



The First Unitarian Universalist Society
of Burlington, Vermont

Board of Trustees Policy Handbook

June 2023

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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, and the eighth principle adopted by our society in June 2022, 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, racial, 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.*

I D. Congregational Covenant

We gather together with the intention of creating a vibrant, healthy, liberal religious community. To this end, we make the following promises to each other:

- To come with open minds and hearts so that we can welcome new ideas, new people and new possibilities.
- To listen carefully to each other, to speak openly and respectfully, and to assume good intentions, especially in times of disagreement.
- To participate actively in the life of the Society by being present, serving/volunteering, and providing financial support.

We recognize that there will be times when we will fall short of these ideals. We will be accountable to each other and forgiving of each other.

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 President, 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 for Board Covenant.

II C. Board Development and Reflection

Board Development

Each year the Board will craft a plan to expand the Trustees' understanding of the Society and work to be done. The Board will monitor progress against the plan.

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 as needed.

Board Agenda

Time will be set aside specifically for Board development at Board meetings with focus on the items 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) a proactive rather than reactive perspective.

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 D).
- 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 fulfills its legal obligation by assuring the Senior Minister's performance.

III D. Board Leadership Roles

- a. The Board President 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-President's role is to assume the duties of the President when they are not available, to work with the President 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 President. The Vice-President 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.

The Senior Minister shall comply with the UUA Code of Conduct for Ministers.

All policies included in Section IV herein ("Executive Limitations") shall apply also to the Director of Operations and Finance.

The Senior Minister shall not:

1. Endanger FUUSB's public image, its credibility, or its ability to accomplish its Ends policies;
2. Allow any risk to the non-profit status of FUUSB.

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 without Board Approval.

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 projected to be received in that period without Board approval;
3. Fails to provide funding for Board activities.

IV E. Financial Reporting

The Senior Minister 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:

1. The cash balances in all accounts owned by FUUSB;
2. The actual versus budgeted expenditures for all budget line items.

IV F. 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.
10. Fail to comply with any FUUSB Financial Controls Policies.

IV G. 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 or complying with the Sole Sourcing Process established by the Director of Operations and Finance; (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;

IV H. 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 implement the Senior Minister Succession Policy (see Appendix E).

IV I. 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.

IV J. 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 Board behavior that is detrimental to the work relationship between the Board and the Senior Minister.

IV K. Safety

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

Please see Appendix C for Safety Policy.

V. Board-Management Delegation

V A. Global Board-Management Delegation Policy

The Board's primary official connection to the operational organization, its achievements, and conduct will be through its Senior Minister.

There is an additional collaborative relationship, under the direction of the Senior Minister, between the Board and the Director of Operations and Finance.

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 not give instructions to persons who report directly or indirectly to the Senior Minister without prior approval from the Senior Minister.
2. The Board will not evaluate, either formally or informally, any staff other than the Senior Minister. Board Members who become aware of improper or illegal conduct on the part of a staff member must inform the Senior Minister immediately.
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 the Nominating Committee and the Endowment Committee).
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:
 - a. By internal report, in which the Senior Minister discloses interpretations and compliance information to the Board.
 - b. By external report, in which an external, disinterested third party selected by the Board assesses compliance with Board policies.
 - c. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 A. Board Covenant - as Approved 9/20/22

We, the members of the 2022-23 Board of Trustees of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, VT, covenant to ourselves and each other to:

- honor and respect our shared time together as a precious and finite resource
- prepare, participate in and prioritize the work of the board, to the best of our abilities, knowing that each member has varying demands on their time
- speak freely and honestly, from the heart, being conscious of time constraints and making space for those who have not yet shared
- know it is OK to state that we are confused, lost, unprepared or intimidated
- listen deeply
- respect the individual styles and differing ways we convey ideas and feelings, withholding judgment and allowing for grace, especially whenever discord arises
- understand that mistakes will be made
- focus the work of the board on what is in the best interest of the Society, guided by our mission and vision, and our UU principles and values
- understand that once the board has made a decision, we will speak with one voice
- recognize that what we do in service to FUUSB reflects the position of the board not our own personal beliefs
- respect the confidentiality of sensitive matters that come before the board from time to time
- assist each other as Board members to ensure that all actions by the Board have been considered in light of the Society's commitment to accountably dismantle racism and other oppressions.

Appendix B. Endowment Committee Policy

I. Endowment Committee Operations

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 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.

II. Investment Policy Statement First UU and Meeting House Fund

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 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.

