepted business and professional ethics and the society's Unitarian Universalist mission, values and ends.

IV B. Treatment of Congregants (Members, Friends and Visitors)

With respect to interactions with parishioners, the Senior Minister shall not cause or allow conditions, practices, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, undignified, unnecessarily intrusive, or fail to provide appropriate confidentiality or privacy.

IV C. Treatment of Staff

With respect to the treatment of paid and volunteer staff, the Senior Minister may not cause or allow conditions that are unfair, unsafe, discriminatory or undignified.

Accordingly, the Senior Minister shall not:

1. Operate without written personnel policies that comply with accepted employment practices, provide for effective handling of grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions.
2. Fail to acquaint staff with their rights under these policies.
3. Amend Board's role in Personnel Policies

IV D. Financial Planning/Budgeting

The Senior Minister shall not cause or allow financial planning for any fiscal year to deviate materially from the Board's Ends priorities or risk fiscal jeopardy.

Accordingly, the Senior Minister shall not allow budgeting that:

1. Contains too little information to enable credible projection of revenues and expenses, separation of capital and operational items, cash flow, and disclosure of planning assumptions;
2. Plans the expenditure in any fiscal year of more funds than are conservatively projected to be received in that period.
3. Provide less for the Board prerogatives during the year than is set forth in the Cost of Governance policy.
4. Shall not fail to report to the Board of Trustees no later than 60 days after the close of the fiscal year and no later than 30 days before the annual meeting of the congregation and no less frequently than quarterly:
5. The cash balances in all accounts owned by FUUSB;
6. The actual versus budgeted expenditures for all budget line items.

IV E. Financial Condition and Activities

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial condition and activities, the Senior Minister shall not cause or allow the development of fiscal jeopardy or a material deviation of actual expenditures from Board of Trustee's priorities established in Ends policies.

Accordingly, the Senior Minister shall not:

1. Expend more funds than have been received in the fiscal year to date unless the debt guidelines in these policies are met;
2. Incur debt in amount greater than can be repaid by normal cash flow variations in revenue anticipated in the next 60 days, or by the end of the fiscal year, whichever comes first, without approval of the Board of Trustees;
3. Make a single unbudgeted purchase or commitment of greater than 1% of the current year operating budget, or an accumulated unbudgeted expenditure of greater than 3% of the current year operating budget, without Board of Trustee approval;
4. Conduct inter-fund shifting in amounts that deviate materially from the Board of Trustee's Ends priorities;
5. Expend designated funds other than for the purposes determined at the time of receipt or designation without approval of the Board of Trustees;
6. Acquire, encumber, or dispose of real property;
7. Fail to settle payroll and debts in a timely manner;
8. Allow tax payments or other government ordered payments or filings to be overdue or inaccurately filed;
9. Fail to actively pursue receivables after a reasonable grace period.

IV F. Asset Protection

The Senior Minister shall not allow the assets to be unprotected, inadequately maintained, or unnecessarily risked.

Accordingly, the Senior Minister shall not:

1. Fail to insure against theft and casualty losses and against liability losses to officers, board members, staff and the organization;
2. Allow unbonded personnel access to material amounts of funds;
3. Subject facilities and equipment to improper wear and tear or insufficient maintenance;
4. Unnecessarily expose FUUSB, its assets, its Board, or its staff to claim of liability;
5. Fail to protect confidential information and files from unauthorized disclosure, loss or significant damage;
6. Make any purchase (1) wherein normally prudent protection has not been given regarding conflict of interest; (2) of over \$2,500 without documenting comparative prices and quality; (3) of more than 1.5% of annual budget without a stringent method of assuring the balance of long-term quality and cost. Orders shall not be split to avoid these criteria;
7. Receive, process, or disburse funds without sufficient controls established in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles;
8. Invest or hold operating capital in insecure investments, including uninsured checking accounts and bonds of less than BBB rating at any time;
9. Endanger FUUSB's public image, its credibility, or its ability to accomplish its Ends policies;
10. Allow any risk to the non-profit status of FUUSB.

IV G. Emergency Senior Minister Succession

In order to protect the Board of Trustee's from sudden loss of Senior Minister services, the Senior Minister must not fail to designate at least one other executive familiar with Board of Trustees and Senior Minister issues and processes.

IV H. Compensation and Benefits

With respect to employment, compensation, and benefits to employees, consultants, and contract workers, the Senior Minister shall not cause or allow jeopardy to fiscal integrity or public image. The Senior Minister shall not:

1. Promise or imply permanent or guaranteed employment.
2. Establish current compensation and benefits that deviate materially from the geographic or professional market for the skills employed.
3. Create obligations over a longer term than revenues can be safely projected, in no event longer than one year.
4. Fail to meet with the Treasurer annually to show that the Senior Minister is in compliance with all **sections of 8**.

