

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
Board of Directors Regular Meeting, April 20, 2021
Minutes

Attending:

BOD Attending by Zoom Meeting: President Jane Zaun, 1st Vice President Carol Lavoie, 2nd Vice President Linda Savard, Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu, Secretary Rod Belshee, Director-at-Large Mack Rogers, and Minister Reverend Barbara Fast.

BOD Absent: Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt

Congregational Members by Zoom Meeting: Barbara Storms, Mel Wilkinson, Carolyn Etheridge, Chris Eager, Sarita Gonzales, Terry LeMasters, Sheryl Eaton

Meeting minutes:

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Jane called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:00 pm PST by Zoom Meeting. Jane led a reading while she lit the chalice.

2. Check-in:

3. Approval of the Minutes:

The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes as written for the March 16, 2021 regular meeting of the Board.

The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes as written for the April 6, 2021 special meeting of the Board.

4. Time-keeper and Process-observer: Carol Lavoie

5. Voices of the Congregation:

Barbara Storms reported on lessons learned at a UUA workshop on strengthening our community. In particular, transparency on how things work is fundamental. Since currently we lack any means for congregants to easily access our Policies and Procedures, she suggests that we find a means to make these available.

6. Reports:

a. President Jane Zaun:

Jane submitted a written report. In the meeting, she reported that there have been many applicants for the Administrative position and she is encouraged that we will find a good candidate, including one with bookkeeping skills.

b. 1st Vice President Carol Lavoie:

Carol submitted a written report. In the meeting, she reported attendance figures at recent Lifespan events: 12 people for Reverend Ian's first class, 10 for the second, 9 for Peter's, and 7 for Reverend Barbara's. Carol highlighted the upcoming June 15th UU read, and the Mama Gloria event (for which ticket sales are slow but it is still early).

c. 2nd Vice President Linda Savard:

Linda submitted a written report. In the meeting she pointed out that the UUA Pacific Western Region is moving to disband the Districts.

d. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu:

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

In the meeting he added that we had an incredible March with \$30K in new money, (\$20.2K Payroll Protection Program loan of which \$17K will be forgiven, \$4.4K unrestricted Spirit Grant, and a \$5K donation to Sacred Grounds from outside of the community.

Jerry projects reserves will end in the \$40K range at the end of the fiscal year, after applying \$38K in exceptional expenses to the current \$81K balance in unrestricted reserves. Next month, Jerry will give a more specific report on our Reserves, in particular delineating designated and restricted.

e. Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt:

Bob is tied up in a court case and not available. He reported to Jane that Worship is set up through May, and that the choir continues to sing.

f. Director-at-Large Mack Rogers:

Mack submitted a written report. In the meeting he reflected that there is very much going on Social Justice, and opined that Social Justice may shift the focus to racial justice (in concert with BIOPOC).

The Salton Sea video with Kerry Morrison as a speaker reached 23 attendees. On Thursday, an Earth Day film Festival with two videos is planned.

g. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast:

Reverend Barbara submitted a written report.

In the meeting, she requested the proceeds of the collection basket on Music Sunday goes to music program on May 30. The Board passed a motion for the collection plate on May 30 to go to the music program.

Reverend Barbara asked for promotion for Mama Gloria, such as on our website.

She added thank you to everyone in Appreciation Sunday and especially the Technical Production Team.

h. Assistant Minister Reverend Ian Riddell: *(attends quarterly: Nov, Feb, May, Aug)*

Reverend Ian submitted a written report. There was no further discussion.

7. Old Business:

a. Attitude of Gratitude, Mack

Cards for Gratitude were sent from the entire Board:

- For helping on the Constant Contact Newsletter and Order of Worship: **Fran Hoag and Linda Savard**
- For managing the Zoom Coordination: **Katy Faas**
- For supplying flowers on Sunday's Worship Service: **Leslie Gebhart**
- For creating the application and managing contact with Spirit Grant Foundation for our AV Project: **Rob DuWors**
- For writing joys and sorrows into our "prayer" book for over one year: **Bryna Blum**
- **Gloria Kapp** for Mama Gloria

b. Approve FY21-22 Proposed Budget

Jerry showed the budget, highlighting the few changes since the May 6 review. Miscellaneous Operational Revenue (4900) is set to \$25,000 to reflect that revenues usually exceed projections, with \$10,804 carry-over revenues from current year. That projects a balanced budget. Jerry

reviewed decisions made in the previous review, including lowering honorary by including eight lay leaders, but rejecting discussed reductions to musicians, Administrator and Minister.

