

Bylaws Revision 2015

Shared Leadership: Clarity and Transparency

Part 2 Policies and Bylaws

When we update the USSB bylaws, the board invites the members of the congregation to learn about the changes they will have the opportunity to approve at the annual meeting.

Annual meeting June 7

There will also be other matters for your vote at the annual meeting including voting for board members and members of the nominating committee, and revisions to the endowment bylaws. Separately, you will also be given short biographies and other information about these voting opportunities. We hope you can attend the annual meeting, or if you can't attend, vote by absentee ballot so we can benefit from your participation.

Bylaws Revision Calendar

Before that annual meeting, the board is offering opportunities for you to engage in the bylaws process.

We are offering a series of informational pieces titled **Bylaws Revision 2015, Shared Leadership: Clarity and Transparency**. We welcome your questions and other responses.

On **Sunday, April 12 at 12:15**, you will be invited to a **workshop** for members to hear about the bylaws revision and to offer questions and insights in facilitated break-out groups. You will be hearing more about this workshop.

Before April 23, you will receive the **notice of the finalized proposed bylaws revisions**.

A week before the annual meeting, at a **Town Hall meeting** we will present and answer questions about the bylaws revisions.

Absentee ballots will be available the week before and leading up to the annual meeting.

Bylaws Revision 2015

Part 2 Policies and Bylaws

This is the second part of the Umail series, *Bylaws Revision 2015*. In it, we review how leadership works at USSB, what the board's goals are for the leadership at USSB, and

how the bylaws revisions help us to meet those goals. The series is also posted on the USSB website under “Leadership and Ministry, Board of Trustees”.

Bylaws Revision 2015

1. Who Leads USSB?
2. **Policies and Bylaws**
3. Frequently Asked Questions

Policies and Bylaws:

What is the difference?

The **bylaws** and **policies** together are the foundation of rights, responsibilities and leadership at USSB. What is the difference between policies and bylaws?

Bylaws: Basic Rights and Responsibilities

The **bylaws establish the basic rights and responsibilities**, rules for voting, board authority, and more. Previously called the Constitution, they have been in existence since USSB was formally founded in 1885 and have been revised many times by the congregation as needed to keep up with changes in congregational life. The last revision was in 2009. The bylaws themselves include the process for making changes to the bylaws, which includes a vote by the congregation. The bylaws give the elected board of trustees the role of governing the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara.

You can read the current USSB bylaws at <http://www.ussb.org/2015-bylaws-revision-policy-governance-documents/>

Policies: How the Board Works

The board of trustees is elected by the congregation to govern the society. The board establishes its governing model. In recent years we have come to realize the advantages of clarifying in writing, through **policies**, how the board chooses to govern. One of the important elements in this clarity is to distinguish the role of the board from that of the minister.

The **policies are the board’s statement of how it governs**. They include the congregation’s values and mission, the relationship between the board and the lead minister, the limitations policies, or general expectations for the lead minister as head of staff and operations (these include policies about finances, policies relating to treatment of staff, policies about leadership style and more) and the policies for the board itself to follow (for example, the board governs as a whole, oversees operations, respects confidentiality, and more). These are established by the board and can be changed by the board.

In recent months the policies have been rewritten so that they are easier to read and so that they more clearly articulate USSB's particular values.

You can read the current USSB Governing Policies at <http://www.ussb.org/2015-bylaws-revision-policy-governance-documents/>

Delegating leadership of operations to the lead minister

Especially in a larger and more complex congregation, but also in many other congregations today, the acknowledged best practice is for the board to provide **clarity** of roles by delegating the job of leading staff and operations to the lead minister. This means that **we expect the minister to inspire and lead our staff and volunteers to achieve our goals according to our values and expectations.**

The board does not lead the staff and operations. Then what **is** the role of the board? **The board's role, clarified in policy, is see to it that in all that it does, that USSB stays aligned with the chosen values and goals of the congregation, and with practices that preserve the health and well-being of USSB.** In order to do this the board listens to and keeps the members informed and works closely with the lead minister.

In Part 1, we showed how our model offers **Shared Leadership, Clarity and Transparency.** **Parts 1, 2 and 3 are posted on the USSB website under Board of Trustees.**

Bylaws Revisions: What are the proposed bylaws revisions and how do they support clarity, transparency and shared leadership?

The board is recommending these changes to the **bylaws**:

- term, "Lead Minister"

In the drafted proposed revised bylaws, we change the term "Senior Minister" or "Parish Minister" to "Lead Minister" throughout. **"Lead Minister" is more clearly descriptive of the called minister's role as leader of staff and operations.**

- Clarification of Role of Minister

The draft proposed revised bylaws remove the language in Article 9.8.2 that obscures the **clarity of the lead minister's role.** In order to be the leader of staff, the minister must have the authority to hire, to set initial salary, and to terminate, all within the scope of the board's written policies.

- Updating Office of Treasurer

Article 11.10 of the bylaws defines the **office of board treasurer.** **For the sake of accuracy and clarity, the proposed bylaws revision replaces the outdated language in the current bylaws with language accurately describing the role of the treasurer.** This article currently places on the treasurer the responsibility for the receipt of income,

for the payment of expenses and for keeping the society's financial records. It states that the treasurer "exercises control over the Society's financial assets." This has not been an accurate statement of the volunteer treasurer's role for many years. Now we have a professional director of administration who manages the income and expenses, and, with the help of a bookkeeper, keeps the financial records of the society. This work is done under the supervision of the lead minister. The board is responsible for seeing to it that this is carried out according to recommended practices. **The role of the treasurer is to assist the board in its financial oversight role.**

● **We are not recommending changes to the articles that pertain to the nominating committee.** These had earlier been recommended, but we find that the **inclusiveness, collaboration and shared leadership that we want to see can be achieved without changing the bylaws.**

The complete current bylaws are on our website at

<http://www.ussb.org/2015-bylaws-revision-policy-governance-documents/>

The complete draft proposed revised bylaws are on the website at the same link.

The current bylaws showing revisions in red are available at the same link and are also attached to this message.

Next: Part 3, Frequently Asked Questions

We welcome your questions and ideas. Please call or email any board member or talk to us at the "Board is In" table on Sunday mornings. Board meetings are open and there is an opportunity to share their thoughts during the open forum. Thank you for your participation!

The 2014-2015 Board of Trustees

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