IV I. Communication and Support to the Board

Communication and Support to the Board. The Senior Minister shall not cause or allow the Board to be uninformed or unsupported in its work. The Senior Minister shall not:

1. Neglect to submit monitoring data required by the Board in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion, which directly addresses provisions of Board policies being monitored, and which includes Senior Minister interpretations consistent with Board-Management Delegation policy as well as relevant data.
2. Allow the Board to be unaware of any actual or anticipated noncompliance with any ENDS or Limitations policy of the Board regardless of the Board's monitoring schedule.
3. Allow the Board to be without information required periodically by the Board or let the Board be unaware of relevant trends.
4. Let the Board be unaware of any significant incidental information it requires including anticipated media coverage, threatened or impending legal issues, claims or lawsuits, and material internal and external changes.
5. Allow the Board to be unaware that, in the Senior Minister's opinion, the Board is not in compliance with its own policies on Governance Process and Board-Management Delegation, particularly in the case of tBoard behavior that is detrimental to the work relationship between the Board and the Senior Minister.

IV J. Safety

The Senior Minister shall not fail to adhere to, and provide necessary supports for, compliance with the Safety Policy.

Please see Appendix A.3 for Safety Policy.

V. Board-Management Delegation

V A. Global Board-Management Delegation Policy

The Board's sole official connection to the operational organization, its achievements, and conduct will be through a chief executive officer, titled Senior Minister.

V B. Unity of Control

Only officially passed motions of the Board are binding on the Senior Minister.

1. Decisions or instructions of individual Board members, officers, or Task Groups are not binding on the Senior Minister except in instances when the Board has specifically authorized such exercise of authority.
2. In the case of Board members or Task Groups requesting information or assistance without Board authorization, the Senior Minister may refuse such requests that require, in the Senior Minister's opinion, a material amount of staff time or funds, or are non-productive.

V C. Accountability of the Senior Minister

The Senior Minister is the Board's link to operational achievement and conduct, so that all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the Board is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the Senior Minister.

1. The Board will never give instructions to persons who report directly or indirectly to the Senior Minister.
2. The Board will not evaluate, either formally or informally, any staff other than the Senior Minister.
3. The Board will view Senior Minister performance as identical to organizational performance so that organizational accomplishment of Board-stated Ends and adherence to Executive Limitations will be viewed as successful Senior Minister performance.

V D. Delegation to the Senior Minister

The Board will instruct the Senior Minister through written policies that prescribe the organizational Ends to be achieved and proscribe organizational situations and actions to be avoided, allowing the Senior Minister to use any reasonable interpretation of these policies.

1. The Board will develop policies instructing the Senior Minister to achieve designated results, for designated recipients. These policies will be developed systematically from the broadest, most general level to more defined levels and will be called Ends Policies.
2. The Board will develop policies that limit the latitude the Senior Minister may exercise in choosing the organizational means. These limiting policies will describe those practices, activities, decisions, and circumstances that would be unacceptable to the Board even if they were to be effective. Policies will be developed systematically from the broadest, most general level to more defined levels, and they will be called Executive Limitations policies. The Board will never prescribe organizational means delegated to the Senior Minister.
3. As long as the Senior Minister uses any reasonable interpretation of the Board's Ends and Executive Limitations Policies, the Senior Minister is authorized to establish further procedures, make decisions, take actions, establish practices, and pursue activities, including establishment and dissolution of Volunteer Committees (except Nominating, Trust Fund, Safety, and Committee on Ministry).
4. The Board may change its Ends and Executive Limitations policies, thereby shifting the boundary between Board and Senior Minister domains. By doing so, the Board changes the latitude of choice given to the Senior Minister. But as long as any particular delegation is in place, the Board will respect and support the Senior Minister's choices.

V E. Monitoring Senior Minister Performance

Systematic and rigorous monitoring of Senior Minister job performance will be based solely on the expected Senior Minister job outputs: organizational accomplishment of Board policies on Ends and organizational operation within the boundaries established in Board policies on Executive Limitations.

1. Monitoring is simply to determine the degree to which Board policies are being met. Information that does not do this will not be considered to be monitoring information.
2. The Board will acquire monitoring information by one or more of three methods:
 1. By internal report, in which the Senior Minister discloses interpretations and compliance information to the Board.
 3. By external report, in which an external, disinterested third party selected by the Board assesses compliance with Board policies.
 4. By direct Board inspection, based on its own initiative and/or on input from congregants, in which a member or members of the Board assess compliance with the appropriate policy criteria.
5. In every case, the Board will judge (a) the reasonableness of the Senior Minister's interpretation and (b) whether data demonstrate accomplishment of the interpretation.
6. The standard of compliance shall be any reasonable Senior Minister interpretation of the Board policy being monitored. The Board is the sole judge of reasonableness.
7. All policies that instruct the Senior Minister will be monitored at a frequency and by a method chosen by the Board. The Board can monitor any policy at any time by any method, but will ordinarily depend on a routine schedule.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Board Covenant

Appendix 2. Endowment Committee Policy

The Endowment Committee shall be responsible for the investment, management, and supervision of the Society's endowment funds and shall have such other duties as designated by the Board of Trustees.