Board approved a motion to accept the budget for referral to the congregation at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.

c. Covid Re-entry Protocols, Rod

The Board approved the Indoor Phase 1 Protocols as amended.

Discussion included the ethics of requiring vaccination. Not requiring vaccinations excludes people who have compromised immune systems, while requiring vaccinations excludes people who are not vaccinated, including children who are not yet eligible. We will require vaccination.

We will require proof of vaccination, not just honor system,, so that all attendees can feel safe and be safe.

Discussion included protocols for renters, who will be required to follow the same rules. Singing was discussed, with extra stringent precautions to filter the air before other groups use the same space.

d. Facilities Update, Rod

Rod submitted a written report. In the meeting, Rod highlighted a few areas.

Facilities recommends spending \$198 to flush the air system with outside air when we re-open the building.

Handyperson Monday work parties have resumed and two new people have joined.

The faster internet is now installed.

Interns from the Cathedral High School Digital Arts and Technology Academy are now available, but we would have limited benefit now since the school year ends in June. We signed up to interview new candidates in August, which will coincide with our new AV system.

The AV grant reviewers asked for details which are being sent to them for their review on Friday.

Jack sent out a wonderful Sacred Grounds newsletter to 39 supporters last week. Hiroshi is working with Dan Spencer on concept designs for the Patio Project. Fundraising is on hold pending guidance from the Board.

8. New Business

a. Finance Committee Presentation, Sarita

The Finance Committee has expanded to ten members. The Committee unanimously voted to support applying the \$100K Gift Reserve to the mortgage (and then applying half of subsequent savings to reserves), and then engaging a capital campaign to retire the mortgage completely. Finance believes collecting \$50K to pay off the mortgage by May 2023 is doable (there may already be \$10K-\$20K offered), Finance recommends that we conduct either a vote on proposals or at least a poll at the Annual Congregational Business Meeting.

Question: when is the loan currently scheduled to be paid off?

Answer: around eight years. The rate (and payment) is adjusted every five years to 3% above the Fed Funds rate, with the next adjustment due in 2023.

Question: what is the recommended Operational Reserve for a church?

Answer: unknown

Discussion: Maybe we just reduce the mortgage, not pay it off completely. That is presented as Option 3. Reserves have grown each of the past four years.

Question: What should we take to the congregation?

Answer: Preferred option is to apply the \$100K reserve and raise \$50K with a capital campaign (this is the first capital campaign in ten years). We could ask the congregation for guidance between the three options.

Discussion: The feeling is presenting this at the Annual Meeting is too rushed, too much of a surprise to congregants. Maybe instead we need to start with informational meetings such as we have done with Solar and AV projects.

Discussion: Fundraising is frequently for specific objectives rather than for the overall general benefit of the church. Our practice and our policies are not in accord. This is a longer term discussion.

Question. Can we test the waters with major donors and see if the money can easily be pledged?

Answer: Yes.

Discussion. At a time of so much transition (changing minister, Board, pandemic, Administrator, ...) is the timing of this premature, especially since there is not an urgency?

The Board decided to form a task-team composed of a few members of the Board and Finance to work through these issues and bring back a proposal(s) to the Board. The Board members will be Linda, Jerry and Rod.

b. Church Council, Linda

Linda reviewed the agenda and thanked the many people helping organize this.

c. Annual Congregational Business Meeting

The Annual Congregational Business Meeting will be held online on May 16, 2021 at 11:15am. Jerry will set up Election Buddy again, and the physical ballots are ready. The agenda is fixed by our By-Laws (reports from the President, Minister, the four standing Committees, the Budget and nominated Officers).

d. Developmental Ministry Assessment, Final Year

We will complete the final Developmental Ministry Assessment during the Board Meeting on May 18.

9. Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment of Regular Board Meeting

Jane extinguished the chalice with a reading and adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:10 pm.

10. Executive Session

The Board met in Executive Session.

11. Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment

Jane adjourned the Executive Session at 7:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rod Belshee

May 18, 2021
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 Carol Lavoie's written report
- c) 2nd Vice President Linda Savard's written report
- d) Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu written report
- e) Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report – *(unable to submit this month)*
- f) Director at Large Mack Roger's written report
- g) Minister Reverend Barbara Fast written report
- h) Assistant Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell's written report

Written reports of Committee Chairs

- a) Facilities Committees

a. President Jane Zaun's written report:

DIBM and Board Covenanting occurred March 3/22 with Rev. Summer Albayati as our facilitator. We agreed on "promises" and "concepts" important for the covenant. A small group of 2 from DIBM and 2 from the Board is planning to review and categorize them before we continue creating our joint covenant. DIBM continues to work on statements they plan to send to the Board that request policy development.

I am participating with a sub-group of Board members in interviewing applicants for the Office Administrator position.

In the absence of an Administrator, Linda Savard, Fran Hoag and I are managing the Constant Contact emails to the congregation. I am grateful to Linda and Fran.

I met with participants who attended the UUA's New Day Rising Event for discussion around how to use the concepts and practices from that experience to best benefit UUCOD's work on Widening the Circle.

I met with our 1st and 2nd VP where we decided to invite DIBM members to join us for part of the Church Council. We then met with them and did further planning for what looks like an exciting Church Council on Saturday April 20th.

Church Council is a leadership Council consisting of all Board Members as well as Committee Chairs.

I attended the (PSWD) Pacific Southwest District Board Business Meeting where Board officers and the Pacific Western Region (PWR) leaders shared the UUA's concept of Regionalization. To that end the PSWD recommends voting in October 2021 to dissolve the District. The PWR is the only UUA region that continues to have Districts. The current PWR Lead, Rev. Carlton Smith, is a "Developmental" Lead. He shared that that the Developmental Goals center around supporting the Districts in the PWR to make changes toward Regionalization.

The interim Communication planning Task Group continues to meet and are now revising the current Communication policy.

Other:

I continue membership in the Stewardship Committee Monthly although I was unable to join the meeting this month.

Meeting with COVID19 Team weekly.

Member of a Chalice Circle and a personal Widening the Circle Study Group.

b. 1st Vice President Carol Lavoie's written report:

- Lifespan Spiritual Growth
 - Offered four new opportunities:
 1. Are You Listening? with Rev. Ian
 2. Setting Boundaries in Community with Rev. Ian
 3. Book Discussion: this is how it always is facilitated by Peter Mathews
 4. 'Mama Gloria' Film Documentary and Panel Discussion. Proceeds go to Safe Schools in the Desert. Organized by Fran Hoag and Gloria Kapp
- Attended Finance Committee, DIB and Special Board meetings
- Assisted in planning the April Church Council
- Participated in interview of minister candidate
- Began work on identifying possible renters for our facilities
- DINNER ON THE BOARD! Auction item has been postponed until the fall. Will keep you posted!

c. 2nd Vice President Linda Savard's written report:

Stewardship Committee –

Highlights:

- Let's Get Together sponsored a couple of activities and has more on the docket.
- The Communication group is working on policies and procedures for communication within the church.
- We prepared for the church council meeting
- Discussed our hopes for next year

