

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
Board of Directors Regular Meeting, October 19, 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, Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt, Director-at-Large Rob DuWors, and Minister Reverend Ian Riddell.

BOD Absent: <none>

Congregational Members by Zoom Meeting: Sheryl Eaton, Chris Eager, Mel Wilkinson, Sarita Gonzales, Jane Zaun

Meeting minutes:

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting:

Linda called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:02 pm PST by Zoom Meeting.

2. Welcome and Check-in:

Linda led a check-in of Board Members.

3. Approval of Board Minutes:

The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes as revised for the September 21, 2021 regular meeting of the Board, with one abstention (due to absence at prior meeting).

4. Process Monitor and Timekeeper: Barb Storms

5. Consent Agenda:

Linda reviewed the following item that the Board approved between regular Board Meetings by email vote, and asked for consent approval to incorporate it into the minutes:

- a. The Board approved appointing Rob DuWors as Director-at-Large, serving the remainder of Mack Roger's term.

6. Voices of the Congregation:

Sheryl Eaton voiced appreciation for the substantial effort that went into the Communication Policy, but expressed concern that it is very lengthy and burdensome. Other than people who are granted approval authority, it could be quite difficult for people to access the communication vehicles of the church.

7. Reports:

a. President Linda Savard:

Linda submitted a written report. In the meeting she added that we have been assigned a Beloved Conversations Facilitator and will start in November. She also reiterated that our Committee on Ministry has no members, and that she has started a UUA PSWD class "Leading from the Heart".

b. 1st Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi:

Hiroshi submitted a written report. In the meeting, he remarked that much of his time has been preparatory work for the Church Council.

c. 2nd Vice President Barbara Storms:

Barbara submitted a written report. In the meeting she added that she led the Lifespan book discussion for "Indigenous History of the United States". She has also spent a lot of time on the auction.

The Social BUUterflies Happy Hour and Coffee and Conversation are both winding down after long runs (thank you Sheryl and Peter), and Sheryl is looking to start up some outdoor activities and the Women's night out.

d. Treasurer Fred Bloss:

Fred submitted a written report regarding our financial position and notable financial events. In the meeting Fred commented that the financial reports are "reasonably accurate" and he is working with Jerry and the bookkeeper to refine some categorizations by next month.

Fred discussed the need for many online accounts to have an associated device for 2-factor authentication, for which UUCOD often uses personal phone numbers. After discussion, the Board agreed to have Fred price out a cheap phone that we pass from Treasurer to Treasurer for 2-factor authentication.

e. Director-at-Large Bob Rancourt:

Bob submitted a written report. In the meeting he highlighted participation in the virtual choir with Jonathan.

f. Director-at-Large Rob DuWors:

Rob submitted a written report. In the meeting he recounted his conversations with Denise (Social Justice) and Mel (Archivist). Denise has decided not to step down as Social Justice Committee Chair, and Mel would appreciate a partner who might take over the role. The Board briefly acknowledged the need for good succession planning and backup.

g. Minister Reverend Ian Riddell:

Reverend Ian submitted a written report. In the meeting he highlighted that membership, stewardship and the care team will meet together to clarify roles in reaching out to people, he reviewed his meeting schedules, and he mentioned that the Ingathering Needs and Gifts would be used to guide the care team, and that Jack will turn them into visual art.

Reverend Ian also expressed delighted at the numerous messages of gratitude in our Facebook Community page as contributors kept adding to the list of people who make our worship services happen.

8. Old Business:

a. Attitude of Gratitude, Rob

Cards for Gratitude will be sent from the entire Board:

- Sheryl, for hosting Happy Hour throughout the pandemic
- Peter, for hosting Coffee and Conversation throughout the pandemic
- Mel and Reign, for helping in the AV booth
- Carol, for the auction
- Pam, for her outstanding work

A card of Sympathy will be sent to Mack, after the loss of Greg

b. Facilities Update, Rod

Rod submitted a written report. In the meeting he highlighted work a major water leak repair and upcoming tree trimming.

c. Covid Protocols/Sunday Service, Hiroshi and Rod

Rod presented a thorough data and analysis, and a proposal from the Wednesday Covid subset of the Board. The challenge for the Board is that new people are showing up and wanting to join, but that the overall infection rates are still high and new data has highlighted how much the risk of hospitalization increases with age.