The Committee shall annually elect a Chair. A quorum shall consist of three members. The majority present and voting shall carry any motion or resolution except as noted below. The Committee may appoint other members and friends of the Society to serve as advisers to the Committee, but advisers shall have no vote. The Committee may obtain such professional advice or services as it deems necessary to advance the purposes of the endowments. The Committee may expend money from the income of the endowments to pay for such advice.

The Meeting House Fund shall be accumulated and managed for the repair and/or replacement of the organ and for the maintenance of the Society Meeting House in perpetuity. Donations to the Society for this purpose shall be held in the Fund. The principal of the Fund shall not be invaded except upon the recommendation of the Committee, with the approval of the Board of Trustees, and the vote of a two-thirds majority of the members of the Society present at a meeting of the Congregation. The income from Meeting House Fund may be expended only upon the recommendation of the Committee and with the approval of the Board. Otherwise, the income shall be reinvested.

The FUUSB Fund shall be accumulated and managed for the general support of the programs and activities of the Society. Gifts to the Society which are not otherwise designated shall be held in the Fund. Income from the Fund shall be available for these purposes. The principal of the Fund shall be invaded only upon the recommendation of the Committee and with the approval of the Board.

The Committee shall, by March 15 of each year, determine the amount of income from each Fund held by the Committee that will be available for the operating budget of the Society for the next fiscal year. Except as otherwise appropriately directed by a donor, the Committee shall, in determining the available income, take into account the goal that the principal of the Funds

shall increase annually by such amount as is necessary to keep pace with the rate of inflation.

Introduction

The principal purpose of this investment policy statement is to provide long term direction to the Trustees of the Board of the FUUSB for the investment of the Society's funds. Secondly, this document will serve to describe to future Trustees the underlying logic and philosophy supporting this statement.

Setting investment policy is the most critical phase of the entire investment process. The effects of good or bad policy can be more significant than the effects of good or poor investment management.

To be successful, an investment policy needs to be appropriate for its institution. It needs to match the needs of the institution (future liabilities, in an accounting sense) to the financial assets most likely to meet those needs. The best way to minimize investment risk is to match, as closely as possible, the timing of future liabilities with the timing of future cash flows from the portfolio assets.

The policy statement also has to withstand "Trustee risk" - the possibility that the Board of Trustees at some stress point (most frequently a low point in the stock or bond Markets) will try to react in a manner detrimental to the long term health of the investment funds. Trustees generally serve only for a few years at a time, and those who adopt this policy statement today may not be here ten years from now to maintain the steady course that is one prerequisite of a successful investment plan. For that reason, this policy statement contains an introductory section presenting the principles and expectations upon which the policy is based.

It is the policy of the FUUSB to invest its trust funds (currently Nims, Meeting House, and Organ/Music) prudently so as to provide predictable and sustained income to the Society while maintaining or increasing the value of the funds relative to inflation consistent with investment

restrictions imposed by the Society and the UUA and providing sufficient liquidity for capital spending (i.e Meeting House and Organ). The goals and policies to accomplish this are outlined below.

II. Objectives

- a. To preserve capital with respect to maintaining the purchasing power of the income and achieve modest growth of the principle.
- b. To maximize current return on investments consistent with safety over the investment horizon of a full market cycle, which is estimated to be 3-5 years.
- c. To maintain adequate liquidity in order to balance the short term and long term needs of the Society.

III. Investment Strategy/Restrictions

a. Asset Class Objectives

Fixed Income: In order to reduce the short term income volatility associated with equities, approximately 1/3 of the fund assets should be invested in bonds with quality indices of BBB- or better.

b. Equities: In an effort to preserve income and principal on an inflation adjusted basis, Approximately 2/3 of the fund assets should be invested in stocks. The investment manager will strive to control risk by diversifying the stock portfolio. No stocks will be purchased that are on the UUA 'do not buy' list.

c. Combined Funds Asset Allocations

The following are the targeted asset allocations of the portfolio:

	Min	Tgt	Max	
Equities	50%	65%	70%	
Fixed Income		25%	35%	50%
Cash	0%	0%	25%	

d. Further Restrictions

Additionally the following restrictions apply: investment manager(s), or those acting on their behalf, may not:

- i) make investments on margin
- ii) make short sales or maintain a short position
- iii) purchase option contracts
- iv) purchase investments for which there are legal or contractual restriction on resale
- v) receive or solicit any reward commission or other remuneration except that a professional financial advisor acting at the direction of the Trust Fund Committee may receive commissions for services rendered
- vi) purchase investments not allowed by the UUA investment guidelines

E. Nims Income Stabilization

In order to further stabilize the income from the Nims Trust, the yearly income will be calculated on a rolling 12 quarter basis and % of this calculated yearly income will be remitted quarterly to the Society.