Additional

- Attended weekly Covid-19 response team meetings.
- Attended 3 Lifespan Spiritual Growth classes - Training on Listening, Training on Boundaries, and a book study of This is How it Always Is
- Member of a "Widening the Circle of Concern" study group.
- Continuing with Chalice Circle involvement
- Attended meeting with DIB to plan for Church Council meeting
- Met with Group to plan Church Council meeting
- Attended Special Board meeting on the budget for coming year
- Reviewed Administrator applications and began interviewing applicants
- Participating in Beloved Conversations
- Attended Pacific Southwest District Meeting – There was a discussion of dissolving the district and moving to regionalization. Current Board Members will stay in place until the October meeting to vote on the dissolution of the district. Participated in a discussion with members from other churches around the Widening the Circle of Concern.

d. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu written report:

As of March 31st, the church held cash assets of \$304,707.60 in its bank accounts. Reserve and restricted funds totaled \$223,240.70, leaving a balance of \$81,467.90 in unrestricted funds. Total cash assets increased by \$42,727 in March, largely due to funds received for restricted accounts. We received \$18,057 in pledge payments for FY 21-22; \$5,048 in contributions to the Sacred Grounds initiative; and \$20,235 as proceeds from the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). PPP funds are currently posted as a liability under 2550 Other Restricted Funds pending our filing for forgiveness for most of the repayment of the loan in May.

UUCOD received unrestricted grant proceeds of \$4,400 from the Spirit Level Foundation. Another grant with the Spirit Level Foundation for \$20,000 to fund our audio/visual project remains pending.

There were no exceptional expenses in March. We were able to provide FIND Food Bank, our March Share the Plate recipient, a check for \$726. With the resignation of the church Administrator, we will see

some decrease in our Administrator Salary Expense until a new Administrator is hired. We ended March with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$870. Disregarding the \$4,400 from the Spirit Level Foundation, we would have run a deficit of \$3,530.

We concluded the FY 21-22 Pledge Drive in March with total pledges of \$173,690 toward a goal of \$185,000. Last year's pledge total was \$175,000. While many individual pledges increased, we had more than 10% of our pledging units that did not continue pledging this year. Donors moving or financial hardship were the most common reasons for not pledging. Approximately 8% of pledgees have not previously pledged.

e. Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report:

(Unable to submit this month.)

f. Director at Large Mack Roger's written report:

Attitude of Gratitude:

- For helping on the Constant Contact Newsletter and Order of Worship: **Fran Hoag and Linda Savard**
- For managing the Zoom Coordination: **Katy Faas**
- For supplying flowers on Sunday's Worship Service: **Leslie Gebhart**
- For creating the application and managing contact with Spirit Grant Foundation for our AV Project: **Rob DuWors**
- For writing joys and sorrows into our "prayer" book for over one year: **Bryna Blum**
- **Gloria Kapp** for Mama Gloria

Social Justice Committee:

This month the Social Justice committee featured Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine as our Share the Plate recipient. We also collected all organizations that were submitted for 2021-2022 Share the Plate and will create a ballot, so that the whole congregation can vote by next month's Annual Congregational Meeting.

Climate and Environmental Justice Team (CEJ Team):

We had our first CEJ Team meeting on Monday, March 22nd, the 4th Monday at 9:30 as our normal time. We had 7 people at our first meeting. Denise and I are co-chairs for this venture as well, since it falls under "social justice". We watched a video about the Salton Sea and established that the

conditions at the Sea, is our priority to work on. The Salton Sea is drying up and causing many environmental concerns, that affect the wildlife and frontline communities. We spoke in depth about all the specific problems with the Sea and are going to move as a team to determine actions that we can take and share with the greater congregation.

We also decided to do some type of education piece around the Salton Sea, in conjunction with Earth Day. First we presented a video on the Salton Sea after the worship service last Sunday. We brought in a presenter, Kerry Morrison to moderate and field questions from those in attendance. I thought the overall result was better than we expected. We gave the attendees some solutions to consider.

Our next event is on Earth Day, this Thursday, and is a “film fest” as we view two videos that are very different and will cause an interesting discussion among the attendees.

As we look toward May, we have even another excellent video to present about more on the Salton Sea. We have discussed joining forces with EcoMedia Compass as they do activities to raise intelligence about the Salton Sea.