Due to the higher risk for our demographic we will begin requiring Proof of vaccination. The Wednesday Covid team will figure out the logistics and timetable, and Rev Ian will work with Membership to establish a process and train greeters.

There was considerable discussion around the topic of who is allowed attendance. We have not been strict on "Members and Friends" only, and we have also had requests from people to become members so they can attend. We discussed the full range from strict limitation to people registered in meminfo as Members and Friends to opening to the general public. A concern with limiting attendance is that the Covid virus is likely to be around along time, perhaps years not weeks, so we cannot limit attendance forever. The Board settled on keeping the limitation to Friends and Members but with adding a process for people to become new Members or Friends. That on-boarding process will be defined by Linda, Rob and Barb over the next couple of weeks.

Restricting the number of attendees to preserve social distancing was discussed but not decided upon. Mask enforcement needs to be very strong, and we discussed signage and greeter training to increase awareness of the policy to not attend following travel, attendance at large indoor events, or if feeling sick.

The Board approved a motion to accept the proposal from the Covid Team with the modification that only Members and Friends as defined by Meminfo are allowed to attend and that we will institute a process to on-ramp new Members and Friends. The key change to existing protocols is the requirement of Proof of vaccination.

d. Auction Update, Barb

Auction planning is in great shape. We have 53 registered bidders.

Barb asked if the requirement for Proof of vaccination will apply to the November 5 silent auction. People enter the building one family group at a time, fully masked. The Wednesday Covid Team will discuss the question.

e. Building Usage / AV Equipment Update, Rod

AV System Update

Rod submitted a detailed written AV Update covering the system capabilities, robustness and simplification, volunteers and training, and budget. In it he listed what is completed to date, in process, and future. Much of the system is now documented and training has begun, including Sunday volunteers, allied groups, and professionals for renters. Volunteers will include enthusiastic youth.

Building Usage – AV

Rod reviewed the current Building Usage policy regarding AV and proposed updates. The updates will focus on the operators (move from UUCOD supplied volunteers to contracted outside AV Professionals who are certified by UUCOD), on the gear being used (e.g. simply attaching a laptop to a TV is different from using the fully video mixer and streaming system), fees and insurance/deposits.

Rod presented some ideas for an updated Building Usage policy but it really requires a sub-group to make a definitive proposal. Discussion included referring it to the Facilities Committee, involving Pam, or forming a subcommittee of the Board. Discussion also included the need to check to see if the new gear needs to be listed on our insurance policy.

9. New Business

a. Mortgage Payoff, Sarita

Sarita presented a draft letter to the congregation and a proposal from the Finance Committee that the Board move swiftly to call a Congregational Meeting to authorize paying off the mortgage. The Board approved a motion to accept that proposal and tentatively set a date of December 5 for a hybrid Congregational Special Business Meeting. The Finance Committee will prepare the presentation.

The actual payoff amount is not yet finalized but consensus was to ask for approval of perhaps \$60K payment from reserves, which is higher than the actual amount we will likely need.

b. Church Council, Hiroshi

The Church Council will have two parts. The first is an introduction to start a discussion of the 8th Principle. The second part is an information gathering session from the committees in particular with respect to the Strategic Goals.

c. Communication Policy and Procedures, Barb

Due to the lateness of the hour, Barb suggested that we defer a first reading and discussion to the next Board Meeting.

Barb briefly reviewed the etiology of the Policy. There has been a need for a Communication Policy and Plan for many years. An ad hoc subgroup of the Stewardship Committee took on the task of drafting a Policy and Guidelines. This combines and replaces three existing documents. A big part of the work reflects the shift to electronic communications.

Barb and Rob noted that this is a Policy document not a Communication Plan, so it does not provide the simple map that guides someone on how to communicate their event. Judged through that lens it would be quite onerous and restrictive. Instead this Policy, once adopted, needs to then drive creation of Procedures and easy guides to help people know how to use the church communication systems. It is still an open question on where the responsibility for creating a Communication Plan lies. Do we form a new Communications Committee? (The one with that name today is instead a Social Media Outreach subcommittee.)

d. Board Retreat Debrief / Strategic Goals, Linda

Deferred.

10. Process Monitor Report, Barb

Did we stay on topic? Yes, very well.

Did we stay on time? Initially yes. The challenge really was that there were too many meaty topics.

