

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
Board of Directors Regular Meeting, May 19, 2020
Minutes

Attending:

Attending by Zoom Meeting: President Jane Zaun, 1st Vice President Vikki Porter, 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms, Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu, Secretary Rod Belshee, Director-at-Large Carol LaVoie, Reverend Barbara Fast, Director-at-Large Larry Rogers.

Absent: <none>

Congregational Members by Zoom Meeting: Director-at-Large Elect Mack Rogers, Social Justice Chair Denise Janssen Eager

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Jane called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm by Zoom Meeting, and led a reading and candle lighting.

2. Check-in:

3. Approval of the Minutes: The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes as written for the April 21 regular meeting of the Board, the April 29 special meeting of the Board, and the May 17 Congregational Annual Business Meeting and the May 17 By-Law Revision Meeting.

4. Time-keeper and Process-observer: Barbara Storms

5. Voices of the Congregation:

Denise Janssen Eager, Social Justice Share the Plate for the Summer

Denise proposed Share the Plate organizations for the summer (July-September). Approval will be taken up at the June Board meeting (since motions cannot be made for items not listed on the agenda). Denise's proposal is July 19 Las Medicos voladores (Flying doctors), Aug 16 Veterans for Peace, Sep 20 Well in Desert. Discussion included the impressive generosity of the congregation on Share the Plate Sundays, with the plate collections often more than double collections on other Sundays.

6. Reports:

a. President Jane Zaun:

Jane submitted a written report. There was no further discussion in the meeting.

b. 1st Vice President Vikki Porter:

Vikki submitted a written report. In the meeting she explained the Facebook statistics. The Facebook stats show that visitations continue to climb for a few weeks after the sermon, and the amount of time people stay on the page is increasing, both great signs.

Vikki also reported on progress training additional volunteers to support the Sunday service, as Rod will be off of the grid starting in late June for a couple of months. Vikki will shift to take the broadcast planning role from Rod, Michael will take on more editing, and Sandy and Margaret will join to take over some of Vikki's up front tasks. That provides good balance and backup with the big critical exception that we have no technical backup for Michael. The Board discussed options such as internships from COD to provide technical backup.

c. 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms:

Barbara submitted a written report.

In the meeting, Barbara commented that the Membership Committee will need to change how it operates when the building is closed, including how to engage new members, run classes, and how to sign the book (one person attended both orientation sessions but missed the induction ceremony and was therefore unable to sign the book and unable to vote).

There was a short discussion of electronic birthday cards and an electronic Directory. Jack is designing a new physical card, which Bryna will print as a contribution.

d. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu:

Jerry submitted a written report regarding our financial position and notable financial events.

In addition, Jerry was contacted by Spirit Level Foundation of UU San Diego, who offered a no-strings-attached Spirit Grant to UU congregations in Southern California equal to 2% of their prior year's budget. Jerry responded and secured an unconditioned \$3,000 check (!).

The Board discussed the Harvey Milk breakfast. In typical years the UUCOD purchases a table (10 seats at \$65 each) which secures a listing for UUCOD as a table sponsor, and then our individual members buy the tickets from UUCOD so there is no net budget expense. We pre-purchased a table

this year before the pandemic. The organizers have canceled the breakfast, and ask if we would like to remain a sponsor or request a refund. This is a primary fundraiser for the Gay Straight Alliance clubs in the schools. The Board approved a motion to remain a sponsor and request congregants to purchase \$65 tickets/donations through UUCOD. If more than ten congregants purchase tickets then any excess proceeds will be contributed to the Harvey Milk Breakfast.

Jerry reported that he adjusted the 2020-2021 budget again, lowering revenue by an additional \$4,700 and expenses by \$2,800 (and intends to close that gap). The budget will be discussed at the June meeting.

e. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast:

Reverend Barbara requested that her Annual Report be mailed out to congregation.

f. Director-at-Large Carol Lavoie:

Carol discussed planning for the auction. She and Barbara are making a plan, building upon the methods that we used for the Annual Meeting, such as use of Zoom, providing technical support phone numbers and using spotters for each screen. Since the constraints of a physical auction are removed, the Silent Auction can now spread over perhaps a week instead of all in one day. The date is pending development of the overall calendar.

