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BELONG WITH HEART. THRIVE IN SPIRIT. ACT IN SERVICE

NSUC Board Policies

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INTRODUCTION

These Board policies are part of a hierarchy of documents that govern the operation of the North Shore Unitarian Church, as outlined below:

Category	Examples
Civil Law	Federal and provincial legislation Municipal bylaws
Foundational Documents	NSUC constitution and bylaws
Board Policies	Care for Material Resources (Finance)
Guidelines	Special fund investment guidelines
Procedures	Cheque writing

Preparation of the Board policies was guided by the governance model outlined in *Governance and Ministry* by Dan Hotchkiss (second edition, 2016).

1. BOARD GOVERNANCE

1.1 ROLE OF THE BOARD

The Board will govern primarily by discerning mission, planning for the future, creating written policies, partnering with the Minister and staff, and holding the Board, committees of the Board and staff accountable.

The goal of this approach is to have the Board, staff and other lay leaders carry out their work collaboratively and openly, within a framework of clearly articulated roles, accountability and decision-making authority.

1.1.1 Board Work Products

In concert with the Minister, staff and congregation, the Board will produce and adopt the following products:

Product	Description	Frequency
Mission Statement	An articulation of the Church's purpose and the reasons for its work. What the Church means to do, whom it hopes to benefit and how, and what it claims as central principles and values.	As needed
Vision Statement	A depiction of what achievement of the Mission looks like in the future.	As needed
Strategic Plan	A plan of how to enact the Vision over a 3-5 year timeframe. A short list of the most important results the Board intends to achieve through the Church's ministry and the strategic choices (regarding program, membership, capital and operating budgets, and staffing) the Board has made about how to achieve those results.	Every 3 to 10 years
Triennial evaluation of the Church's ministry	An assessment of the Church's success or difficulties in achieving its Mission.	Every 3 years
Board and Ministry Goals	Drawing on the Strategic Plan, short lists of priority areas where the Church will advance its work in the coming year, as a starting point for budgeting and work planning.	Annual
Budget	A proposed annual budget for congregation approval	Annual
Evaluation of the Church's ministry	An assessment of the Church's success or difficulties in achieving the prior year's Ministry Goals.	Annual
Performance evaluations of the Board and Minister	Assessments of the Board and Minister in their respective roles.	Annual

1.2 BOARD OFFICERS

In addition to the duties defined by the bylaws, the officers have the following responsibilities:

1.2.1 President

The President prepares the Board's agenda, facilitates or arranges for the facilitation of Board meetings, and works in partnership with the Minister to ensure productive partnership between the Board and staff.

1.2.2 Vice President

The Vice President assists and substitutes for the President upon request. The Vice President(s) is responsible for…TBD.

1.2.3 Secretary

The Secretary ensures the safety and accuracy of Board records, including meeting minutes and these policies, and their prompt posting.

1.2.4 Treasurer

The Treasurer supports fulfillment of the Board's financial oversight responsibilities by working with the Finance and Endowment Committee and the Minister to monitor the financial health of the Church and invest Special Funds.

1.3 BOARD COMMITTEES

Committees exist to help the Board govern by making recommendations and executing tasks assigned by the Board. The Board approves committee terms of reference and appoints committee chairs. Committee chairs, in turn, recruit committee members subject to any constraints in the committee terms of reference. The Board and committee chairs will jointly assess their respective appointments every 2 years.

The standing Board committees are:

1.3.1 Finance and Endowment Committee

Contributes to the Church's success by ensuring the financial health of the Church and the appropriate use of financial resources, by managing all bequeathed and gifted funds for the Church, and by recommending appropriate policies to the Board for the expenditure of funds and the use of capital.

1.3.2 Revenue Development Committee

TBD

1.3.3 Human Resources Committee

Contributes to the Church's success by acting as a resource on effective human resource management. Assists the Board in developing human resource policies, advises the Board and Ministers on human resource issues and provides annual recommendations to the Board on staff salaries and benefits.

1.3.4 Governance Committee

Contributes to the Church's success by acting as a resource on good governance to the Church community. Helps the Board to focus on its chosen role, to train Board members, and to ensure the Board conducts periodic self-evaluations.