Did everyone get to contribute, were all voices heard? Did we follow our covenant? Yes, there were many opinions and thoughts presented and all were heard respectfully.

11. Extinguish Chalice and Adjournment of Regular Board Meeting

Reverend Ian offered closing thoughts and extinguished a chalice. Linda adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:32 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rod Belshee

November 16, 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 Linda Savard's written report
- B) 1st Vice President Hiroshi Yamaguchi's written report
- C) 2nd Vice President Barbara Storm's written report
- D) Treasurer Fred Bloss's written report
- E) Director at Large Bob Rancourt's written report
- F) Director at Large Rob DuWor's written report
- G) Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell's written report

a. President Linda Savard's written report:

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Ministry (DIBM)

At this month's meeting we discussed the upcoming 8th Principle presentation to the Church Council, BIOPOC candle lighting at Sunday Services, a proposal for a land acknowledgment on church grounds, our goals, and our list of ongoing items. We also discussed inviting representative from the worship committee to our next meeting and the format of that meeting. We ended our time together with a discussion of identifying UUCOD as being located in the Coachella Valley instead of Rancho Mirage. The team agreed that it would be more inclusive to say Coachella Valley.

Beloved Conversations

The Beloved Conversations, Among team members attended a one day retreat put on by the facilitators of Beloved Conversations.

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 held its first meeting of the year. At the meeting the team identified goals in the Strategic Plan in the area of Leadership Development that they will address this year. They plan to offer some Leadership Training for congregants and will assist committees to develop position descriptions for their members.

Personnel

Nothing new to report at this time

Additional

- Attended weekly Covid-19 response team meetings.
- Attended Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) Special Meeting. At that meeting, delegates voted to merge the PSWD with the Mountain District.
- Attended Pacific Western Region, California, Nevada, and Hawaii president's meeting.
- Participated in the Board Retreat.
- Met with Hiroshi to plan the Church Council Meeting.
- Met with Rev. Ian and Hiroshi to develop the board agenda and to discuss the upcoming the church council.
- Attended first class for Leading from the Heart sponsored by the Pacific Western Region
- Met with members of DIBM to plan presentation to the Church Council on the 8th Principle
- Participated in film series discussions facilitated by Sandy Sladen and Margaret Manson offered through Lifespan Spiritual Growth.

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

- Develop agenda for upcoming Church Council Meeting
- Work on 8th Principle Reading that will be read at the Church Council Meeting
- Host Chris and Denise in Ouray (2020 auction item)
- Attend Facilities and Stewardship Committee meetings
- Attend DIBM meeting and 8th Principle Presentation Meeting
- Attend Board Retreat
- Attend Chalice Circle Facilitators Meeting
- Collaborate with Rod on COVID Protocols and Reopening
- Continue to work with Gene and donors for possible acquisition of sculptures

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

My Activities

- Attended the Beloved Conversations: Among Retreat as well as the Board Retreat.
- Led the Stewardship Committee meeting; attended the Membership meeting and worked with Rev. Ian to plan a joint meeting for Stewardship, Membership and Care committees
- Completed entering auction items into MemInfo for the catalog and am now assigning paddle numbers. Met with Carol Lavoie and Pam Bibb on details related to the auction.
- Met with the choir director hiring team about advertising and applicants.
- Continue reviewing pre-print drafts of the directory.

Stewardship Committee

- Social BUUterflies
 - Sheryl continues to identify outdoor community social activities and advertise them
 - Sheryl is organizing a women's activity (Pizza) at the church to possibly reinstate a "Women's Night Out" ongoing event
 - Sheryl hosted Saturday night cocktail hour since the beginning of Covid but since attendance has diminished it is being as of October 15.
- Communications
 - The ad-hoc subcommittee for communications completed a draft of a communication policy for Board review. Stewardship continues to grapple with the role Stewardship should take regarding church communications. We hope the Board will give some direction in the coming months.
- Coordination across committees
 - Stewardship requested a joint meeting with Care and Membership to discuss coordination of efforts and clarification around outreach and support for members. The meeting is November 4 at 2pm on Zoom.