7. Old Business:

a. Attitude of Gratitude, Carol. The Board sent a card of gratitude to:

Fran Hoag for critical behind-the-scenes help with the Annual Meeting and Share the Plate voting.

b. Harvey Milk Breakfast

<covered earlier during the Treasurer's Report>

c. Debrief Annual Meeting, Jane

Reverend Barbara congratulated the Board on adapting and leading a wonderful meeting.

The Board debriefed what worked well and what we might change next year if we again have a virtual meeting.

- The earlier notification timeline required by non-profit law meant that we didn't have all of the material available at the time of the first announcement and absentee ballots. Next year let's move up the due dates for all materials.
- We included a meeting reminder in the Collection Basket email. We should plan a separate reminder the morning of the meeting with just the meeting invite.
- The coffee and conversation time (30 minutes) was very effective. It gave just the right amount of time to get everyone connected and comfortable, with Fran and Barbara on the phones calling people who had any difficulty. The tech support was excellent.
- The use of spotters for each screen for question and answer was effective. The screen capture of attendees provided a great visible recording of member attendance. The recording of the meeting in Zoom assisted with subsequent minutes. Towards the end attendees were un-muting themselves, so locking that ability would preserve structure.
- The Share the Plate voting was not really part of the formal Annual Meeting, and voting was a bit complex since members used their Election Buddy ballot and friends used a Constant Contact ballot. It would be better to just have all Share the Plate voting done through Constant Contact.
- Some ballot questions came up after the Annual Business meeting had closed, in particular a request when voting for Board members to allow voting Yes, No, Abstain, or write-in. In prior years there was just a voice vote for the entire slate, but the use of electronic ballots changes expectations.

d. Facilities Update, Rod

Rod submitted a written report.

The initial solar contractor failed to perform and we have agreed to terminate the agreement pending return of the deposit. We have filed a complaint with the California Contractor Board, and will file in small claims court to recover our deposit.

Rod requested guidance from the Board for going forward

- do we want to continue to pursue solar?
- do we want to use a Power Purchase Agreement to secure a discount?
- do we have a source of funds?

The Board believed that the congregation was overwhelmingly in favor of achieving a net-neutral carbon footprint. Canceling our solar proposal (and repaying the loan from the member) was deemed inconsistent with our fiduciary duty to act in accordance with the members interest. Deferring the solar installation was considered too expensive (we would be still be incurring the high electric bills in addition to loan interest). The Board agreed by consensus to move forward with the solar proposal.

In consultation with Kevin Brandt, serving as legal counsel, the Board decided by consensus not to pursue a Power Purchase Agreement. The risks associated with a default of the PPA provider during the initial six years were deemed too great, especially in these uncertain times.

Additional funds will be required to complete the solar project. New bids indicate the cost will be around \$66,000, the amount approved by the congregation in December 2019. However, we only took a loan of \$51,000. The Board agreed by consensus to apply surplus funds from this year and possibly the Spirit Grant to the solar reserve account so that the solar project is fully funded moving into the next fiscal year. This actually makes the payback on the solar project sooner, since only a portion of the expense is financed.

Rod also briefed the Board on an additional potential art donation. Gene Kain lost access to the place he was storing his metal sculptures just a few days before he was scheduled to leave town. He offered to donate a very nice piece to the church. We did not have time to form an ad-hoc team to evaluate the proposal, so we agreed to store his work in the community room and give us time to form a team and evaluate the donation proposal.

e. Covid-19 Response Team

<deferred>

f. Zoom Issues

The Board discussed issues with scheduling Zoom meetings. The Board approved by consensus to add a second Zoom account through UUA to reduce time conflicts. Jane will help establish calendaring priorities when conflicts arise.

The Board also favored restricting access to the Zoom account to eliminate the addition of meetings that are not on the paper calendar. Carol will explore expanding her role to include the scheduling of meetings in Zoom and then changing the password. Rod offered to help with training.

8. New Business

a. Developmental Ministry Annual UUA Assessment

The first hour of our June Board Meeting will be to work on the annual Development Ministry Assessment for the prior year. This is an assessment of progress on the Development goals, not an assessment of the minister. Jane will invite a member of the Committee on Ministry to join, and Vikki suggested that we also invite all newly elected member of the Board of Directors.