1.3.5 Property Committee

TBD

1.3.6 Denominational Affairs Committee

Contributes to the church's success by acting as a conduit between outside denominational bodies and individuals or groups within the church whose work might be enhanced by such contact, and keeps the church community in general informed about the larger Unitarian/Unitarian Universalist world of which we are a part.

1.3.7 Residence Governance Committee

TBD

1.4 EXPECTATIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

1.4.1 Board Covenant

Board members will operate in accordance with a written covenant adopted by the Board.

1.4.2 Conflict of Interest

Board members are to avoid conflicts of interest, as outlined in the Church bylaws.

1.4.3 Removal of Board Members

Board members can be removed from the Board, as outlined in the Church bylaws.

2. DELEGATION TO THE STAFF

2.1 GLOBAL DELEGATION TO THE CHIEF OF STAFF

The Board hereby delegates all of its authority to manage the work and resources of the Church to the Minister as Chief of Staff, except as specifically limited by Board policy. The Minister shall lead the spiritual, programmatic, and administrative work of the Church. The Minister has the authority and the responsibility to make all operational decisions; adopt administrative policies and procedures; and allocate financial and human resources, in alignment with the Mission, Vision, Strategic Plan, Annual Goals, Annual Budget and Board policies.

Accordingly, the Minister acts as the Chief of Staff and, in that capacity:

- directs both paid staff and volunteers;
- assumes responsibility for hiring, training, evaluating, and dismissal of paid staff, except as limited by Board policies;
- assumes, in conjunction with Ministry Team Leaders, responsibility for recruiting, training, and dismissing of volunteers; and
- may delegate to paid staff or volunteers any portion of globally-delegated authority except as specifically prohibited or limited by Board policy.

The Minister holds him/herself to strict adherence to the policies created by the Board.

2.2 CORE STAFF TEAM

The Minister manages the work of the Church in collaboration with a Core Staff Team. The Core Staff Team includes the Minister and those staff who report directly to the Minister. The Board expects the Core Staff Team, individually and jointly:

- to lead and unify the paid staff and volunteers in directing their efforts toward the fulfillment of the Church's Mission;
- to ensure compliance with the Church's Bylaws and Annual Budget, Board policies, and applicable laws and regulations;

- to uphold high standards of ethical and professional conduct;
- to work towards achieving the objectives in the Strategic Plan; and
- to accomplish the goals set out in the Annual Board and Ministry Goals by developing annual goals for its work as a team.

2.3 STAFF ACCOUNTABILITY

All staff members are accountable to the Minister, who is accountable to the Board for their performance.

2.4 MINISTRY TEAMS

Ministry Teams are created as a means to carry out the Mission of the Church and to achieve its desired outcomes. After such consultation as the Minister deems appropriate, the Minister establishes Ministry Teams and their mandates, and assigns paid staff. Each team will respond to an identified need, and teams may be formed at the suggestion of interested members or staff. Anyone interested in the establishment of a Ministry Team should consult the Minister. The Minister will establish processes for regularly and periodically assessing all Ministry Teams. The Minister will regularly inform the Board about how the Ministry Teams are carrying out the Mission, Strategic Plan and Annual Board and Ministry Goals of the Church.

3. GUIDANCE AND LIMITATIONS

3.1 CARE FOR PEOPLE

North Shore Unitarian Church is an intentionally diverse and welcoming community where all reasonable care must be taken to prevent harm to members, guests, children, youth, staff, and others affected by the church. The day-to-day responsibility for caring for people will fall to the Minister and Staff and will include the following:

3.1.1 Health and Safety

Ensure that all NSUC programs are safe for participants and that all facilities are maintained in a safe and sanitary condition. Ensure that all licensing regulations such as those for alcohol, smoking and fire safety are met or exceeded.

3.1.2 Vulnerable Persons Protection

Create and follow clear procedures for the screening, selection, training and supervision of anyone who works with persons age eighteen or younger or anyone in a vulnerable sector.

3.1.3 Emergency Planning

Review and update regularly the written plan for responding to reasonably foreseeable emergencies, including accident, illness, fire, toxic conditions, weather problems, power outages, and natural disasters.

3.1.4 Building Security

Ensure that access to Church buildings is limited to those who have legitimate business on the premises

3.1.5 Universal Access

Ensure all programs and activities are provided in such a way that individuals with disabilities can participate safely and as conveniently as possible.