Membership Committee

1. LeGrand Velez is identifying greeters/ushers for in-person services
2. 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.
3. Questions around training for greeters and if and how new people can/should be allowed to come to services were discussed and referred to the Covid team.
4. We continue to reach out to new people who have started attending on-line services, have requested the newsletter or have registered for the auction.
5. Membership will revisit topics related to becoming more welcoming in the coming months and may need more help from DIBM

d. Treasurer Fred Bloss's written report:

As of September 30th, the church held cash assets of \$285,910.04 in its bank accounts. Reserve and restricted funds totaled \$183,162.16, leaving a balance of \$102,747.88 in unrestricted funds.

Pay-Down-the-Mortgage: \$13,818.15 was applied to our mortgage principal this month. This brings the principal balance below \$58,000.00. 2 regular monthly payments have been made since that calculation.

Share the Plate: September's collection raised \$415 for The Galilee Center.

September's revenues of \$11,662.04 fell short of expenses totaling \$30,628.75, resulting in a loss of \$18,966.71. Two factors played into this: Fully-paid annual pledges were mostly collected the previous month & the Pay-Down-the-Mortgage expense was included this past month.

Reverend Ian continues a search for a music director. There is some modest money in the budget for such a position.

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

Summary

- Church is open only to members and friends, and remains closed to the public, due to the Coronavirus Pandemic
 - Hybrid services with appropriate protocols in place seem to be working
 - This Director participated in no services this month
- This month the Board met and delivered its “Dinner on the Board” auction prize from last year’s auction
- This month the Board met for its retreat, which was very productive
- Some Committees continue to meet and act
 - This Director participated in a Choir and a Social Justice meeting
 - This Director will participate in the forthcoming Board meeting and the Church Council
 - Although the Choir is on hiatus, thanks to Jonathan Fast and Rev. Riddell, the choir met and produced “Come and Join the Choir” for a service this month
- *Updates provided within*

Although the Church remains closed to the public due to the Coronavirus Pandemic and we have re-opened only to members and friends. Hybrid in-person and virtual services seem to be working at present with appropriate protocols in place for in-person worship. This Director participated in delivery of the Board’s “Dinner on the Board” auction item from last year’s auction. This Director also participated in the Board’s retreat, which was very productive. This Director participated in a Social Justice meeting in preparation to serve as a liaison for a Share-the-Plate recipient next month. This Director will participate in this Board meeting and the upcoming Church Council.

UUCOD Choir

Although the Choir is on hiatus due to Coronavirus restrictions, thanks to Jonathan Fast and Rev. Riddell, we met and produced a song, “Come and Join the Choir,” for inclusion in services this month. The Choir awaits hiring of a choir director and revisions to safety protocols that may allow in-person singing.

Worship Committee

The Worship Committee is not meeting until next month.

f. Director at Large Rod DuWor's written report:

My Activities

- Participated in DIBM Meetings on 9/22 and 10/5.
- Had 2 meetings related to presenting the Eighth Principle at Church Council.
- Worked with Sarita and Sandy on DIBM Goals for this year.
- Attended the film class being offered by Margaret and Sandy.
- Attended the Pacific Southwest District Regional Meeting as a delegate.
- Attended the UUCOD Board Retreat.

Social Justice Committee

- A) Met with Denise Janssen Eager to get familiarized with the Social Justice Committee.
- B) Denise is no longer looking for a co-chair. She is feeling better and happily running the committee—not looking for a replacement.
- C) She reviewed the most recent meeting minutes and a Share the Plate summary she created. I thought I would append those to my report since there is so much rich information folks may want to know about.

Archives

- I met with Mel. She hadn't been asked about her Archivist role before.
- Mel maintains a binder that's organized by year. It includes news clippings, obituaries about members, something about new members, annual summaries of UUCOD activities, events, announcements. There are 5 binders of information.
- She would like to have someone digitize all the materials and house the digitized information on the Google Drive.
- She believes that not many people know about the binder archives.
- She is willing to continue but would also be welcoming if someone were eager to assume this role.

g. Minister Reverend Ian Riddell's written report:

Hello, friends,

We have certainly started our church year with connection and beginnings of deeper work. I was so happy to be part of our Board Retreat earlier this month. It is wonderful to see the depth of connection, concern, and vision you all have for the life of our congregation. I know the scope and amount of the work we were looking at seems daunting. I can only remind you that we will not get everything done that we think needs doing, but we will do what we can with our hearts and minds and spirits active.