Vikki observed that we had a great start on the next Strategic Plan and involvement with the Church Council, but that was stopped by the pandemic. Even in the current situation we need to establish a new Strategic Plan, and Vikki offered to continue to help even after she leaves the Board.

Jane outlined the training that she will be conducting for the new Board members, including the Board Manual, Policies and Procedures and the By-Laws.

b. Rental Offer

Rabbi Jules has requested renting the building for two services during the high holy days in September (Saturday the 19th and Monday the 28th). They plan to live stream with 20-25 people in the building and will practice safe distancing.

Board discussion focused on our responsibility to ensure safety. Do we prescribe the safety procedures, or is that up to the renter? The Board also discussed the need for cleaning and sanitizing after the rentals.

The topic was tabled so that Jane could discuss the request and safety procedures with the Rabbi, and we would look to guidance from the UUA.

9 Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment

Jane adjourned the meeting at 7:50pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rod Belshee

_____, 2020
Date Approved

Addendum to Board of Directors Meeting Written Reports of Board Members and Committee Chairs

Attachments

Written Reports of Board Members and Minister

- a) President Jane Zaun's written report
- b) 1st Vice President Vikki Porter's written report
- c) 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms' written report
- d) Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu's written report
- e) Director at Large Carol LaVoie's written report
- f) Minister Reverend Barbara Fast's written report

Written reports of Committee Chairs

- a) Facilities Committees

a. President Jane Zaun's written report:

This Sunday May 17th was our 10th Virtual Sunday Worship since shelter in place orders came from Governor Newsom.

Since our Board Meeting on April 21st, the majority of my time has been related to preparation for the Annual Congregational Business Meeting held virtually May 17th.

I have continued to offer support to our congregation with articles in the Newsletter, phone calls, emails, and participation in Zoom meetings.

I continue participating with the COVID19 Response Team 3x/week in ongoing discussions related to support for the congregation.

The UUA has a Spirit Grant program; some of their requirements have changed. I've asked Rob DuWors, Endowment Committee co-chair, to look into the possibility of UUCOD qualifying for one next year.

The WW local representative, Judy I, did contact me, met me at the Church and moved all of their food from the storage area. Their 4 cabinets remain for now.

b. 1st Vice President Vikki Porter’s written report:

Service Production. Shepherded production planning for four Sunday services since last board meeting, meeting four times weekly with production team and participating Worship Leader and Worship Associates.

Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Engagement	Promote
05/17/2020 8:30 AM	 "The Moral Imagination" Rev. Barbara Fast, Worship Leader			374 	389 277 	Boost Post
05/10/2020 8:06 AM	 "Mother's Day, Mother Earth, Healing Covid" With Rev. Dr. Don			378 	290 157 	Boost Post
05/03/2020 9:43 AM	 Welcome to "Music Sunday" with Jeffrey Huard & Rev. Barbara Fast			906 	262 368 	Boost Post
04/26/2020 8:22 AM	 "Flower Power" with Rev. Barbara Fast			847 	345 349 	Boost Post

Averaged 72 views per service (views = 1+ individuals). We don’t reach peak views until about 15-20 min into service.

COVID 19 Reponse Team. Met 3 times a week with team for problem solving and planning. Currently plan to compare service visitors to lists of unknown donors.

Communication. Will begin cross-posting service info on other CV FB groups in outreach to new audiences. Reviewing FB public page graphic design with Jack Fitzsimmons. Renamed FB closed group “Community for UUCOD” and restated rules for group governed by covenant. Unless there is objection, I’m assuming chairperson of Communication Team.

c. 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms’ written report:

Stewardship Committee attempted to meet in May, but had Zoom issues with another meeting at the same time. Stewardship postponed its meeting until June 2 at 1pm.

- **Social BUUterflies-**
 - Sheryl continues to holding a Saturday Zoom Happy Hour. Generally about 8-10 people attend each week. She plans to continue this if there is interest.