A. Objectives

- a. To preserve capital with respect to maintaining the purchasing power of the income and achieve modest growth of the principal.
- 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.

B. First UU Fund (Schwab 0547)

Purpose

The 1st UU Fund is to be used for the following purposes:

- The First Unitarian Universalist Society Fund shall be accumulated and managed for the purpose of the general support of the programs and activities of the Society. Income from the fund shall be available for these purposes.
- Quarterly distributions based on total return of up to 5% (inclusive of all assets of the fund (i.e. Schwab, VCLF, and OC CD). The committee will apply a total return approach using the percentage to the rolling 12 quarter average balance in the Fund and be established annually in January for the upcoming fiscal year
- Discretionary distributions based on recommendation of the Endowment Committed and approval of the board.
- Unrestricted contributions in excess of \$1,000 to the UU which are not so designated for the annual budget are added to the corpus.

Description of Assets

The assets of the 1st UU Fund include:

- Portfolio of Investments held at Schwab (Acct #0547)
- \$10,000 Loan to the Vermont Community Loan Fund with 1.5% interest (Income paid into Schwab account)

C. Meeting House Fund (Schwab 0553)

Purpose [Restated below to conform to the language in the bylaws as of 6/2017]

The Meeting House Fund shall be accumulated and managed for the purpose of the maintenance, improvement, and purchase of the Society's long-term fixed assets in perpetuity. Donations to the Society for this purpose shall be held in the Trust. The principal of the Trust 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 of the 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.

In applying the income distribution provisions, the committee will apply a total return approach using a percentage from 3-5% applied to the rolling 12 quarter average balance in the Fund and be established annually in January for the upcoming fiscal year.

Description of Assets

The assets of the Meetinghouse Fund are comprised of a portfolio of investments at Schwab Account#0553.

D. Investment Guidelines (Both Funds)

1. The Committee will use a diversified group of individual securities and funds to include domestic and international fixed income and equity options.
2. The Committee may also invest in appropriately insured community investments
3. ESG Consideration. In the process of evaluating investments for this account, consideration will be given to various third-party providers of data and rankings related to environmental, social, and governance issues (ESG). Wherever possible the manager will select securities that rank higher on these metrics relative to their peers. In addition, the manager will refrain from owning any securities involved in the extraction, refinement, and/or sale of fossil fuels.
4. Without prejudice to the actual portfolio holdings, the portfolio shall have volatility and return characteristics similar to a portfolio containing 60% stocks and 40% bonds. The committee shall

measure the portfolio's volatility and return periodically and compare it to the following blended benchmarks:

- a. 60% MSCI ACWI, 40% Barclays Global Agg (principal portfolio target)
 - b. 60% S&P 500, 40% Barclays Intermediate US Agg
 - c. 60% MSCI ACWI-ex US, 40% Barclays Global Agg ex-US
- 5. Only actively managed funds that have management tenure of at least 3 years will be considered.
 - 6. Funds should have reasonable expenses compared to peers.
 - 7. The Committee will review and approve the IPS annually.
 - 8. The Committee will meet at least annually with the investment advisor to review the investments and make any necessary changes
 - 9. The Committee will document on an ongoing basis, all decisions and determinations made in the course of the Committee meetings.

E. 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

III. Ethel Nims Trust Fund

The Society is fortunate to be the beneficiary of the Ethel Nims Trust. The Trust was established with a Corporate Trustee, which has the ultimate powers and responsibility over the management of the investments and distributions. The Endowment Committee is the liaison between the Corporate Trustee and the Board. In practice, the corporate trustee is responsive to the input of the Endowment Committee as to the annual distributions and the implementation of the investment management (i.e. applying Environmental, Social, Governance principles where possible.)

The Ethel Nims Trust, when initially established, was set up as an income only trust (only current yield of interest and dividends were distributable. Subsequently, it was revised to have a Total Return Approach.

In order to further stabilize the income from the Nims Trust, the yearly income will be calculated on a rolling 12 quarter basis of the assets and up to 5% of this calculated yearly income will be remitted monthly to the Society. The Endowment Committee works with the board in establishing request for the annual distribution and communicates same to the Corporate Trustee for approval.

As was done in 2022, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, as beneficiary of the Ethel Nims Trust Fund has legal standing to request the removal and replacement of the corporate trustee. As such the Endowment Committee is responsible for monitoring the performance, fees and execution of the corporate trustee and make recommendations to the board accordingly.

