

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan
CONGREGATIONAL HANDBOOK
(updated March 18, 2007)

Citing determinations and decisions from Executive Board meetings, congregational meetings, written records, and historic precedents of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan.

ARTICLE I

The name of this organization shall be recognized as the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan. (August 1990)

ARTICLE III

The membership book will signed one time by each member and the membership list will be updated based on donations/pledges, committee/Board activity, and in-kind donations. (January 24, 1993)

- Section VI: Because District and national dues and the process for determining a quorum are based on membership numbers, the membership list shall be updated annually.
- The Treasurer and membership committee chair shall review the membership role and submit a recommendation for deletions to the list based on UUFM Bylaw guidelines.
 - This review shall be conducted each October for action at the November Board meeting.

ARTICLE V

Section IV: Annual Meeting - In an effort to coordinate scheduling between the Annual Meeting and the Sunday programming for April, the Executive Board shall determine the date for the meeting no later than each September.

- Section VIII: Voting Member List - At all congregational meetings where business is to be conducted, there shall be a current list of all voting members of the congregation, as determined by Article III of the UUFM Bylaws.
- The Coordinator and the Membership Committee chair shall provide the membership list.
 - The list shall include the names of all individuals who have been members for at least thirty days prior to the meeting date.
 - All members present at a congregational meeting shall sign the member list so that the presence of a quorum may be established.
 - The list shall be given to the secretary to be filed with the meeting minutes.

- Section IX: Guidelines for Proxy Voting (April 24, 2005, Annual Meeting)
- Proxy votes may not be considered in determining the quorum for a meeting.
 - Both the member giving a proxy and the member holding a proxy must have been members in good standing for 30 days before the meeting.
 - A proxy assignment is good for only one meeting.
 - Each member may hold only one proxy.
 - Proxy designation forms will be made available fifteen days before a congregational meeting. The form will include a place for the member's signature, the name of the designated proxy, instructions on how to complete the form, how to return it, and the date that it is due.

ARTICLE V

Section IX: Guidelines for Proxy Voting (continued from previous page)

- Proxy forms may be obtained from the Secretary or the Membership Committee Chairperson or on the UUFM website.
- Proxy forms must be returned to the Membership Committee Chairperson before the start of a meeting.
- The Membership Committee Chairperson will validate the membership of both the person giving a proxy and the person holding a proxy, using the voting member list that will be used at the meeting.
- A member giving a proxy may revoke it any time before the start of the meeting, and vote on his/her own behalf.
- The proxy will be a general proxy, not a limited proxy; i.e., the proxy holder is given the discretion to cast a vote based on information discussed at the meeting.

Guidelines for Post-Meeting Postal Mail Voting (April 24, 2005, Annual Meeting)

- Members who will vote by postal mail after a congregational meeting may not be considered in determining the quorum for a meeting.
- The voter must have been a member in good standing for 30 days before the meeting.
- Intent to vote by post-meeting mailed ballot must be reported to the Membership Committee Chairperson before the start of a congregational meeting.
- Post-meeting ballots, prepared by the Executive Committee Chairperson and the Secretary, will be sent via postal mail by the first Wednesday following the congregational meeting. The ballot will include instructions on how to fill out the ballot, how to return it, and the date that it is due.
- The ballot will not include procedural motions regarding conduct of the meeting.
- Ballots must be returned to the Membership Committee Chairperson by the second Friday following the congregational meeting.
- The Membership Committee Chair will validate each ballot, using the voting member list that was used at the congregational meeting.
- The outcome of votes at a congregational meeting will not be announced until post-meeting mailed votes have been added.
- Post-meeting mailed votes will be added to the votes of members present at the congregational meeting and results announced on the second Sunday following the meeting.

Section X: Purchase/Sale of Property - During any time the Fellowship is considering the purchase or sale of property the following guidelines shall be utilized to ensure a thorough review of the given situation and congregational authority.

- A special committee or an appropriate standing committee shall gather information regarding available options and oversee the review process.
- Ample opportunity shall be given for congregational input on the preferred course of action (through small group meetings, Sunday programs, evening programs, etc.)
- A proposal containing an outline of available options and a recommendation shall be submitted the Executive Board.
- A 2/3 vote of support by the Executive Board is required to submit the proposal for a congregational review.
- A congregational meeting shall be called in accordance with UUFM Bylaw guidelines to determine subsequent action.

ARTICLE V

- Section XI: Hiring/Termination of Minister - During any time the Fellowship is considering the hiring or dismissal of a minister, the following guidelines shall be utilized to ensure a thorough review of Fellowship needs, fairness to all parties, and congregational authority.
- A special committee, or an appropriate standing committee shall gather information regarding available options and oversee the review process.
 - Established UUMA guidelines shall be followed (which are on file, and located at www.uuma.org).
 - Ample opportunity shall be given for congregational input on the preferred course of action (through small group meetings, Sunday programs, evening programs, etc.)
 - A proposal containing an outline of available options and a recommendation shall be submitted to the Executive Board.
 - A 2/3 vote of support by the Executive Board is required to submit a proposal for a congregational review.
 - A congregational meeting shall be called in accordance with UUFM Bylaw guidelines to determine subsequent action.