3.1.6 Grievances and Harassment

Create and follow clear procedures to ensure that grievances and allegations of harassment are dealt with in a fair, just and balanced manner. Harassment of any kind, including sexual and personal harassment, is absolutely prohibited.

3.1.7 Disruptive Behaviour

Ensure that behaviour that threatens the physical or emotional safety of any adult or child is firmly and promptly addressed.

3.1.8 Protection of Personal Privacy

Ensure that Congregation members are advised on how to protect their privacy. Some program participants may wish to not be recorded, photographed or have their images broadcast.

3.1.9 Conflict

Ensure a process is available to deal with conflict in the NSUC community by acknowledging it and understanding it, but not necessarily resolving it.

3.2 PERSONNEL DECISIONS

The Board expects the Minister to take the lead in the selection, hiring, supervision, and discharge of all paid staff with assistance, as required, from the Human Resources (HR) Committee.

3.2.1 Hiring Senior Staff

Before filling a position reporting directly to him/her or one that is at least half-time, the Minister must create a Search Committee, including at least one member of the HR Committee. The search committee shall conduct a search and identify a preferred candidate, or a prioritized short list of candidates, to the Minister. The Minister, with the assistance of the Search Committee, will present a final candidate to the Board for approval.

3.2.2 Hiring Other Staff

Before filling other paid positions, the Minister must consult with at least the position's direct supervisor before making the hiring decision. The Minister informs the Board and HR Committee of his/her decision.

3.2.3 New Positions

The Minister may create and fill temporary positions provided that they can be funded within established budgetary limits. The Minister may recommend other new positions or adjustments to existing positions, as part of the budget process, after consultation with the HR Committee and the Finance and Endowment Committee and before a decision by the Board.

3.2.4 Termination of Staff

The Minister may recommend to the Board the termination of a staff member reporting directly to him/her or one working at least half-time, after consultation with the HR Committee. The Minister may decide upon the termination of other staff members and will inform the HR Committee and Board of the decision.

3.3 CARE FOR STAFF

The Church intends to be a fair, ethical, and attractive employer; to achieve high staff morale and productivity; and to protect staff members from injustice and abuse related to their employment.

3.3.1 Supervision and Evaluation

Each employee will be assigned an immediate supervisor who will complete the annual process of reviewing the job description, setting annual goals, reviewing performance, and planning professional development.

3.3.2 Compensation and Benefits

As part of the annual budget process, the HR Committee will review compensation and benefits for all paid staff against relevant benchmarks and, in consultation with the Minister and Finance and Endowment Committee, recommend to the Board adjustments for the coming year.

3.3.3 Whistleblower Protection

The Church prohibits retaliation against employees or other persons who in good faith report a suspected violation of law, danger to public health or safety, or violation of Church policies.

3.3.4 Further guidance on HR Issues

The HR Committee will ensure that more detailed documented policies and procedures exist to guide implementation of these policies, reflect applicable legal requirements, and provide a reference for employees.

3.4 CARE FOR MATERIAL RESOURCES

The Board entrusts the Treasurer, Finance and Endowment Committee (FEC) and staff to take all reasonable care to prevent harm to the Church's financial assets, property, credit, and tax exemptions and develop administrative practices and procedures designed to prevent such harm. The Treasurer must report promptly to the Board on any significant shortcomings in their implementation.

3.4.1 Operating and Capital Budgets

3.4.1.1 Annual Operating Budget

The Treasurer, in consultation with the minister and the FEC, will present a proposed budget cycle for the next fiscal year at the June Board meeting.

The cycle will include the timetable for

- meetings between the FEC and the HR committee
- staff and ministry teams to inform the Minister of their funding needs,
- the Minister, committees and task forces to inform the Treasurer of their needs,
- the HR Committee to recommend the COLA to be used for the next year and any staffing or staff salary changes
- the Board to establish a Canvass target

- the FEC, in consultation with the Minister, and when appropriate, with the HR Committee, to review the canvass results before drafting a budget for the Board's review
- the Board's approval of a recommended budget for presentation to the congregation, and
- the Congregation's Special General Meeting to approve the Annual Budget

3.4.1.2 Capital Budget

A multi-year capital budget, indicating significant Capital requirements, must be prepared by the Treasurer in consultation with the Minister, the FEC, and the Property Committee and submitted for approval by the Board when significant capital spending is anticipated.

