

**First Congregational Church
Minutes of Governing Board Meeting
Wednesday, August 6 at 7 p.m.**

In attendance: Pastor Kevin Downer, Laura Boies, Charles Bottieri, Suzanne Cimochoowski, Bruce Mikoljaczak, Ginny Moylan (Moderator), and Jen Beck.

Welcome and Opening Devotions:

- Moderator Ginny M opened the meeting at 7:06 pm with our current ritual of lighting a candle and sharing a word or phrase that expresses your state of mind as you come to this meeting. Pastor Kevin shared an opening devotional from Houses of Hope- Pathways to Gratitude Notebook-Why Practice Gratitude If What We Need Is Hope?- Melissa Wiginton

Consent Items:

- Ginny asked if anyone would like to discuss any items listed under the consent items. Suzanne noted that there were two errors in the June minutes. Charlie did attend the meeting and the ChurchTrac policy regarding contact with youth should read that contact with youth will be conducted through parental emails or parents will be cc'd on all correspondence. Jen agreed to make those changes.
- Laura proposed that we start another series of "What is the Bible?" sessions and invite the community.
- Jen asked if Kevin and Ginny could clarify the goals and purposes of our work with Houses of Hope. She is not sure that the congregation has a good understanding of the goals of this work. Suzanne suggested that we circle back to the CAT Survey from 2018 and the work of the Visions and Values team. Ginny and Kevin shared that historically, our congregation has had a difficult time navigating change and conflict. This has been born out in both the CAT Survey and the work of the Visions and Values Team. Kevin further shared that the goal of our work with Houses of Hope is to build the congregation's capacity to communicate and listen more compassionately and effectively through the development of these spiritual practices. It is imperative that we develop this capacity in order to plan for the future. We discussed the benefits of creating small groups this fall to share and build these practices with the congregation. Rev Kevin will work with the Houses of Hope team to create a plan for this.
- Ginny asked for motion that we accept the consent items. Suzanne made a motion and Charlie seconded it. Motion passed.

Financial Report- Suzanne asked if we could move our Stewardship Campaign up a week. Rev. Kevin said that he thought that would be fine. We are using all UCC materials this year. Stewardship meets on 8/21/25. They will discuss and finalize this new plan and plan for a launch on either 10/5 or 10/12.

Clerk Update- We still do not have a Clerk. Bruce agreed to take the minutes for the September meeting, Jen B agreed to take the minutes for October. Ginny will continue to post the Action Items monthly.

ChurchTrac Policy Update- Rev Kevin shared that the revisions are complete. Given the recent email breeches with various members of the congregation, Rev. Kevin suggested that we institute a 2 factor sign in for users. This would mean using individual users rather than groups. Rev Kevin asked us to send him our preferred emails for ChurchTrac.

Internal Audit Revisions- Suzanne said that she feels she should share these revisions with the Finance Committee before we vote on the revisions. She agreed to do that. We will vote on these revisions at the September meeting.

Homecoming Service- September 7th. We agreed that the Governing Board should host Coffee Hour on the 7th. Ginny will send an email around for sign ups after Labor Day.

Renewal Through Repurposing Presentation- 8/19/25 in Willimantic. We currently have 7 people attending from our congregation.

Other:

Updates to Sanctuary Updates- Marylou Davis identified a company that would be able to polish the cross, but experienced resistance when she shared this plan with some members of the congregation. So she has stepped back. The Governing Board would still like to proceed with this project. Ginny will touch base with Marylou and reach out to this company for next steps.

Review of action steps completed by Ginny.

Closing Prayer- Led by Ginny

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:35 PM.