

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
Board of Directors Regular Meeting, September 21, 2021
Minutes

Attending:

BOD Attending by Zoom Meeting: President Linda Savard, 1st Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi, 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms, Treasurer Fred Bloss, Secretary Rod Belshee, Minister Reverend Ian Riddell.

BOD Absent: Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt, Director-at-Large Mack Rogers

Congregational Members by Zoom Meeting: Carol Lavoie, Barb Ketay, Mel Wilkinson

Meeting minutes:

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Linda called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:02 pm PST by Zoom Meeting and lit the chalice. Rev. Ian reads words from the UUA General Assembly.

2. Welcome and Check-in:

Linda offered welcoming remarks and led a check-in of Board Members.

3. Approval of Board Minutes:

The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes as written for the July 20, 2021 regular meeting of the Board.

4. Process Monitor and Timekeeper: Barb Storms

5. Consent Agenda:

Linda reviewed three items that the Board approved between regular Board Meetings by email votes, and asked for consent approval to add them to incorporate them into the minutes:

- a. The Board approved appointing Barbara Storms as 2nd VP, serving the remainder of Linda Moretti's term.

b. The Board approved a job description for Choir Director.

c. The Board approved application to and funding for Beloved Conversations – Among.

6. Voices of the Congregation:

None raised.

7. Reports:

a. President Linda Savard:

Linda submitted a written report. In the meeting she added that the Congregation's application for participation in the Beloved Conversations Among program was approved. She also highlighted the need to fill the Committee on Ministry (two people appointed by the Minister and one by the Board).

In response to a question, she answered that the Nominating Committee consists of Carol Lavoie, Susan Hannon and Jane Zaun.

b. 1st Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi:

Hiroshi submitted a written report. In the meeting, he mentioned that the Patio Project and Sacred Stones will wait until team members return to the valley and we first communicate the projects to the congregation (see later in the agenda).

He also mentioned that he reached out to the cohorts of the UUA Leadership Development course he took a few years ago and very few were meeting – for example the UU Fellowship of Durango was meeting outdoors. He was glad that we are leading the way.

Hiroshi looks forward to resuming help with the Facilities work parties when he returns next month.

c. 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms:

Barbara submitted a written report. In the meeting she highlighted a projection for this year's auction – donations are down due to donor fatigue. With the contributions for the AV system, paying down the mortgage, Rev B's bench and Sacred Grounds, the auction will be lighter this year, and that is okay.

The pledge drive kickoff will again be Zoom bingo since we still cannot predict when we fully return to the church. Similarly, BUUterflies will focus on outdoor activities for now.

Stewardship wants to find means to connect with people who do not attend physical events and are also challenged with online technology.

Membership conducted a large effort to scrub the directory, reaching out to people multiple times and in multiple ways. Those who never responded will be dropped from the Directory.

d. Treasurer Fred Bloss:

Fred submitted a written report regarding our fiscal year end financial position and notable financial events. In the meeting Fred answered several questions about specific line items.

Fred traced one automatic monthly banking fee down and discovering that it was for an account that we had abandoned but not canceled. He is working to close the account.

e. Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt:

(No report, not present)

f. Director-at-Large Mack Rogers:

(No report, not present)

g. Minister Reverend Ian Riddell:

Reverend Ian submitted a written report. In the meeting he commented how much he has been working with Rod and that it is a good relationship. He highlighted the need to populate the Committee on Ministry and fill the Choir Director position.

He was excited that UUCOD was accepted into the Beloved Conversations Among program, and added that DIBM is looking on how to communicate to the congregation, including a kickoff from the pulpit.

Rev. Ian also reported that he was thrilled to give Pam her Performance Review since he had received so many favorable inputs from everyone.

8. Old Business:

a. Attitude of Gratitude, Linda

Cards for Gratitude will be sent from the entire Board:

- Tracy Flynn, for herculean effort making personal contacts
- Steve Kerr for the AV works
- Jane for both her support for the new President and for coordinating the Sunday Zoom hosting

The Board also thanked Board Members (without cards)

- Rod, for the AV efforts
- Fred, for major time required to learn and keep up with the Treasurer role

b. Facilities Update, Rod

Rod is no longer on the Facilities Committee but will serve as the Board liaison. The Committee is currently without a Committee Chair.