- Section XII: Endowment - During any time the Fellowship is considering using more than five percent of the Endowment Fund within a fiscal year, the following guidelines shall be utilized to ensure a thorough review of Fellowship needs, available options, and congregational authority.
- A special committee, or an appropriate standing committee, shall gather information regarding available options and oversee the review process.
 - Ample opportunity shall be given for congregational input on the preferred course of action (through small group meetings, Sunday programs, evening programs, etc.)
 - A proposal containing an outline of available options and a recommendation shall be submitted to the Executive Board.
 - A 2/3 vote of support by the Executive Board is required to submit the proposal for a congregational review.
 - A congregational meeting shall be called in accordance with UUFM Bylaw guidelines to determine subsequent action.

- Section XIII: Statements of Principle - In the lives of individuals, the Fellowship, the community, and the nation, there are times it is necessary to openly proclaim where one stands. Different situations require different responses. this amendment provides guidance for when the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan, as a whole, wishes to make a statement of principle on an issue of importance to the Fellowship. It is intended to ensure that such statements are not used for trivial purposes, and are used only when the support of the Fellowship is overwhelming. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan may adopt statements of principle when the following conditions are met:
- Discussion and instruction has taken place within the Fellowship. This should include discussion at committee level and a Sunday program on the topic.
 - The statement of principle is non-trivial and should have an impact on the resolution of the problem.
 - The statement of principle should have the overwhelming support of the Fellowship with at least an 80 percent supporting vote of a quorum as specified in the Bylaws. (January 29, 1995)

ARTICLE VII

- Section VII: Nominating Committee - The Nominating Committee chair (Immediate Past Chair) shall submit suggestions for two additional committee members for Executive Board approval no later than January of each year. The Nominating Committee shall work

with current committee members to recruit committee chairs for the coming term.
(March 18, 2007)

- Section X: Executive Board Officer/Committee chair roles and responsibilities - The general administration of the Fellowship requires delegation of tasks. Committees have been developed to deal with specific areas of need. To inform potential volunteers of responsibilities, create consistency, and assure that important tasks are not overlooked, the following guidelines have been generated:
- Individual folders shall be updated annually by the vice chair to reflect any changes that have occurred during the year.
 - Folders are issued to each Executive Board officer and committee chair containing the roles and responsibilities of their committee/position, a copy of the Bylaws, and the mission statement of the Fellowship.
 - Changes to roles and responsibilities may be made as needed to facilitate effective administration of the Fellowship.
 - Changes to the roles and responsibilities of a position are to be proposed to the Executive Board for a majority vote of approval.
 - The congregation may provide input regarding roles and responsibilities to the Executive Board, the minister, or the committee chairs.

ARTICLE VII

- Section II: Minister and Staff - When dealing with Fellowship staff, the following guidelines shall be utilized to ensure a thorough review of Fellowship and staff needs, fairness to all parties, and congregational authority.
- All Fellowship staff will be supplied with a job description outlining their responsibilities.
 - the appropriate committee shall conduct an annual performance review with each Fellowship staff member.
 - The congregation shall have an opportunity to provide the appropriate committee with input regarding staff performance.
 - The appropriate committee shall submit its recommendation to the Executive Board for review.
 - A majority vote of support by the Executive Board is needed for subsequent action.

ARTICLE IX

- Section III: Bylaws - The following guidelines have been established to ensure that the Bylaws accurately represent the functioning of the Fellowship and effectively facilitate Fellowship activities.
- The Executive Board shall ensure compliance with the established Bylaws.
 - Proposed bylaw changes shall be reviewed by the Executive Board.
 - The Executive Board shall make a recommendation to the congregation.
 - A congregational meeting shall be held in accordance with Article IX, Section I, of the Bylaws.
 - A formal review of the Bylaws shall be conducted every four years.

ARTICLE X

Congregational Handbook - These guidelines have been created and are maintained in accordance with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Inc., of Manhattan Bylaws. (March 3, 2003)

In an effort to promote continuity and effective administration of Fellowship business, a Congregational Handbook of policies and procedures shall be maintained by the UUFM Executive Board.

- A current copy of the Congregational Handbook shall be kept on file.
- A current copy of the Congregational Handbook shall be posted at the Fellowship.
- Any member may request a copy of the current Congregational Handbook.
- The Executive Board shall review the Congregational Handbook annually and update policies as needed for effective administration of Fellowship business.
- Proposed changes shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.
- Adopting, repealing, or modifying policies shall require a majority vote of the Executive Board.
- Policies may also be amended or repealed by a 2/3 vote of the congregation.