IV. Supervision

- a. The Endowment 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 Endowment Committee will be responsible for selecting the investment manager for the trust funds
- c. Semi-Annually, the Endowment Committee will obtain performance reports from investment managers which measure performance against

agreed upon benchmarks

- d. All investment decisions by the Endowment Committee shall be decided by the majority vote of members present.
- e. The Endowment Committee will review this policy statement annually to ensure that it remains appropriate and is complete.
- f. The Endowment 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.

Adopted by the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington Board of Trustees on June 13, 2023

Appendix C. Safety Policies

Introduction: Safety as an Aspect of Covenant

FUUSB's Safety Policies derive from Society members' covenantal relationship with one another, with the Society's neighbors and the surrounding community of Burlington. Implementing these policies demonstrates our commitment to Unitarian Universalist principles and to radical welcoming.¹

- a. Throughout these policies, our focus on safety is grounded in FUUSB's Congregational Covenant.² That Covenant will be referenced in membership programs, worship, faith development, as well as congregational meetings.
- b. Our Covenant with the Community includes a commitment to view the Meeting House and grounds as a community resource. Regular annual events (i.e. Christmas breakfast, 4th of July picnic) will be offered when possible.
 - i. In times of local, national or global crisis, FUUSB will strive to offer open access to the Sanctuary when appropriate and safe.
- c. Society programs will prioritize access for all.

The purpose of these policies is to guide FUUSB staff and lay leaders in creating and managing programs that guard the physical, psychological and spiritual safety of all: members and friends (adults, children & youth); neighbors, tenants, and visitors to Society buildings and grounds.

¹ "The policies and procedures we put in place allow us to be a better version of ourselves: open and affirming faith communities who hold each other in covenant and love. At the same time, these policies and procedures take the safety of our buildings, our people, and our communities seriously. At their best, our safety policies are an embodiment of our covenant with each other." -Safety as an Embodiment of Covenant: Destructive Behavior | Safe Congregations Handbook | UUA.org

² Our Congregational Covenant - First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington (uusociety.org)

1. Building & Grounds Safety and Security³

a. Philosophy

- i. We strive to be a welcoming space that prioritizes both safety AND radical welcome in our buildings and on our grounds.
- ii. We will provide safety training and support to staff and lay leaders.
- iii. We will strive for openness and transparency, while respecting individuals' confidentiality, when communicating with FUUSB members regarding significant safety concerns. Our goal is to improve safety throughout the Society by raising awareness.

b. Security Systems

- i. Effective security systems (entry alarms, security cameras, smoke alarms, entry codes, etc.) will be installed, maintained, and in use throughout FUUSB buildings at all times.
- ii. The Facilities Manager and Director of Operations will ensure that all building staff, security volunteers, and anyone with an entry code are trained in current security procedures.

c. Safety management: congregational events, interaction with public

- i. FUUSB staff will establish and maintain collaborative relationships with municipal offices and agencies such as the Howard Center Street Outreach Team, Church St. Marketplace, Burlington Police Department, etc.

³ <https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/building-security>

- ii. Exterior doors will remain locked unless there is security staff present. Inside room doors will remain locked whenever the space is not in use.
- iii. Security Staff, whether paid or volunteer, will go through training. All events open to the public will have no fewer than two Security Staff on duty.
- iv. Snow & Ice Removal. A snow removal company will be hired to remove snow from the parking lots and sidewalks. Facilities and/or Security staff will strive to maintain snow and ice free sidewalks, steps, ramps, and parking lots to the best of their ability.
- v. Vandalism. All acts of vandalism will be reported to the Facilities Manager who will assess the damage and make referrals to the city graffiti task force, police, or insurance company as appropriate.

2. Accessibility

By valuing a spectrum of abilities, we only add to our collective richness and diversity. Universal Access is the philosophy that all resources should be designed for all people, regardless of ability, economic status, race, gender, ethnic background or sexual orientation. FUUSB will regularly monitor and evaluate the implementation of minimum standards and guidelines for the accessibility of our physical meeting house, communications, and online presence including remote access to virtual worship services, events, and meetings as we strive to move towards Universal Access.

Physical access to FUUSB buildings will be barrier free to all persons; remote access to worship and other public programs will be available. Information on programs open to the public will be available through uusociety.org; information on programs for Society members and friends will be communicated via regular congregational communications.