With a building, either there is continual improvement or deterioration. With the strong focus of Rod and Steve on AV, and the summer hiatus of the Handyperson work parties, there are a number of items that need addressing inside and outside. The Committee members are strong but really need a Committee Chair for organization and communication.

c. Covid Protocols, Hiroshi and Rod

Data

The Covid team reviews the latest data for positive test cases and for new cases each week. The rates in Riverside County peaked near the end of August and have been falling. They remain high but are very encouraging. Rates are worse in the western county than in the Coachella Valley.

Recommendation

We do not recommend any change in protocols at this time. Further, we suggest that at this point we can modulate the protocols within the Covid team since controversial issues that required Board consideration are behind us and the congregation has accepted those judgments (e.g. Do we require vaccination? Do we require proof? Do we restrict attendance?). Board approval requires considerable time since meetings only occur monthly and a more nimble response is desired.

The Board approved a motion that the Covid team can move back and forth between any of the previously accepted protocols as conditions change, but that new protocols (e.g. dropping the vaccination requirement) require Board approval.

Current protocols: everyone entering the building must be fully vaccinated, there must be a record of attendance for Contact Tracing, and if any one person asks then all people will wear masks. Further, for our Sunday services we require masks and distance between family groups.

d. Sacred Stones and Patio update, Hiroshi and Rod

The Board approved the Sacred Stones and Patio expansion in July. This needs to be well communicated to the congregation before any construction starts. Enthusiasm for the Sacred Grounds was extremely high in February 2020 after six months of build-up, but has deteriorated. Team members return to the valley next month and can start planning to rekindle excitement around the Sacred Stones and Patio expansion..

Gene Kain has offered an additional opportunity for art for the grounds. The ten people who have resumed activity on the Sacred Grounds are strongly in support of the donation, self-funding is available and all of the conditions in the Arts and Aesthetics policy have been met, such as unconditional transference of ownership. The opportunity had a brief mention at the July Board; Hiroshi and Rod requested a second look. After discussion the Board approved acceptance of the art.

e. Mortgage Reduction, Linda and Fred

Fred's Treasurer Report outlines the current numbers for the mortgage payoff. We are making progress payments each month, paying down the mortgage and saving interest expense even this year. We plan to pay off the remainder of the mortgage (perhaps \$55K) from reserves by May, ahead of the refinance date, if the Congregation approves.

The Finance Committee recommends not going forward with a Congregational Info session and Drive to the rest of the Congregation, due to donor fatigue and coming up on the auction and then the Pledge Drive. The Board agreed.

9. New Business

a. Appointment to Denominational Affairs Liaison, Linda

The Board approved appointment of Jane Zaun to the new position of Denominational Affairs Liaison.

b. Funding Request – Care Team, Bryna

The Board approved allocating \$250 to the Care Team expense budget (previously zero). Linda reported that the Finance Committee Chair felt the amount was low enough it did not warrant consideration by the committee. Barbara asked that some protocols or guidelines be established to ensure equity.

c. Funding Request – UUCOD Signage, Randy and Linda

The Board approved a request to reimburse Randy \$250 for replacing the UUCOD sign on Diana Shore. Discussion included discomfort that the expense was incurred without prior Board approval.

d. Part Time Minister, Rev. Ian

Unlike the Choir Director, the process of hiring an Assistant Minister is very early on. It needs to start with clear goals, and clear assessment of our team strengths and weaknesses. Rev. Ian also wants to review the process used when he was hired, and leverage that (Barb can fill him in).