I'm excited that we begin our work with the Rev. Joseph Lyon-Santos, our coach for Beloved Conversations: Among this month. I hope this work will engage the congregation even more into this work of belonging and inclusion and show us some more ways we can build change into our ways of being.

in peace and love
Rev. Ian

Summary Outline of the work I've been involved with for 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

- The Care Team did not meet for our regular meeting this month due to individual health issues and travel. We will resume our monthly meetings on November 1.
- 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 still 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 met with Barb Storm (in her capacity as part of the Stewardship Committee) this month. We are planning a meeting in the first week of November, bringing together the Care Team, the Stewardship Committee, and the Membership Committee to talk and think together about the needs of our congregation (some identified in the October 17 service) and how each of these teams of people will respond. We hope to better clarify for all which group is responsible for which kinds of caring this year.

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 Bibb to check in on work expectations and how things are going. We continue to work well together.
- Pam and I continue to work on our processes for getting ready for Sunday mornings including creating the print order of worship and preparing the lobby.
- I continue to work with the Choir Director hiring team (Katy Fass and Barb Storms) and our personnel team (Walter Gendell). We have advertised and shared the job posting in a wide variety of places. We have only a couple of certain applications at this point. The posting has been shared on our UUCOD Facebook page and many other places and we are hoping for more engagement soon.
- I participated in our annual Board Retreat this month, leading our opening worship and working with the Board to clarify and ground our strategic priorities for the year.
- We continue to be without members for our Committee on Ministry. This has not been a focus of mine this month, though I hope to bring more attention to it after I return from my vacation.
- As part of our congregation's "Beloved Conversations Among" team, I participated in the program's opening retreat and will be joining the team as we meet and get to know our congregation's coach, the Rev. Joseph Santos-Lyons, this month.

C) Membership and Committees

- I met with congregational leaders of Script 2 Stage 2 Screen to hear about history, context, and expectations. I am gratified they are taking our COVID protocols so seriously.
- I met with the Membership and Social Justice Committees to get better acquainted with their work and how I might be involved/connected to what they're doing and act as a resource.
- I attended the first meeting of the Chalice Circle facilitators for this year to get to know them better and to support their leadership.
- I worked with Randy Steele and LeGrand Velez to prepare the greeters and ushers for our COVID protocols. I feel I should have given this more attention as our greeters have felt unsure at times about whether they should be asking people not to come in. Our COVID Response Team is forwarding recommendations to the Board about changing these protocols, which should make things clearer and more straightforward for our greeters on Sunday morning. I'll work with the greeters to continue deepening their preparation.

D) Lifespan Faith-Development

- I have been planning my upcoming Sacred Practices classes.

E) Worship

- I continue to lead the Worship Team meetings and the weekly Production meetings.
- I led worship several times this past month:
 - September 26 – Atonement and Forgiveness (WA: Bryna Blum)
 - October 3 – The Work of Justice, Change, and Love (WA: Sarita Gonzales)
 - October 10 – Heresy and Faith (WA: Betty Bender)
 - October 17 – Ingathering (WA: Joni Paddock)
- I continue to work with Rod Belshee and other volunteers fine-tuning and improving our streaming services and AV capabilities. Rod continues to be a steadfast and creative voice in this work and has shared with the Worship Team ways that we can begin to further enrich elements of our worship without placing undue burden on our tech folks.
- While we await the arrival of a new choir director and the easing of singing restrictions, Jonathan Fast gathered with our choir on Zoom and prepared a choir recording for our October 14 Ingathering service.

● Denominational Activities

- I regularly consult with local and regional colleagues on issues affecting our congregations.

● Prophetic Outreach, Interfaith Activities, and Local Collaboration

- I participated in the October Social Justice meeting.
- I have become part of the group of DIC clergy who write a weekly “Faith Matters” column in the Desert Sun. My first article was published this month, based on my “Joy and Woe” sermon.

● Personal and Professional Growth

- I continue daily Spanish language learning and plan to find a tutor for ongoing learning in the fall.
- I participated in the Fall Pacific Southwest UUMA Chapter retreat. Many of these people have been my professional colleagues and friends since I began my ministry in Las Vegas in 2012. It is always healing and grounding to spend time together.
- My reading this month includes “The Inconvenient Indian” by Sherman Alexie and I continue to read “Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others” by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk.

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.