ARTICLE XII

- Section II: Maintaining the Endowment Fund - The following guidelines have been approved for managing gifts and bequests to the UUFM Endowment Fund. (November 9, 2003)
- Gifts of \$1,000 or less will be added to the savings account. Larger gifts will go into the Pax World Fund, or other socially responsible mutual fund. This reduces the costs of brokerage fees.
 - The savings account should be kept equal to at least 5 percent of the total portfolio. This is the amount the Executive Board can withdraw from the endowment fund per year, without a congregational vote.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES and PRECEDENTS

Alsop Trust Fund - Handled by Robert Littrell. A bequest totaling \$74,000 was received from the Alsop Trust to be restricted to specific uses, not to include normal operational expenses (1990). This bequest was the seed money for the development of the Fellowship's endowment fund.

Memorial Garden/Cemetery - Ground is secured in perpetuity (Patrick Caffey, 1986). A 60 square foot area was dedicated by Charles Stephen (April 25, 1993). Persons will be permitted to bury or scatter human ashes in designated areas. The garden will be available to members, friends of the Fellowship, and their loved ones (June 14, 2005). Memorial flag stones may be placed in designated areas, if desired. These stones will be purchased by the Fellowship for the ease of maintenance by volunteers. The family may have engraving done at their own expense. Memorial stones in place before June 14, 2005, [GRAYDEN] will remain (June 14, 2005). It is recommended that a permanent Memorial Garden Committee be formed to oversee policies (June 14, 2005).

Bronze Plaque - The bronze plaque in the "old sanctuary" shall contain the names of all deceased UUFM members (1989). An additional plaque shall be located in the "old sanctuary," which will contain the names of all deceased who have their ashes in the memorial garden. A memorial book, containing the names and obituaries of all members, will be kept in the minister's office (June 14, 2005).

Memorial Fund - A fund will be established for maintaining the Memorial Garden/Cemetery (May 1992)

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES and PRECEDENTS *(continued from previous page)*

Social Action funds - The annual Social Action Committee budget is "to be used as the Executive Board sees fit, and the money not used during the course of the year shall be distributed by the Executive Board at the close of the fiscal year, as seems proper." (April 2000)

Mission Statement - To ensure that the Fellowship mission statement reflects the current self-defined goals and purposes of the congregation, a regular review of the statement shall be conducted by the Executive Board.

- A review of the mission statement shall be conducted at least every 5 years, starting in the year 2005.
- A special committee or an appropriate standing committee shall be appointed to oversee the review process.
- Ample opportunity shall be given for congregational input (through small group meetings, Sunday programs, evening programs, etc.)
- A report regarding the outcome of the review process and any recommendations shall be submitted to the Executive Board.
- A 2/3 vote of support by the Executive Board is required to submit any change(s) in the mission statement to a congregational review.
- A congregational meeting shall be called in accordance with UUFM Bylaw guidelines to determine subsequent action.
- A 2/3 vote of support by the membership of the congregation is required to institute any change(s) in the mission statement.

Congregational Meeting Votes - At all congregational meetings where business is transacted, the moderator of the meeting shall recruit two members to tally all votes taken.

Weekly Collection - Since the Sunday collection is an integral part of the financial health of the Fellowship, the collection shall be taken at every Sunday program.

- The collection baskets shall be passed during each Sunday program.
- The convener shall be responsible for conducting the weekly collection.
- The Treasurer, or his/her appointed delegate, shall ask one other Fellowship member to assist with counting the weekly collection.

Safety Deposit Box - The Fellowship shall maintain a safety deposit box for the safe storage of especially important documents. The keys to the box shall be entrusted to the Treasurer.

Budget Development and Pledge Drive - Each fiscal year the Finance Committee shall build a "bottom up" operating budget and conduct an annual pledge drive to support the budget.

- The Executive Board shall provide general guidance to the Finance Committee regarding increases in income and expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year. (January)
- Committee chairs and others who are responsible for various expenditure lines provide input to the Finance Committee for creating a budget. (February)
- The Finance Committee meets to review all input and prepare a budget for consideration at the March Board Executive Board meeting. (February)
- A majority vote of approval by the Executive Board is required to submit the proposed budget for a congregational review. (March)
- The proposed budget shall be placed on the agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting in April.

MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES and PRECEDENTS

Budget Development and Pledge Drive *(continued from previous page)*

- The Finance Committee conducts an all-member canvass to secure pledges for the coming fiscal year. (May)
- Results of the pledge drive shall be submitted to Executive Board for review. (June)
- The Executive Board shall determine if adjustments to spending are needed to correspond with expected income from all sources. (June)