Men’s First Friday Breakfast

The first Friday Breakfast will be Friday, May 7th, with a NEW TIME and a NEW OUTDOOR VENUE. I will announce that tables have been reserved for us on the Monterey side of the IHOP in front of Home Depot. We are meeting at **8:00**, returning to the original breakfast time we had before. Please join us to connect and see some UUCOD people in person. Most people it seems, have had both their shots, but it is up to each individual to determine personal safety. (Masks are required and essential before being served and before getting up to go to the men’s room)

g. Minister Reverend Barbara Fast’s written report:

WORSHIP: I want again to offer tremendous gratitude for all the time, commitment and gifts shared from so many volunteers. I was glad to have been able to acknowledge the steadfast volunteers of this congregation in such a visible way.

MARCH/APRIL Worship

- March 14- Comfort and Change Rev Ian & Joni Padduck
- March 21 - What Does Your Spirit Magnify? Rev Barbara , Hiroshi Yamaguchi and Peter Mathews & STP FIND food bank , Ros Hoover
- March 28 - UUA Stewardship Service
- April 4 - Easter & Passover Rev Barbara & Betty Bender

April 11- Covenant and Community Rev Ian & Sarita Gonzales
 STP -Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine- Bryna Blum

April 18 Volunteer. Appreciation, Flower Communion, ZOOM, Rev Barbara & WA, Bob Rancourt

April 25 "To Go On", Rev Tania Marquez, WA Derek Moore.

May 2 "A Promise and A Hope – Rev Barbara, WA, Bryna Blum

May 9 "To Accept the Past", Rev Ian, WA, Joni Paddock

May 16 Believe the Bird, Part 2 WA, Peter Mathews, Followed by Congregational Meeting

May 23 Hospice Chaplaincy In a Time of Covid. Rev Don Stouder

May 30 – MUSIC SUNDAY: TBD

- I am asking the BOD to approve that the Plate Collection go to Music programming for the 2021-22 FY.

Committees:

Attended Special BOD meeting on Budget.

Attended the DIBM/BOD Covenanting process.

Consulted on Worship/Music Budget.

Attended Tech Meetings for Worship.

Attended the news formed Soc Justice Comm on Environment led by Mack Rogers.

COM: Members of the COM are planning to send the BOD a final recommendation for a Right Relations Policy.

Worship: Worship has invited DIBM Reps to come and offer guidance for diversifying the worship experience.

Membership: Received insights from Sandy Sladen a DIBM member.

Chalice Circles are moving into the Spring transition time and going well.

Lifespan Programming has been successful and sustained.

BYOT 2: 5 session concluded

I continue to lead a weekly Metta Meditation session.

Community Outreach

MAMA GLORIA THE FILM MAY 15 2PM-4PM with Mama Gloria and Luchina Fisher at 45 minute Q & A after the film.

I am working with Fran Hoag (Tech) and Gloria Kapp (Community Outreach) to produce a streaming showing of Mama Gloria on May 15nd to be followed by discussion with Mama Gloria and the Director/Producer Luchina Fisher as a Fundraiser for Safe Schools.

Gloria has been working on outreach for Mama Gloria the Film and saw there was no presence on our website! There is a large presence on other community websites.

LINK:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/cu/snf0LW7/mamagloria>

Community Outreach

Spoke at Desert Interfaith Panel re: Climate Concerns April 9.

Spoke about our plan to focus on the Slaton Sea and be of use to other groups active already. That work fits DIBM priorities as well.

UUCOD Earth Day work.

Personal

I have cataract surgery, Monday April 26^t

g. Minister Reverend Ian W Riddell's written report:

attends quarterly: November, February, May, and August.