e. Board Retreat, Linda

- A) Change to meeting on zoom instead of in person
- B) October 9th, 9:00-11:30 AM and 12:30-3:00 PM
- C) Proposed agenda items:
 - Opening/Centering
 - Getting to know each other
 - Relationship building/communication
 - Break
 - Strategic Goals review and revision
 - Develop board goals
- d) Discussion included adding Leadership Development and Succession Planning

f. Church Council, Linda and Hiroshi

- October 23rd 9:30-12:00 on zoom
- Hiroshi and Linda are developing the agenda. Currently proposed agenda items:
 - Share new strategic goals and board goals
 - Move towards presenting the 8th Principle for Congregational approval

g. Sunday Service Production, Rod

AV Budget

Rod projects perhaps \$ ~11,800 remaining in the AV reserve after current and planned expenses. Fred is double checking the accounting for July and August to ensure that this total is correct. We overachieved on donations, and our expenses are under budget

- Excess donations plus prior balance total \$7,600 above budget
- Completed and planned expenses total \$4,200 under budget

Hybrid Service Production

We didn't get to practice with recorded sessions and instead went straight to live – we are very grateful to have a highly supportive audience! Our first service included live elements, recorded elements, music, seven camera shots and imagery. The second service added captions and PowerPoint. Generally the visuals elements in-house and for the stream went well.

For stream audio we added piano mics and crowd mics, and are still dialing those in. The Sep 12 audio was problematic with unbalanced audio levels in-house and insufficient volume in the stream. Sep 19 was considerably better and we will keep dialing it in. The Zoom resolution is poor and we are working on that, along with additional capabilities such as scrolling lyrics. We are making very rapid progress!

Volunteers and Workload

With the visuals and streaming base pretty solid at this point, we are now working to simplify and automate. Much of the visuals and stream is now automated to single button-push between Order of Worship elements, reducing errors. Audio is still manual.

It takes about 8-12 hours to program a service at this point, and two operators to run it on Sunday. Rod hopes to get the programming time down to 4-8 hours per week, depending on how unique the service is. Note, that is *less* time than was required for the recorded services over the past 19 months.

Sometime in October we can hold an AV Open House and then train volunteers for either the programming during the week or the operation on Sunday. Rod currently has nearly ten candidates, including one each from DOS and S2S2S.

h. Building Usage/AV Equipment, Rod

Outside groups using the building may want to use the AV equipment. It is also a potential source of revenue for us, and makes rental of the space more attractive.

We can train and certify individuals for outside groups to contract with. Renters may then engage only people on that list. The audio board and the video switcher both have means to save and restore full settings, such that DOS can have their own configuration and restoring it to UUCOD is just a button-push. Outside groups are strictly prohibited from making physical changes (e.g. unplugging cables) inside the audio closet.

Desert Outreach Synagogue had serious streaming challenges on September 10, so the Rabbi has replaced his initial AV professional and I am currently training James Gonzales. He and I will be jointly running a Bar mitzvah this Saturday.

Monday night meditation is considering use of the screens only (with just a laptop and mic) for a hybrid/live meditation.

i. Auction, Barbara

(already covered during her report)

j. Leadership needs: Committee Chairs, Choir Director, Linda and Rev. Ian

We need Committee Chairs for Care, Social Justice and Facilities, and we need all three members for the Committee on Ministry. We also have many less visible volunteers shortages, such as meminfo.

Rod expressed frustration that we have had Leadership Development and Succession Planning as a Strategic Goal for at least five years but made no progress. Hiroshi suggested that we formally change the Nominating Committee to a Leadership Development Committee in May (required By-Law changes), and that we start using the new name now. The new membership of that Committee is meeting to draft an initial charter consistent with Leadership Development and Succession Planning.

10. Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment of Regular Board Meeting

Reverend Ian read from Denny Davidoff's ten points on how to be a UUA leader, and Linda adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rod Belshee

October 19, 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

- D) President Linda Savard's written report
- E) 1st Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi's written report
- F) 2nd Vice President Barbara Storm's written report
- G) Treasurer Fred Bloss's written report
- H) Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report (*none submitted*)
- I) Director at Large Mack Roger's written report (*none submitted*)
- J) Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell's written report

Written reports of Committee Chairs

- a) Facilities Committees (*none submitted*)

a. President Linda Savard's written report:

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Ministry (DIBM)

At this month's meeting we looked at a variety of documents that were developed over the past year in regard to the work of the DIBM to decide on goals for the year. We have not finished developing goals and will continue that process this week. It is the intention of the DIBM to work closely with the board and church council to continue our anti-racism work.