- a. One designated point person will act as FUUSB access coordinator who can be easily contacted and respond to access questions and requests. The point person's contact information will be made clear on all public-facing communications in print and online. Reasonable accommodations will be made to the best of our Society's ability.
- b. Livestream access will be available for Sunday worship services in the sanctuary.
 - i. Sound amplification will be used for all services and programs in the sanctuary, and for group gatherings inside and outside, as-needed at discretion of staff.⁴
 - ii. Assistive listening devices will be consistently available in the sanctuary
- c. Remote access will be available for group meetings and Faith Development offerings as determined by staff and lay leaders, and will include closed captioning. Staff and group leaders will make use of remote meeting options to increase access and conserve energy.
- d. Accessible restrooms are available on the first floor and lower levels of the meeting house; lower-level restrooms are also gender neutral.
- e. FUUSB will encourage a fragrance-free environment and take consistent measures to consider food allergies.
- f. FUUSB will take seriously the work of protecting the health and safety of vulnerable persons while engaged with congregational

⁴note from Melissa Saltee on hearing assistance, services for visually impaired: I don't think FUUSB is ready to outline this further until there are access workshops to train staff how to present information more accessibly. Besides amplification devices, there aren't other practices currently in place such as "open captioning" and integrated visual descriptions.

life, physically at the meeting house, at a FUUSB event, and while participating online.

3. Health & Safety

- a. The Society will offer training for First Aid, CPR, AED, Overdose Response to all staff whose job descriptions require it.
- b. The Society will hold a Sunday morning Fire Drill at least once per year. Security Staff will be trained on responsibilities for alarms at other times.
- c. Active Shooter, or other Violent Threats: Staff and key volunteers will be trained in specific response strategies no less than once a year.^{5 6}
- d. Weapons and illegal drugs, including but not limited to firearms and explosives, are not permitted at Society functions or on Society property at any time.
- e. The Society will communicate and urge compliance with public health protocols, including but not limited to pandemic/epidemic protocols and natural disasters.

4. Financial Safety⁷

- a. Financial Safeguards are included in Board Policies section IV. Executive Limitations (ref. Sections D, E, F)
- b. Financial Policies & Procedures will be maintained by the Director of Operations & Finance and reviewed annually by the Treasurer and Finance Team.

⁵ Most active shooter situations are over within 2 - 5 minutes, which makes it difficult to pre-determine any exact protocol. The best response, according to FEMA, Active Shooter Answer Key, is Run, Hide, Fight.

⁶ Active Shooter and Lockdown Situations

⁷ <https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/checklists/financial-controls>

5. Children and Youth

- a. Faith Development programs for children and youth will employ preventative measures and delineate guidelines on appropriate behavior with children and youth in all Society functions.
- b. Training for Faith Development teachers, advisors and childcare staff will include information on child abuse protection, including child sexual abuse.^{8 9} Faith Development procedures will detail processes to respond to concerns or allegations about inappropriate behavior or abuse.
- c. Faith Development will collect and maintain information to accommodate youth and children's special health needs, i.e. allergies.
- d. Children's Faith Development Safety Procedures, will be maintained by the Director of Faith Development.

6. Allegations of sexual and physical abuse¹⁰

The Society will maintain updated procedures on responding to concerns or reports of sexual or physical abuse - involving children and youth in Faith Development programs, and of any individual congregant. Concerns may be raised by anyone in the Society; credible allegations will be referred to the Response Team.¹¹

- a. 'Response Team' – includes Senior Minister, Dir of Operations & Finance, Director of Lifespan Faith Development, plus two other members appointed by the Board of Trustees.

⁸ <https://www.uua.org/safe/handbook/safety-for-re>

⁹ <https://www.uua.org/safe/youth>

¹⁰ Sexually Safer Congregations

¹¹ Detailed procedures for the Response Team will be reviewed and finalized with Rev. Karen G. Johnston in 2023/24 congregational year. Response Team processes will be linked here, but not included in these Policies in full.

7. Employee Misconduct

Misconduct by a minister or other staff member will not be tolerated at FUUSB. Specific violations will be detailed in the FUUSB Employee Handbook, and in the Letter of Agreement between the Society and its Minister(s).

New Safety Policies were approved by the FUUSB Board of Trustees on June 13, 2023.

Appendix D. Communication Policy – as approved 2/16/21

I. Introduction

One of the primary tasks of the FUUSB Board of Trustees is to inform the members and friends of the society and to be informed by them. Doing this effectively requires the continual application of sound communication strategies that reflect the principles and values of the community. This includes operating with transparency, speaking truth, listening effectively to the thoughts, ideas and feedback of others and being open to new ideas. It also includes showing respect to all individuals, building trust, and working toward mutual understanding.