- **Care Team**
 - The Care Team met a week early this month to accommodate member schedules.
 - We continue to check in and share our contacts with congregants and offer each other guidance and support in our support of congregants' needs.
 - I led two trainings in March and April.
 - Saturday, March 27, 9:30am-12:30pm **"Can You Hear Me Now? Listening Skills in Community"**
 - Attended by 12 participants
 - 4 Care Team members
 - 8 other congregants
 - Saturday, April 17, 1:00pm-4:00pm **"Boundaries in Community"**
 - Attended by 10 participants
 - 4 Care Team members
 - 6 other congregants
 - In May we will continue the task of updating the congregation's "Emergency Contact Forms." We have reached out to the Board and to the Membership commiKee and feel like we should start this process from scratch.
 - Margaret Beaman continues to work on creating neighborhood maps to aid in connection and communication

- **Pastoral Care**
 - I have continued to meet with individual congregants and couples by phone and Zoom.
- **Worship**
 - I lead worship service with Sarita Gonzales on April 11 “Covenant and Community.” This was the second half of my two-sermon “set” based on the request of the “Choose a Sermon Topic” winner at our auction.
 - I participated in the monthly Worship Team meeting
 - I participated in the April 18 Flower Communion and Volunteer Appreciation service.
- **Study and Teaching**
 - I listened to Rebecca Solnit’s Men Explaining Things to Me and am continuing to read *Emotional Agility* by Susan David and the UUA’s *Widening the Circle*.
 - I participated in the Pacific Southwest UUMA Chapter retreat with a workshop focused on Boundaries in Ministry.
 - I continue to participate in the second session of *Beloved Conversations* online which runs through June
- I meet weekly with Rev. Barbara
- I continue to sing with the choir (not part of my 1/5 time as AM)
- I continue to preach at other congregations: On March 28, I preached at the UU Fellowship of Kern County in Bakersfield.

Written Reports of Committee Chairs:

a. Facilities Committee Chair Rod Belshee’s written report:

Covid Protocols (*See separate topic in Board Meeting*)

- We propose new Indoor Phase 1 Protocols to be adopted.

Building re-opening

- Facilities has a detailed list of procedures to re-open a building that has been vacant, derived from the CDC and largely focused on ventilation and water systems.
- CDC recommends flushing the air as part of the re-opening procedures. Facilities proposes that we pay Desert Air \$198 to open up the HVAC fully to outside air, blow and exhaust the building for 48 hours, and then reset to the standard mix of outside air.
- All water lines will be flushed to eliminate any buildup of leaching metals or Legionnaires bacteria.

ICD rental and Community Room space

- Insight Community of the Desert has decided to contribute \$250/month for the storage space in the community room.

Handyperson weekly work party

- The Monday work party has resumed. We have had 3-5 participants.
- Steve and Rod repaired a number of landscape lights, including two parking pole lights.
- Others check and flagged some irrigation emitters and did some weeding.

AV Project

- The AV grant has not yet been approved.
- We have spent just under \$3,500 for AV cabling, equipment rack, internet switch and cabling, and a power conditioner. This will allow us to complete the installation of the AV gear more quickly when we do get the grant approval.
- Spectrum completed the installation on April 19, with a switchover of internet and phones from WiFiBy.
- Several pieces of gear will need re-investigation as new models have been introduced, including the TV screens, the PTZ cameras, and several PC components.
- PC Graphic GPU cards remain unobtainium. We have found one to borrow so that we can install, program and test the system, but it will need replacing with an Nvidia GPU.

Irrigation

- Peter has been watering a couple of times a week, and the vegetation is responding well.
- All of the irrigation valves are now working. With priority on irrigation for the trees, emitters on two of the four circuits with trees have been inspected and repaired. We will then focus on the other two circuits with trees, and likely not pursue the remaining six circuits at this time.
- Water use is up.

Sacred Grounds

- Leslie Gebhart, Jane Betts Stover and Sheryl Eaton are enthused about re-starting the Sacred Grounds project.
- Hiroshi is looking into design options for the Patio project, and securing bids. A shade system is the biggest challenge. He has preliminary bids for flatwork. Dan Spencer is coming up with design ideas for shade. Another design idea, instead of hardscaping, might include shade trees and vegetation for garden seating.
- Jack emailed a Sacred Grounds newsletter to the 39 people on the Sacred Grounds email list.
- Capital fundraising is on hold, pending guidance from the Board. Ideas include a matching challenge and selling pavers to build the Celebration Garden.