Beloved Conversations

The finance committee approved our request for \$3000.00, so we can participate in Beloved Conversations, Among. We completed and submitted our application for Beloved Conversations, Among. We have not yet heard if we have been accepted into the program.

Committee on Ministry

Currently there are no members of the Committee on Ministry. The minister needs to appoint two members and the board needs to appoint one member.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee will have its first meeting of the year later this week

Personnel

Pam Bibo, our Office Administrator had her 90-day review. A job description for a Choir Director was developed and will be posted soon.

Additional

- Attended weekly Covid-19 response team meetings.
- Attended Pacific Western Region, California, Nevada, and Hawaii president's meeting. Much of the discussion was about covid-19 and protocols.
- Met with Rev. Ian and Hiroshi to develop the board agenda and to discuss the upcoming board retreat and the church council.
- Attended Stewardship Committee meeting, DIBM meeting, and communication policy and procedure development meeting.
- Gathering information to help set up Chalice Circles for the coming year.

b. 1st Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi's written report:

I've taken a break from church work for the past couple of months while we are out here in Ouray, but not completely, so here's what I've been up to...

Continue to work with the sacred grounds subgroup on moving forward with the proposal that was presented and approved by the board.

Met with Leadership Experience cohort to share information on the process of how different congregations are moving towards resuming in-person programs and services.

Continue to work with Rod and others regarding reopening COVID Protocols and the decision making process of slowly returning to multi-platform in-person Sunday Services.

Met with Beloved Conversations BIPOC pod to stay connected and to help me decide whether to participate in "Among"

Stayed in communication with the facilitators of the Desert Mediation Group.

Participated in the BIPOC group meeting.

Met with Pres. Linda and Rev. Ian to discuss agenda items for the Sept. board meeting, board retreat and church council, communication to the congregation on sacred grounds and on facilities (maintenance) tasks that will need to be done.

Participated in the following committee meetings:

DIBM

Stewardship

That about does it...look forward to returning to the desert by mid October at the latest.

c. 2nd Vice President Barbara Storm's written report:

My Activities

- I'm now leading the Stewardship Committee and below indicates where that committee is putting its energy
- I'm entering the items for the auction into MemInfo so that we can run the catalog in October.
- I worked over the summer to update member and friend information in MemInfo for the directory, ran the first draft of the directory and revised the front and back pages of it.
- Reviewed the choir director job description and have begun meeting with other members of that hiring team.

Stewardship Committee

- The committee is involved in two of the major activities of the church as well as social activities:
 - **Auction:**
 - Silent Auction-Friday, November 5 from 10-4pm at the church (following protocols)
 - Live Auction on Zoom-Saturday, November 6 at 5:45, bidding starts at 6pm
 - We are experiencing donor fatigue

	Live Items	Silent Items	Generosity Challenge	Budget Goal	Amount Collected/ Anticipated
2020	33	42	\$3000	\$17,000	\$24,000
2021 (as of 9/15)	23	29	\$1500	\$17,000	\$14,000

- **Pledge Drive**
 - Stewardship will coordinate the kickoff—Zoom bingo on Saturday, January 29: 6-8pm
 - Assist with publicity as needed

- **Social BUUterflies**
 - The wide offerings of Lifespan Spiritual Growth takes pressure off needing to schedule frequent social activities. BUUterflies will identify community activities that are outside, at least for now.
 - First BUUterflies activity is an October 1 Movie (Mama Mia) at Sunnylands.
 - Sheryl Eaton continues to host the Saturday night cocktail hour.
- Stewardship Concerns:
 - How do we engage members and friends who can't/won't physically attend activities and who are technologically challenged?
 - How do we coordinate with Membership and Care to do outreach especially to new people who begin attending services or activities?
 - How can we best support other committees in their activities.?

