

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
Board of Directors Meeting, February 19, 2019
Minutes

Attending:

Sarah Gonzales, President; Jane Zaun, 2nd Vice President; Jerry L'Hommedieu, Treasurer; Rod Belshee, Secretary; Rev. Barbara, Minister.

Absent: Vikki Porter, 1st Vice President; Nancy Boyce, Director at Large; Susan Hannon, Director at Large.

Congregational Members: Dorian McWain

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Sarah called the meeting to order at 6:30pm, and Reverend Barbara led the group in affirmation of our Congregational Covenant.

2. Check-in:

3. Approval of the Minutes:

The January Board meeting minutes were approved.

4. Discussion with Music Director & Music Budget:

Dorian led a discussion of the current (FY 2018-19) Music Program budget. There is a \$593.31 projected gap after all donations, music budget lines, and the music funds are included. Kurt will perform a benefit concert on May 11, the premier of a piece he has been working for years. He has a very loyal following and the \$25 tickets will likely sell out, with the excess rolling into the music fund for next year. Roger Beaman will help lead the organization effort. Tickets will be online so that Kurt's followers in LA can secure tickets.

Dorian led a discussion of next year's (FY 2019-20) proposed budget. Proposed expenses are \$16,492 against a budget of \$12,500. Dorian reports that that is a shoestring budget for an excellent program. He pays four singers for choral support, including attending rehearsals and helping to coach their sections. The volunteer choir members enthusiastically support this path to excellence. Sarah asked if there are options for budget flexibility if we get squeezed. Dorian offered that he would cut the bass or percussion accompaniment. He would want to keep all of the choral support so that he has all four sections and can pick any music (he has only one volunteer soprano).

Dorian prefers in the future, if there is inability to fully fund the music program, to decrease the program rather than continue an annual fundraiser. The choir is the big expense, including an accompanist at all rehearsals. The annual fundraiser is a make effort for the music director and if it is going to be expected then it should be reflected in the contract and compensation.

5. Reports:

a. President:

On February 24, the Conversations with the Board will focus on recruiting time and talent. Specifically, we will ask What does it take to run the business of the church? What type of work can you do? What can we do as a Board to share the work with you? What would you volunteer for? Sarah and Jerry will lead.

Especially needed for the committees is a CRE chair (if Denise has to drop one of her two roles), an Endowment chair (Roger will keep the Finance chair), Communications, and a Social Justice co-chair.

The April Conversation with the Board will focus on the Budget.

b. 1st Vice President:

Not present; no report submitted.

c. 2nd Vice President:

2nd Vice President's Report *(this is a condensed version of her written report)*

The Stewardship Steering Committee.

The initial introduction of our broader concept of stewardship has included the pledge drive letter, Reverend Barbara's sermons, a February newsletter article, and testimonials. Additional plans include written role descriptions for new member Mentors, work with committee chairs to adopt in their committees, using Board At Large Directors, Volunteer Appreciation at the May 5th Congregational Meeting. The stewardship steering committee is also looking to survey the most recent three years of previous new member groups to gain their perspective regarding the orientation process and how we can make the process more robust, and is suggesting testimonials throughout the year.

Palm Springs LGBT Community Leadership Council:

Formed about a year ago to support and enhance the Palm Spring LGBT community and to provide collaboration between all organizations, the sponsors are DAP (Desert Aids Project), The Center, DBA (Desert Business Association) and Palm Springs Pride. There were clergy or representatives

from Bloom in the Desert, St Paul's Episcopal Church in Palm Springs, and UUCOD. At the January 2019 meeting each allied community organization was able to speak a bit about their organization. Jane pointed to our Peace Labyrinth and S2S plays, and the collaboration between UUCOD and ICD "Waking Up White". Meetings are alternate months, with the next one being March 26. Future events include Palm Springs Pride (Nov 1st-3rd, the 50th anniversary of Stonewall), the Veteran's Day Parade and Black History Month Parade: <https://obayley.net/community-calendar/>

d. Treasurer:

Treasurer's Report (written)

As of January 31st, the church had \$119,633.18 in its bank accounts. There were no short-term liabilities and reserved and restricted funds totaled \$46,923.65, leaving a balance of \$72,709.53 in unrestricted available funds. The Labyrinth Fund ended the month with a balance of \$6,129.87. Year end contribution statements were distributed or mailed in January and 1099 and W-2 statements were issued to contractors and employees by January 31st.

