

# ***Unitarian Society of Ridgewood***

## ***Board of Trustees Meeting: 10/2/17***

### ***Convened at 7:30 PM***

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#### *ATTENDEES:*

Willis, Duran, Lewis, McMurray, Krag, Nolan, Nadler, Josefsberg, Debelis, Rev. Sarah

#### **1. Opening Words and Check In**

##### *Benediction for the Heavy Heart*

Good morning. I missed your “good”  
because a plane, because a truck, because  
a gun, because a cop, because a government,  
because a people suffering, because too many  
people suffering, because war, because famine,  
because some mornings it is so hard  
to rise, to wake, to be a self.

There is a pause here. There is a deliberate  
cessation. I want a cessation to the noise  
in my head, to the ache in the collective  
heart of this world. When I was young  
this seemed possible. When I was young  
how hope seemed to spring eternal.

I want to write about butterflies, about  
the cracked edges of tree bark pressing  
like a holy mother into palms. I want to write  
about the joy of children’s cries, about birth,  
about the arch of your smile, how I could  
lose myself in the corners of your  
sweet and grinning mouth. This you is  
you reading this. I want for your joy,  
want to lose myself in you. I want your  
mornings “good,” your evenings “good,”  
all the late-nights and sunrises and afternoons  
and moments pressed against the ticking  
glass of your life “good.”

Breathe. For yourself. For each other. Let us breathe in when others cannot. When we can do nothing else. Let us stretch ourselves open to embrace our friends, to extend our bodies open to anyone willing to meet us, or even to meet those we think may not. Let us hold each other for this moment. For this blink of human existence.

--- Mason Bolton

## 2. Ministerial Startup Meeting

Rob recapped the Ministerial Startup meeting held on 9/23, prompting a wide ranging discussion leading to the unsurprising conclusion that “consensus is not easy to establish.” Still and yet, the Startup yielded a list of congregational goals accompanying four ministerial priorities. Via a congregational letter, Rob will communicate to the congregation “the importance of patience” and our shared responsibility --- as a congregation – for a successful ministry.

Asked to share her impressions, Rev. Sarah referred to an intense interest in a successful ministry – as expressed from different vantage points. Looking forward, she asked about existing channels through which the minister hears and learns about “honest [congregant/BOT] communications.” Several useful feedback mechanisms characteristic of healthy faith communities were identified. Rev. Sarah was asked to provide her recommendations at an upcoming meeting.

## 3. 2017-18 BOT GOALS

The BOT unanimously adopted the following as its 2017-18 goals:

- ❖ Review / Evaluate / Adjust Organizational Structure
  - Examine the Role of the Board of Trustees
  - Clarify the relationship between the Board and the Minister and clearly define Roles and Responsibilities
  - Review the larger USR Organizational Structure and evaluate what changes should be made to:
    - Improve Communication Throughout the Congregation
    - Clarify the Roles & Responsibilities of the various parts of the whole
    - Make it easier to new members to understand how things work and to engage in the life of the congregation
    - Create a more holistic [collective] sense of the congregation

- Review recommendations with and gain consensus among key stakeholders throughout the congregation
- Communicate the changes to the Congregation

❖ Lay Groundwork for 2018-19 Capital Campaign

4. Organizational Structure

Deferred to the BOT retreat on Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>.

5. Minister's Report (See Attached)

Rev. Sarah responded to several questions about changes in Sunday services as well as her thoughts about how the Sunday Services Committee can serve as a sounding board for ministerial innovations.

With respect to our musical guests, a discussion ensued about the propriety in a worship service of expressing appreciation via applause. The consensus view is that applause is inappropriate and generally unexpected.

With regard to the minister's role as a staff supervisor, the BOT assured Rev. Sarah that other priorities superseded "efficiency."

6. Treasurer's Report (See attached)

Peter explained how the reported bottom line 2016-17 deficit of \$15,000 results from backdating 2017-18 expenses (in salary and building maintenance.)

7. Personnel (Closed Session)

8. Leadership Position Update

Robert Markowitz will be co- chairing the stewardship drive with Anita DiGiulio.

Adjournment: 9:15

*Bernie Josefsberg*