3.4.2 Spending Authority

The FEC, in consultation with the Treasurer and Minister, will establish procedures regarding the individuals or positions responsible for monitoring and approving expenditures from all Church accounts subject to the following limitations:

3.4.2.1 Donor-Restricted Funds

Donor-restricted funds may not be used in violation of donor restrictions nor Board-restricted funds in violation of Board-imposed restrictions.

3.4.2.2 Lending or Borrowing Church Funds

Lending or borrowing of Church funds requires Board approval with the exception of advances, up to $3,000, for church approved travel where the Minister can approve such advances for staff and the Treasurer or President can approve such an advance for the Minister.

3.4.2.3 Changing Compensation for Staff

Board approval is required to change compensation for any full-time staff positions or to change the basis on which benefits are calculated. Normally such changes are approved in the course of the annual budgeting process.

3.4.2.4 Seek to Prevent Spending Over Budget

The staff must anticipate and seek to prevent spending in excess of their budget. The Minister, in consultation with the Treasurer, may authorize overspending in a budget area when balanced by reduced spending in other areas, and the adjustment is consistent with approved plans and goals. The Treasurer will inform the Board, at its next meeting, of such discussions and/or decisions.

3.4.2.5 Addressing Over Budget Expenditures

If the Minister and/or Treasurer anticipate that the overall budget will be exceeded they will, where possible, consider options for addressing this over expenditure. The Treasurer will keep the Board informed of such actions at their regular monthly meetings.

3.4.2.6 Treasurer's Responsibility Regarding Exceeding Approved Budget

The Treasurer, in consultation with the Minister and the FEC, is authorized to approve a cumulative total of $10,000 per annum in excess of the overall budget before seeking approval of the Board. The Treasurer will keep the Board informed through the regular review of Financial Statements at Board meetings of approvals she/he has given that exceed the approved budget.

3.4.3 Gift Acceptance

The Minister is responsible for receiving and acknowledging all gifts to the Church that do not require a tax receipt.
The Treasurer is responsible for receiving and acknowledging all gifts to the Church that require a tax receipt.

The following limitations on Gift Acceptance also apply:

3.4.3.1 **Non-cash gifts valued at under $1,000** must be approved by the Minister or Treasurer.

3.4.3.2 **Non-cash gifts over $1,000**, including securities, real estate, and personal property, must be approved by the Board.

3.4.3.3 **All gifts restricted in any way** by the donor must be approved by the Board.

3.4.4 Special Funds

Special Funds include Endowment Funds, Restricted Funds and Project Funds.

3.4.4.1 Endowment Funds

Endowment Funds are those intended to be held in perpetuity to provide a long-term stream of income to the Church or as an emergency fund. The Board increases the Endowment Funds either by accepting gifts restricted by the donor to Endowment use or by voluntarily placing funds into an Endowment Fund.

The FEC is empowered to direct the investment of the endowment funds. The endowment funds must be invested to seek a maximum rate of total return, using conventional investment instruments consistent with the following: prudent management of investments, preservation of principal, potential for long term asset growth, and socially responsible investment practices.

Annual income earned from the Endowment Funds may be used for Church purposes after consultation with the FEC and with the Board's approval. Income not spent in the year after it is earned will be reinvested into the Endowment Fund capital. Any use of the market value of an Endowment Fund must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the congregation.

3.4.4.2 Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds are funds that have been restricted by the donor or by the Board for a specific purpose.

The FEC directs the investment of these funds in conventional investment instruments taking into consideration the purpose of the Fund.

Restricted Funds are to be spent in a manner consistent with the intentions established either by the Board or by the individual who donated the money.

3.4.4.3 Project Funds

Project Funds are specific accounts for work that transcends a fiscal year, is not a normal operating expense, and has been designated for a special purpose. Projects with a value up to $3,000 must be approved by the Minister, projects with a value over $3,000 but less than $10,000 must be approved by the Treasurer and projects with a value over $10,000 must be approved by the Board.