Membership Committee

- K) Randy and LeGrand are identifying and training greeters/ushers for in-person services
- L) Over the summer, committee members contacted or attempted to contact everyone in the directory who had not been at a social activity, class or zoom service, and had not been in contact with Care or pledge stewards. Those who did not respond to repeated attempts (emails, calls, some letters by USPS) are being removed from this year's directory.
- M) Members are reviewing a draft of the directory before it goes to the printer. The directory will be available for pick-up at the Silent Auction. Note: The directory is only available to those who are listed and to new members.
- N) We do not expect to have New Member classes in the fall although we do have some UU's from other churches who we expect will join or become dual members.
- O) There are enough requests for pavers that stones can be purchased and engraved.

d. Treasurer Fred Bloss's written report:

As of August 31st, the church held cash assets of \$280,915.12 in its bank accounts. Reserve and restricted funds totaled \$182,412.16, leaving a balance of \$98,502.96 in unrestricted funds.

To date there has been \$70,081.15 collected & applied to the mortgage over and above the monthly payments of \$1,901.15. As of August 10, our mortgage balance was \$72,200.31.

Since then another monthly payment has been applied. It is our intention to apply \$13,318.15 of collected Pay-Down-the-Mortgage funds to the mortgage principal this month (September).

That will leave a balance of \$56,981.01. Recently there was another \$500.00 collected which is not part of that figure. Also there was another monthly pledge totaling \$300.00 which will be fully collected by early-to-mid November.

August's Share the Plate efforts raised \$395 for The EcoMedia Compass .

Revenues of \$27,792.04 exceeded expenses of \$16,713.94, resulting in a gain of \$11,078.10 for August. Again, this was the result of continued fulfillment of pledges to "Pay Off the Mortgage" as well as annual pledge payments in advance for fiscal year 2021-2022.

Reverend Ian is moving to possibly hire a music director. There is some modest money in the budget for such a position.

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

none submitted this month

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

none submitted this month

g. Minister Reverend Ian Riddell's written report:

It has been a full couple of months! The most important thing that I hold in my heart as we meet this month is gratitude and excitement that we are worshiping together in new ways on Sunday mornings. It has been wonderful to finally lead services live in our Sanctuary and a great joy that we can continue to share these services on Zoom for those who are unable to be present in person.

Many thanks to our volunteer ushers and greeters for their work in getting ready for doing things in new ways and for welcoming us home so warmly. Thanks also to our coffee hour leaders and volunteers who planned to come back as well and are "on hold" until our Covid restrictions change.

And, of course, deep gratitude to volunteers and to Rod Belshee especially for managing our AV tech so that we can share our worship live in Zoom. It's fantastic to have the screens and cameras in the Sanctuary helping to enhance our live worship as well.

I'm also looking forward to diving into our work to widen the circle through our participating in Beloved Conversations Among this Fall. This work is so crucial to meeting the needs of our world in the coming years. I'm inspired also by the vision and work of our Diversity Inclusion and Belonging ministry team and our plans to engage the wider congregation in this work.

It continues to be a joy to be your minister.

Summary Outline of the work I've been involved with for the the past month. This is not an exhaustive list, but is meant to give you a general idea of what I've been up to as your minister.

A) Counseling and Pastoral Care

- I continue to meet monthly with the Care Team.
- I spent some time this past month calling families with children and youth. Some responded, some did not. There is a general feeling of disconnect, partly due to COVID and partly due to lack of engagement from the congregation for the children and youth.
- We continue to check in and share our contacts with congregants and offer each other guidance and support in our support of congregants' needs.
- We are continuing the process of finalizing "Emergency Contact" forms.
- We will be planning a learning session for the congregation for later in the fall on planning for the end of life (wills, powers of attorney, medical decisions). This is intended to parallel Peter Mathew's ARE course on aging.
- I continue to meet with congregants in need of connection and conversation by phone and Zoom.
- I consulted with a social worker colleague on a pastoral issue.