The May **Membership Committee** meeting focused on:

- The look of the directory and whether we should include pictures. A subcommittee is working on recommendations to bring back to Membership. Membership will then make a recommendation to the Board. Note: that in June Membership will be discussing who should be included in the directory and the committee will send a recommendation to the Board
- The committee recommends a listing in the monthly newsletter of birthdays. Bryna and Marty will design a birthday card and Bryna volunteered to write and send the cards to each of the birthdays, starting in July.
- The committee is working on a summer update of the directory to include new contact information provided by members and friends and to include new members who are not in the directory.
- In June, the committee will be working on a clearer definition of what constitutes an active member and will send a recommendation to the Board.

d. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu's written report:

As of April 30th, the church had \$280,448.83 in its bank accounts. Reserve and restricted funds totaled \$224,269.20, leaving a balance of \$56,179.63 in unrestricted funds. Expenses for the month exceeded revenues by \$4,977. This is not unusual for this time of the fiscal year since most pledge payments have been paid. Last year, expenses exceeded revenues by \$7,561 at the end of April. Less the \$100,000 donation we received in November, our year-to-date revenues exceed expenses by \$27,566. Despite the COVID-19 virus, it's been a good financial year.

Contributions of record are nearly twice the amount received in March and our April Share the Plate provided \$562 to Friends of the Desert Mountains. We have received several donations designated for the Audio/Visual Fund, Music Fund, and the Sacred Grounds Reserve. We are seeing weekly collection plate donations from individuals viewing our streaming services who were previously unknown. There was no rental income posted in April.

At it's April meeting, the Board voted not to pursue Payroll Protection Program funds since the application required a certification that the Church had suffered a significant financial impact and might have to lay off employees; the Board felt neither point was valid. After reviewing a tentative budget approved by the Finance Committee at the April meeting, the Board decided late in April to revisit the proposed budget based on new information. After several meetings, the Board approved a proposed budget that was almost \$12,000 lower than the initial budget and nearly \$9,000 lower than the current year's budget amount.

e. Director at Large Carol LaVoie's written report:

<none submitted>

f. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast's written report:

<none submitted. See Reverend Barbara's extensive annual report, included with the annual meeting.>

Written Reports of Committee Chairs:

g. Facilities Committee Chair Rod Belshee's written report:

Rooftop Solar

We have terminated our solar contract, pending return of our deposit. We have filed a complaint with the Contractors State License Board regarding our solar contractor. We will also file in Small Claims Court to recover our deposit.

The Congregation authorized a Power Purchase Agreement, however such agreements do not protect the church ownership of the system if the PPA company declares bankruptcy in the first six years. PPA agreements are in common use by non-profits and can save us about \$8,500 but the contract provisions are concerning.

We have solicited new bids from new installers. They range from \$66K to \$73K (without PPA). We borrowed just \$51,000 (not the full \$66,000) and after paying the deposit the solar reserve is now just \$43,300. We can cover the cost without incurring the debt by moving the surplus from this year into the solar reserve account.

Refrigerators

To cut expenses we will empty both refrigerators and turn them off. Since the room temp is 88F, this might save about \$100 before the cool weather returns. We will also turn off the hot water heater. Most of the food will reach an expiration date before re-open the church, and it is not acceptable to food pantries since it requires refrigeration, so Rod will donate it to local families directly.

Building Use

In the past five weeks, ten people have accessed the building a combined 36 times. The typical stay is just 15 minutes, and the typical gap between people is over 24 hours. The primary users are Glenn, Rod, and Jane (7 visits each) and Jerry and Rev B (5 visits each).

I will discontinue monitoring.

Metal Sculpture

Gene Kain had an immediate need to remove his art pieces from the shop where they were located. He offered to donate one to the church but we judged that we did not have sufficient time to

properly evaluate the offer. The piece is temporarily stored in the community room until we are able to form a team to evaluate the offer and make a recommendation.

Sunday Service - Implications of Live Streaming

Rod is putting together an assessment of what it will take to continue live streaming when we resume in-person. (For now, we are using personal equipment.)

There are a number of issues to explore, not just equipment cost but also the number and skills of volunteers to run it, and the floor space to house a little production booth.

Custodial

There have been no recorded visits by Roberto of M&M in the past five weeks (!).

Handyperson Tasks

none

Sacred Grounds

On hold