



POLICY GOVERNANCE IN BRIEF

River Road Unitarian Unive
Congregation
June 2014

THE BASIC BARGAIN OF POLICY GOVERNANCE...

The board assigns all *management* of the organization to the senior leader and agrees to focus its own attention on:

Policy

Planning

Fiduciary Responsibility

Evaluation.

THE BASIC BARGAIN OF POLICY GOVERNANCE...

In return, the senior leader agrees to:

Pursue with vigor the goals of the organization

Be responsible for all day-to-day management

Be evaluated annually

Be bound by limitations set by the board

Be subject to policies set by the board

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOARD IS GOVERNANCE, WHICH INCLUDES:

Articulating the mission

Mission: what good does the congregation mean to do, who does it hope to benefit and how, and what does it claim as its central values

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Board of Trustees will adopt policies so that the River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation might grow and deepen in fellowship, spirit, and service”

PURPOSES OF THE BOARD

Selecting strategies for achieving the mission

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Board will determine whether the congregation should call any additional ministers and/or if the Board should hire any additional ministers.”

“The Board will develop and approve a strategic plan at least every five years.”

PURPOSES OF THE BOARD

Creating policies that will enable staff and members to work together to make sure the mission happens

Policies are authoritative written statements intended to control many decisions over time. They include mission statements, annual goals, budgets, rules about finance, personnel, real estate, personal safety, etc.

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Board is responsible for adopting policies which will further the vision of the congregation...”

“The Board will approve a budget annually.”

PURPOSES OF THE BOARD

Ensuring that people and resources are protected against harm

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Board of Trustees has the ultimate authority for the fiscal condition of the congregation. The Board has fiduciary responsibility for ensuring an orderly long-term fiscal plan with appropriate levels of reserves for capital replacement or expansion; for developing the annual budget...; and for exercising an appropriate degree of oversight...”

PURPOSES OF THE BOARD

Evaluating its own work

and

Evaluating the work of the senior minister

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“Annually, the Board will agree to a basic list of responsibilities for the Senior Minister’s work, agree on the basic list of limitations, and evaluate the Senior Minister

“The Board will consciously model its governance style and will self-monitor itself for appropriate governance.”

THE PURPOSE OF THE BOARD IS NOT...

~~To evaluate staff other than the senior minister
To make day-to-day business decisions
To, for example, “protect the minister from time-consuming and complicated financial matters”
Blind trust~~

GOVERNANCE PURPOSE OF THE SENIOR MINISTER

The senior minister will seek to realize the vision of the congregation by overseeing the day-to-day operations of the congregation, delegating as appropriate to staff members and lay leaders, and reporting to the board regularly on progress toward the congregation's goals

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Senior Minister is the Executive Director of the congregation and will seek to realize the vision of RRUUC by overseeing the day-to-day operations of the congregation, delegating as appropriate to staff persons and lay leaders.”

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Senior Minister is responsible for ensuring the direction and evaluation of all staff and any ministers hired by the Board. The Senior Minister is responsible for hiring of staff or for delegating hiring authority to other staff members.”

SENIOR MINISTER LIMITATIONS

The senior minister will act at all times in accordance with all appropriate codes of ethics and professional conduct, and will do nothing illegal or immoral in pursuit of the vision of the congregation

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Senior Minister will act at all times in accordance with the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association’s Code of Professional Conduct and will do nothing illegal or immoral in pursuit of the vision of the congregation...”

SENIOR MINISTER LIMITATIONS

The senior minister is empowered to make **all** operational decisions not explicitly reserved to the board, assigned to someone else, or prohibited by other policies

SENIOR MINISTER/BOARD LINKAGE

When the board speaks to the staff, it speaks to the senior minister, who represents the whole ministry structure to the board

SENIOR MINISTER/BOARD LINKAGE

Only formal decisions of the entire board
constrain or limit the senior minister

SENIOR MINISTER/BOARD LINKAGE

The board evaluates the senior minister based on progress toward the congregation's goals and his or her fidelity to the limitations put forward by the board

SENIOR MINISTER/BOARD LINKAGE

The board self-evaluates against its own goals and its progress toward the congregation's goals

GOVERNING STYLE OF THE BOARD

Staying focused on its appropriate purposes and responsibilities rather than day-to-day management

RRUUC EXAMPLE

The Board will engage in strategic leadership of RRUUC, rather than day-to-day management, which is the purview of the Senior Minister.”

GOVERNING STYLE OF THE BOARD

Encouraging diversity of viewpoints

GOVERNING STYLE OF THE BOARD

Making a clear distinction between the board chair's role and the senior minister's role

GOVERNING STYLE OF THE BOARD

Being disciplined with regard to attendance, preparation, and respecting roles

GOVERNING STYLE OF THE BOARD

Self-monitoring

ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR

Responsible for the integrity of the board process, including insuring that the board has fair, thorough, and open discussions of issues pertaining to its work

RRUUC EXAMPLE

“The Board chair assures the integrity of the Board’s process, collaboratively sets the agenda for the board meetings...”

ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR

Works with the senior minister to set the agenda for the meetings, making sure that the content of the meetings is limited to those issues which belong to the board

ROLE OF THE BOARD CHAIR

Does **not** have authority to personally supervise or direct the work of the senior minister or any other member of the staff

BOARD CODE OF CONDUCT

Maintain civility and charity in relationships with each other, the staff, and members of the congregation

Support decisions made by the board

Respect confidentiality

Avoid conflicts of interest

BOARD COMMITTEES

Support the specific work and purposes of the board

Examples include finance, audit, investment, personnel (whose purpose is advisory, not participative)

Do **not** have authority over staff; are **not** responsible for monitoring organizational performance in any area

RRUUC BOARD COMMITTEES

Audit

Finance

Financial Stewardship

Investment

Endowment

Governance

Strategic Planning

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

If there is one, it has power to act in emergencies between meetings of the board

May be asked to make recommendations on matters to be considered by the board

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Carry out all the ministries of the congregation

Are supported by designated staff leaders

Report **through the staff** to the board

Examples include property, communication, stewardship, pastoral care, religious education, worship, etc.

RRUUC PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Building

Communications

Denominational Connections

Personnel

Membership

Music

Pastoral Care

Religious Education

Social Justice Council

OTHER GROUPS

Congregations often have denominationally-required committees such as a Nominating Committee

Task forces can be created for short-term purposes such as a capital campaign

RRUUC PROGRAM TASK FORCES AND TEAMS

May include:

Fine Arts

Grounds

Kitchen

Computer Team

Bazaar Advisory Group

Retreat Planning Committee

Memorial Garden

COMMITTEES ACCOUNTABLE TO CONGREGATION

Leadership and Nominations

ADVANTAGES OF POLICY GOVERNANCE FOR PROGRAM COMMITTEES/TASK FORCES/GROUPS

Clarity about congregation's goals and the role your committee plays in achieving those goals

Staff support

Clarity about accountability

ADVANTAGES TO PROGRAM COMMITTEES...

Recognition that volunteers don't have time to do as much as they once did and that congregation is too large for volunteers to do everything. As a result, staff take on an increasing workload