B) Administration, Governance, and Staff

- I continue to meet weekly with our Covid Response team and monthly with the DIB Ministry team.
- I meet weekly with Pam Bibo to check in on work expectations and how things are going. We continue to work well together
- Pam and I are working on new processes for getting ready for Sunday mornings including creating the print order of worship and preparing the lobby.
- I worked with the Choir Director hiring team (Katy Fass and Barb Storms) and our personnel team (Walter Gendell) to prepare a job description and job posting for hiring a new Choir Director. I surveyed choir members, asking for their input on the qualities and skills they are hoping to experience in a new director. The Board approved the new job description and the hiring team and I are now advertising the position and making plans for the interview process.
- Linda and I met with Sarah Millsbaugh, our regional contact, for a “fall check in” to discuss the beginning of the church year and how she might support us.
- We are currently without members for our Committee on Ministry. I have so far been unable to find someone to fill the new term following Rob DuWors, Kevin Brandt chose to not continue, and Barbara Storms was appointed to the Board. I’ll be working with Linda and the Board over the next months to rebuild this important committee.
- I completed Pam Bibo’s 90-day probation evaluation. Pam is doing such a fabulous job. I consulted with various congregational leaders who have been working with Pam and there was overwhelming and unanimous agreement that she has quickly become an excellent part of the working life of the congregation.

C) Membership and Committees

- I met with the BIOPOC group to get better acquainted and to listen and share hopes and expectations for the year ahead.

D) Lifespan Faith-Development

- I hosted three Crafting Circles in August, in person and on Zoom. Attendance was small, but we had a lovely time reconnecting and sharing our creative work.
- I consulted with UUA regional staff Melissa James as I began thinking about the ways that we might start addressing the needs of children and youth in our congregation and how that might fit with the work of a second minister.

E) Worship

- I continue to lead the Worship Team meetings and the weekly Production meetings.
- I led worship several times over the past months:
 - July 25 – Worked with Kevin Brandt on his Doctrine of Discovery sermon
 - August 22 – Voice Still and Small (WA: Bryna Blum)
 - August 29 – Joy and Woe are Woven Fine (WA: Derek Moore)
 - September 5 – helped coordinate Ginger and Linda’s Labor Day service

- September 12 – We Share the Sacred Breath (WA: Bryna Blum)
 - September 19 – Shared worship associate duty with Sarita Gonzales
 - Much of my attention this past month has been on work with Rod Belshee and other volunteers on preparing ourselves to go live with hybrid worship: in person and through Zoom. Rod has been tireless in his attention and commitment to making our worship services accessible, smooth, and meaningful. We continue to iron out bugs, but we are well on our way to sharing our services in Zoom and live.
 - While we await the arrival of a new choir director and the easing of singing restrictions, Jonathan Fast and I will be gathering with our choir on Zoom over the next couple of weeks to prepare a choir recording for our October 14 Ingathering service.
- **Denominational Activities**
 - I regularly consult with local and regional colleagues on issues affecting our congregations, including recently advising a colleague whose congregation was in the process of hiring a music director.
- **Prophetic Outreach, Interfaith Activities, and Local Collaboration**
 - I participated in the July meeting of the Desert Interfaith Council and will continue to participate as my time allows
 - I have become part of the group of DIC clergy who write a weekly “Faith Matters” column in the Desert Sun.
- **Personal and Professional Growth**
 - I participated in a five-week learning group focused on digital media and knowledge management for clergy.
 - I continue daily Spanish language learning and plan to find a tutor for ongoing learning in the fall.
 - I completed a longer-term project: I finished the final course in UC San Diego’s Copyediting Certificate program. I had started this work during my time away from ministry and decided to close the loop and finish the program over the summer.

in peace and deep love



My weekly schedule is as follows:

Currently, my days off are Friday and Saturday; I’m in the office Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday and available for meetings/appointments on Thursday and Sunday.

Upcoming Travel Schedule:

I will be out of town on vacation from October 24 through October 31.

Written Reports of Committee Chairs:

none submitted this month