The pledge drive for FY 19-20 started on January 13, 2019 and, as of February 13, 2019, the Church has received pledges totaling \$131,493.00 toward a goal of \$165,000.00. A total of 41 pledging units have not yet pledged although approximately 10 of those units are expected not to pledge since they have moved or cannot be contacted.

There is, at least, \$11,000.00 in this year's budgeted funds that we anticipate not using for their designated purpose. These funds could be used for other purposes in this fiscal year or not used, increasing net revenues for the year.

A working draft of the budget is attached and will be discussed at the February board meeting. Most expense categories are in line with previous year amounts except for the Music Program and Building & Property Maintenance which will be discussed at the upcoming board meeting. Most committees have provided their input to the budget and the Finance Committee has reviewed the first draft. The Finance Committee has recommended maintaining the existing music program budget and proposes fundraisers for any expense in excess of the budget. The Finance Committee is open to expanding the current year and next year's budgets to meet ongoing maintenance or capital repair necessities. These expenditures can be financed by available unencumbered funds. The Finance Committee has completed their final draft of Financial Procedures and will submit it for review by the Board at the upcoming meeting. Several Finance Committee members currently assist with various financial processes. Roger Beaman prepares weekly deposits and Barbara Storms and Bill Smith help with data entry into MemInfo. Bill Masco, Larry Rogers and Roger Beaman have helped with the annual Pledge Drive and Chris Eager led the Pledge Drive. Barbara Storms has been instrumental in leading the effort on the Financial Procedures effort and been a major contributor to the Scrip program. Cheryl Eaton has recently joined the committee. Thanks to all for their efforts.

At the last meeting, Finance Committee members discussed S2S2S and raised questions regarding how it interfaces and supports UUCOD's mission, questioned its financial transparency, its cost and value to the Church, and risks it may pose. Committee members recommend there be further inquiry into these and other questions.

e. Minister's Report:

Minister's Discussion

Reverend Barbara thanks the Board members for their gifts, intelligence, ideas and energy.

Reverend Don is willing to help train the pastoral committee members as pastoral care givers. Reverend Carolyn might be available as an affiliated community minister to provide several services in the pulpit plus adult religious education. A UU mens retreat is being offered. Reverend Barbara wants UUCOD to provide support to allow members to attend the UUA regional meetings regardless of their financial means.

Minister's Written report *(this is a condensed version of her written report)*

Developmental Ministry

One of our tasks is to persist in the transition from Pastoral size organization (per UUA 75-150) to a Program size organization (150-250) in order to develop the kind of ministries that will help UUCOD thrive in the years to come. A part of that is to create and communicate policies that help us say "yes" and "no" or "not yet" congruent with our goals, vision and values.

Stewardship of Worship Sermons from both Reverend Barbara and guest clergy/speakers are meaningful and very well received, attendance is up and the spirit is enlivening!

January 20 – Waking up White, including personal witness from participants and wonderful music from Suzanne Sheridan.

Jan 27 – Ecological Diversity and Refugia in the Coachella Valley, Dr. Cameron Barrows, UCR.

Feb 3 – Ground Hog Day, a joyful day!

Feb 10 – Wonderful day with the full choir, a celebration of Bob Woolfson, and the Stardust sermon, with attendance of 184 (!).

Feb 17 – The powerful story of Job, blowing on the coals of the heart.

Membership: About 8 folks attended the new member meetings.

Pastoral Care: We are beginning to evolve a concept of a pastoral care team with a mission and set of policies. Rev Dr. Don is available to be a part of a process to train and support our UUCOD Pastoral Care volunteers.