IV. Supervision

A. The Trust Fund Committee will be solely responsible to the full Board of Trustees for the administration of the trust funds and will make periodic reports to the Board.

B. The Trust Fund Committee will be responsible for selecting the investment manager for the trust funds (except for the Nims fund, which is currently being managed by the Chittenden Bank per the Nims will).

C. The Trust Fund Committee will meet on a regular basis to monitor the performance of the investment manager(s). All investment decisions by the Trust Fund Committee shall be decided by the majority vote of members present.

D. The Trust Fund Committee will review this policy statement annually to ensure that it remains appropriate and is complete.

V. Performance Measurement and Evaluation

A. Overall Performance

The Trust Fund Committee recognizes that the overall portfolio performance will reflect the constraints and guidelines established in this statement of policy along with the results of the investment manager's actions.

B. Inflation

Inflation will be measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI)

C. Total Return Benchmarks

The investment manager's performance will be compared to the following: Fixed income (35%): Lehman Intermediate-Term Government/Corporate Bond Index Equities (65%); Standard & Poor's Composite Stock Index

VI. Instructions for Investment Manager

a. Notification of Significant Changes

The Trust Fund Committee requires prompt notification of any deviations from the investment strategy outlined on Section III or any change in the investment manager's fundamental investment strategy.

b. Performance Calculation and Presentation

The investment manager will provide an annual report summarizing performance against the benchmarks outlined in Section V.

Adopted by the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington Board of Trustees on

Appendix 3. Safety Policy

In development

Appendix 4. Communication Policy

Info Sharing Task Force Policies (Adopted December 2015)

Member Comment at Meetings of the Board of Trustees

The board offers dedicated time at the beginning of each regular board meeting for members of the society to share views, ideas and concerns related to the board's policy making and policy monitoring functions. Society members who wish to speak to the board during the "Member Comment" period, who wish to make a formal presentation, or who are seeking a specific action from the board should consult with the board president no later than 5 PM on the first Monday of the month to be placed on the agenda. The president reserves the right to limit the number of speakers and amount of time allotted for speaking at any meeting.

Complaints to the Board

The board and its members have an ongoing duty to listen to and be in conversation with the congregation. Members and friends will be encouraged to share ideas and to engage in constructive dialogue with board members. This may include bringing complaints and grievances to the attention of board members. It is the intent of the board to be responsive to the congregation, but it is not a function of the board to resolve complaints that are not directly related to strategic planning and the board's policy-making and policy-monitoring functions.

Initial Responses to Complaints

It is the role of board members to make sure they hear and understand the concern that a parishioner is raising with them. Anyone making a complaint should be encouraged to contact directly someone who can resolve the concern rather than involving a board member as a third party. Board members may assist complainants in identifying the person to whom the concern should be directed. Individual board members do not have the authority to make any representations that any action will be taken, that the complaint will be resolved in a certain way, or that the problem will be taken up by the board as a body.

Board Discretionary Responses

The board as a body has the discretion to decide whether to take up, and how to respond to, complaints, criticisms or grievances addressed to the board. If the board decides to review or act on a concern, the board will limit itself to matters involving board policy, governance, and other general affairs of the Society. Complaints or grievances involving ministerial activities will be referred to the Senior Minister. The president or vice president of the board will strive to acknowledge all written complaints within 48 hours as a matter of courtesy.

Other Voices

When voices within the congregation become audible, the board owes those voices its ear, but it also should take into consideration those who are not speaking or cannot speak.

Connection with Parishioners

Linkage with Congregation Governance at FUUSB is in the form of a covenantal representative democracy, based on commonly held religious values, and held together by a unified mission. The board will forge and maintain strong and trusting connections with the parishioners of FUUSB. The board must establish, maintain, clarify, and protect its relationship with those parishioners. With this in mind, the board will plan two-way communications activities with the congregation as part of its annual governance agenda. Such linkage plans will build upon the following example elements:

Board Reports to Parishioners:

- Open board meetings
- Policy manual
- Minutes of meetings and draft agendas
- Periodic informational postings, newsletter articles, enews updates and mailings
- Responses to inquiries, concerns, criticisms, and other feedback

Feedback from Parishioners:

- Open board meetings
- Member Comment Time at board of trustees meetings
- Board member presence and participation at Society events
 - Listening and feedback sessions
- Governance education sessions

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A.5 Charters of Committees of the Council