In all communication the Board of Trustees will speak with one voice, as a single body, reflecting the position of the entire Board. All board members will convey the Board's thinking and policy rather than their own preferences. In most group situations the Board President will speak on behalf of the board. If the Board President is not available another board member may be designated.

II. Standard types of communication between the Board of Trustees and community

1. Communication from the board to the congregation/community at-large happens through many avenues, including:
 - Written communication: through letters mailed to all active members and friends, by emails to the same group, by articles published in The Steeple or E-news Blast.
 - Verbal communication: usually from the Board ~~Chair~~ President, during services, annual meetings, or during special meetings convened by the board.
 - Additional information about Board policies, meeting agendas and minutes, is posted regularly on the FUUSB website.
2. At least several times a year (or more) the board will solicit input or feedback from members of the community through:
 - Written or online surveys, or requests for ideas and input.
 - Requests for participation in board-sponsored meetings, designed for information sharing and the gathering of members' thoughts on a

particular topic. The board will plan these two-way communication activities with the congregation as part of its annual governance agenda.

- Additionally, there is some time for discussion during the Annual Membership meeting.

III. Communication between the Board and an individual(s) that is initiated by the individual

Individual FUUSB members or members of the Youth Group may at any time take the initiative on their own to bring ideas and/or concerns to the board in the following ways:

- By writing a letter or sending an email (at any time) to board@uusociety.org.
- By addressing the Board at one of their regularly scheduled Board Meetings:
 - 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 must first consult with the board President to share the nature of their concern and arrange a time to make the presentation.
 - The President reserves the right to limit the number of speakers and amount of time allotted for speaking at any meeting.

IV. Board response to the concern raised by the individual(s)

1. The Board's response to a concern raised by an individual will depend on the type of issue that is raised. It is the intent of the Board to be responsive to the congregation, but it is not the role of the board to resolve all complaints. The board's principal focus is strategic planning, policy-making and policy-monitoring. When a complaint or concern falls outside the normal board focus, the Board President will help direct the individual to an appropriate resource person.

The Board does not deal with personnel issues unless they pertain to the senior minister.

When a member brings an issue to the Board in person or in writing, the Board may need to learn about, investigate, and discuss the issue prior to responding to the individual. In most cases, a matter will be addressed at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

2. Board response to an email or letter

- The Board President (or Vice President) will respond to written communication in as timely a manner as possible.
- If appropriate, the Board President will bring the matter of concern to the whole board at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

3. Board response to an individual(s) presenting a concern at a board meeting:

- Express appreciation to them for attending.
- Listen carefully to what is being said and where the person is coming from.
- If appropriate and deemed helpful by the board or the speaker, one member of the board will be selected to engage in a one-on-one discussion utilizing reflective listening with the speaker to demonstrate their understanding of the concern
- Withhold judgment and refrain from taking sides.
- If evident, explain potential steps and the likely timeline to resolve an issue.
- Thank the person for bringing the matter to the board's attention.

V. Understanding informal communication with an individual Board member

1. From time to time, individual members may seek out an individual Board member to raise a matter of concern. This may take the form of an informal one-on-one conversation, in person, at a coffee hour or other FUUSB activity or out in the community, or by email, text, phone call, or note.

2. When a FUUSB member brings up an issue pertaining to another individual
 - Refer them to the minister if the issue pertains to an employee.
 - Suggest the member bring the matter up directly with person they are in conflict with rather than involving a board member as a third party.
3. When information of relevance to the Board is shared informally by a member of the congregation, the individual board member should:
 - Encourage the individual who raises the matter to contact the Board President directly or attend a Board meeting, or
 - Ask how they can support the individual to have their concern addressed, or
 - Ask whether the individual would like the Board member to raise the concern they have identified at the next Board meeting or with the Board President.
4. Individual board members do not have the authority to make representations that a particular action will be taken, that the complaint will be resolved in a certain way, or that the problem will be addressed by the whole Board. They also must not try to solve problems on their own without consulting the Board President and/or the Board.
5. Individual Board members cannot “speak for the Board”, however they may
 - Respond to a question or concern based on common knowledge, such as board policy or previously settled issue.
 - Share a resource that is available for the public via FUUSB’s website.
 - Respectfully listen in an informal capacity.