Social Justice/ Community /Charity

Rev. Barbara attended the Women's March on February 19th, in her collar. Joni and friends helped the TSA during the shut down and were on the news. The Share The Plates Offerings are both highlighting the good work that goes on in the Coachella Valley, the needs of this community and publicity and are well supported by UUCOD.

Community: Reverend Barbara was part of the Community interfaith gathering in Rancho Mirage, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Desert. She is attending the Coachella Valley interfaith group and has committed UUCOD building to an MLK interfaith event next year.

She officiated at a wedding on Feb 9th and will again on Feb 22. (Joy!)

Administrative: We have a wonderful new Administrator, Andrea Gonzalez.

Lifespan Faith Development- Children's Religious Education (CRE) and adult RE visioning will be on the agenda. A first meeting to consider CRE/RE visioning is set for March 3.

UUA: Rev Barbara will attend the SW District meeting on April 26th through 28th in Long Beach, and the General Assembly in Spokane at the end of June. The UUA reached out about an Association effort to support Black Lives Matter with a financial campaign. We have not yet been part of that effort.

SCHEDULE: Reverend Barbara will be away May 17-June 2 to visit Vienna /Europe with Jonathan as he does research on a book he is writing. She did not take her week of time in February, so will take one extra day off next week and March 5-11.

Weekly schedule:

Monday – Sabbath

Tuesday & Thursday from 1-5, office hours

Tuesday & Thursday evenings – committee meetings.

Rev Barbara is in the office at other times, as needed, and takes one day for writing at home, usually Wednesday.

Children's Religious Education:

The Board received a letter from Denise, co-signed by nine others, expressing disappointment that the Board decided to stop the search for a Children's Religious Education Coordinator, and imploring the Board to take steps to reinstate the search and support the search process.

Sarah clarified that the Board did not stop the search. The postings have been active for six months with no applicants. One has expired, but the posting at College of the Desert is still active. We need to re-vision CRE as the Sunday School model is not working – we had two Sundays in a row where no kids showed up.

Reverend Barbara suggested that we need a different model. UUA congregations everywhere are having the same challenge, and Sunday School as a model is not working. Other faiths have successful inter-generational services, rather than isolating children, and they also have a higher retention rate since the children organically become members of the congregation as they age. We need to first determine the shape of the program and then hire accordingly. The CRE Search Committee reportedly never met. The initial applicants lacked experience in education or in UU or both.

It was reiterated that the UU SW District has a session on re-thinking Sunday School and that the Board would support parents or other attendees financially as needed.

6. Current Business:

a. Attitude of Gratitude: no action taken.

b. 2020 Budget Review-Brainstorm:

Jerry reviewed changes to the draft budget composed by himself and Roger. New rental agreements include \$75/month for Mothers Demand Action through November, and about \$500/year for DOS smaller activities. Increased expenses included \$250 for Social Committee (e.g. to pay event fees as needed to ensure that all members can participate), and \$1000 for Stewardship Committee. Jerry proposed that we reduce the Bookkeeping review from monthly to quarterly, and to change the retainer to an hourly fee.

The Board discussed other recommended changes to the budget for Jerry to work through.

c. Approved Changes to the Building Use Policy: tabled.

d. Conversations with the Board 2/24/2019: Discussed earlier in the meeting.

e. Facilities Budget Reserves: Rod requested two increases to this year's Facilities budget, and increase from \$900 to \$3600 for General/Maintenance/Supplies expense, and an increase from \$1,000 to \$15,000 for Capital Reserve. Rod outlined the details for those requests. Jerry moved, Jane seconded and the Board approved the increases as requested.

7. New Business:

a: First Review of Finance Policy and Procedures: tabled.

b: Spring Cleaning-What gets stored at the church: tabled.

8. Closing. The Chalice was extinguished.

9. Adjournment. The Board Meeting was adjourned by Sarah at 9:45 PM.

10. Executive Session. The Board met in Executive Session.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rod Belshee, Secretary

Date

Approved: _____, 2019