The project fund account will receive deposits and fund payments. When the account is established, the individual responsible for approving expenses from the account will be identified and henceforth their approval will be necessary for the withdrawal of funds from that account. Any change to the individual responsible for approving expenses from a Project Account must be approved by the Treasurer.

The FEC will annually review these accounts at their December meeting. They may decide when an account should be closed and how these funds will be allocated.

3.4.4.4 Investment Management

When the Invested Funds exceed $250,000, a professional investment manager should be appointed by the Board upon the recommendation of the FEC. This investment manager will report to the FEC and work closely with the Treasurer.

3.4.5 Accounting and Financial Standards

The staff, in consultation with the Treasurer, must create Church accounting and financial controls, that conform to accepted standard practices for churches of comparable size in the areas of cash management, separation of functions, approval authority, fund accounting and reconciliation. The FEC is responsible for ensuring that this standard is met and implemented.

3.4.6 Asset Protection

The staff must take all reasonable care to ensure that Church assets are protected from loss or theft. This includes the maintenance of Church property and equipment in working order and the protection of the Church's intangible property, including intellectual property, electronic data and paper files.

The Treasurer, in consultation with staff, the Property Committee, and the FEC, is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate insurance is in place for the organization to protect against property losses, liability for injuries to others, and other relevant risks.

3.4.7 Document Retention

The staff must maintain written procedures to govern the backup, retention, and destruction of the Church's documents, giving definite retention periods for classes of financial, business, pastoral, personnel, and corporate records in both paper and electronic forms.

4. MINISTRY MANAGEMENT

TBD

5. BOARD OVERSIGHT

5.1 Mission Focus

The Board's duty of care requires it to ensure that the Church's human and material resources are used to achieve its mission. The Board fulfills this duty in two ways: by monitoring regular reports provided by the staff and Treasurer and by scheduled evaluation of the Church's progress toward achieving its annual goals, strategic plan and mission.

5.2 Monitoring

The Minister and Treasurer will provide regular reports to the Board. Reports must include, at minimum:

5.2.1 **Monthly financial statements** that show overall financial performance compared to budget and highlight significant financial or operational issues. These reports will be filed and made available to any Church member who wishes to examine them.

5.2.2 **Quarterly financial statements** that show the overall financial position of the Church. These must include a balance sheet and income statement.

5.2.3 **Monthly programmatic monitoring** written reports from the Minister on key operational metrics, progress on achieving the annual ministry goals and compliance with applicable Board policies. Each report will focus on selected areas of progress and compliance so that in the course of the year, the entire set of annual ministry goals and all points of policy compliance are covered.

5.3 Evaluation

Everyone responsible for work on behalf of the Church will engage in a continual process of evaluation. The purposes to be accomplished through evaluation are to foster excellence in ministry work by ensuring that all Church leaders:

- Practice open communication and regular feedback;
- Meet performance standards appropriate to their roles;
- Maintain effective working relationships with one another; and
- Focus on achieving goals approved by the Board and staff.

5.3.1 Board and Minister Evaluation

Through a process developed by the Board, the Board will annually assess its performance and that of the Minister, including their contributions towards the fulfillment of the prior year's annual Board and ministry goals. The Minister evaluation should help the Minister to remain motivated, creative and flexible.

5.3.2 Staff Evaluations

The Minister must ensure that all Church employees develop, with their supervisors, timely annual performance goals supportive of the annual ministry goals, strategic plan and mission and that their performance is evaluated annually in writing.

5.3.3 Evaluation of Ministry Teams

The Minister must ensure that leaders of ministry teams develop, with their staff supervisors, goals supportive of the annual ministry goals, strategic plan and mission and that their performance is evaluated annually in writing.

5.3.4 Triennial Evaluation of the Church's Ministry

Every three years, the Board and Minister will together appoint a Review Committee of three persons held in high esteem by the Church and mutually acceptable to the Board and Minister. Working with the Minister, the Committee will design and facilitate a review of the Church's ministry. The Committee's report to the Board, a written response from the Minister and the Board's plan for addressing any recommendations will be published to the Church.

5.3.5 Annual Financial Audit

In keeping with the Church's bylaws, the Board will annually engage a qualified professional to conduct an audit of the Church's financial statements and to report to the Board and Congregation in writing.