Appendix E. Senior Minister Succession Policy – as approved 2/15/2021

Summary

In the event that the Senior Minister is for any reason unable to perform her duties as Executive under policy-based governance, an Acting Executive will be identified in advance to perform those functions and thus ensure that the Board of Trustees is not without the services of an Executive, regardless of Senior Minister absence. The Senior Minister will ensure, to the best of her ability, that the Acting Executive is familiar enough with the Society's governance processes, Board policies, Executive business and current Society issues to be able to assume the role of Acting Executive. This plan addresses three sets of circumstances under which the services of an Acting Executive might be required:

1. Emergency leading to the sudden unavailability of the Senior Minister.
2. Planned absence of the Senior Minister for the purposes of sabbatical, parental leave, or medical leave/disability.
3. Planned absence of the Senior Minister for the purposes of annual vacation, study leave, professional development or denominational service.

1. Emergency

In the event of the Senior Minister's sudden unavailability due to illness, death, or other significant emergency, the Director of Operations and Finance (hereafter DOF, formerly titled Director of Administration) will serve as Acting Executive and will be expected to fulfill the executive functions of the Senior Minister under the Board's policies until such time as the congregation may secure, through the processes of the Unitarian Universalist Association and on a temporary, indefinite or ongoing basis, the services of another minister who can assume the role of Executive. Under these circumstances, as Acting Executive, the DOF will support the Board of Trustees in its role of ascertaining whether the services of another minister should be engaged, determining the time frame for which such services should be secured, and communicating with the Unitarian Universalist Association about such services and related ministerial transition issues as needed. Further, the Acting Executive will immediately identify a minister to perform pastoral care duties in the Senior Minister's absence.

In the event that said emergency prevents the Senior Minister from informing the Board that the succession protocol has been activated, the DOF will fulfill this function and notify the Board of Trustees immediately. The Board President and Acting Executive will together inform the congregation that the succession protocol has been activated and share other related information as appropriate.

2. Sabbatical, Parental Leave, or Medical/Disability Leave

For leaves of three months or shorter, during which the Senior Minister will not be available to perform executive or other ministerial functions, the Director of Operations will serve as Acting Executive and Chief Staff. The Senior Minister may also hire a substitute minister to serve during the leave and to perform certain key duties such as preaching, pastoral care, and program support. The substitute minister will report to the Acting Executive. He/she/they may advise the Acting Executive as needed, but the Director of Operations will be the person ultimately accountable to the Board for the purposes of the Board's policies.

In preparation for a planned absence in excess of three months, during which the Senior Minister will not be available to perform executive or other ministerial functions, the Senior Minister will be responsible for securing in advance the services of a substitute minister who will be an "Acting Executive" for the length of the Senior Minister's leave. The substitute minister will be an ordained minister in fellowship and good standing with the Unitarian Universalist Association. The decision to hire such a substitute minister and the contents of the Letter of Agreement governing her/his service must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

In the event that, during her/his service, the substitute minister becomes suddenly unavailable due to the circumstances outlined in 1. above, the succession protocol described therein will be followed (i.e., the DOF will become "Acting Executive").

During such leaves, the authority to hire or terminate employees will return to the Board of Trustees. Should an incident arise necessitating a disciplinary action or termination, the Acting Executive will advise and confer with the Board of Trustees in a timely manner.

3. Planned Absence for Vacation, Study Leave, Professional Development or Denominational Service

It is expected that the Senior Minister will be absent for eight weeks per year for vacation and study leave, with possible additional time away for professional development and denominational service. During these planned absences, the Senior Minister will continue to serve as Executive, with the following protocols in place:

- a. Prior to departure for such an absence, the Senior Minister will apprise the Board President, Vice-President, and DOF of how she can be reached in the case of an urgent situation or emergency of such a nature that it warrants the immediate input of the Society's Executive. In such circumstances, if possible, the Senior Minister will provide consultation remotely; however, if such an event requires the Senior Minister's immediate return, she will do so as quickly as possible. If the Board of Trustees determines that the services of an Executive are required while the Senior Minister is in the process of returning, the DOF will serve as "Acting Executive" until the Senior Minister's return.
- a. During these absences, the DOF will serve as the Senior Minister's "deputy" for Executive business and issues, including staff supervision. Should a non-emergency situation or question arise that would usually warrant the Senior Minister's counsel, input or decision, the DOF can be a resource to the Board of Trustees, staff, lay ministry leaders, and Society members in the Senior Minister's absence. The DOF is authorized to determine whether the issue at hand (a) can be addressed or decided by the DOF without further consultation with the Senior Minister, (b) requires the Senior Minister's input but can await the Senior Minister's return, or (c) requires an immediate consultation with the Senior Minister. The DOF will follow through accordingly.
- b. In advance of her departure, the Senior Minister will designate a minister to perform pastoral care duties in her absence.