

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF THE DESERT
Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2023

Attending:

Board Members Attending by Zoom: President Linda Savard; 1st Vice President Bill Masco; Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu; Secretary Bob Rancourt; Director at Large Carol McDaniel; Director at Large Dave Carter

Minister Attending by Zoom: Rev. Ian W. Riddell

Board Members Absent: 2nd Vice President Fran Hoag

Congregational Members Attending by Zoom: Rod Belshee; Leslie Gebhart; Barb Ketay; Diana Leslie; Ingrid Pratt; Barb Storms; Jane Zaun

Meeting Minutes:

1. Opening and Chalice Lighting: Linda called the regular Board Meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. PST by Zoom. Rev. Riddell offered an inspirational reading as the chalice lighting.
2. Welcome and Check-in: Linda welcomed everyone, and she and everyone checked in.
3. Approval of Board Minutes: The Board approved a motion to accept the minutes for the February 16, 2023, Board Meeting.
4. Process Monitor and Timekeeper: Dave
5. Voices of the Congregation: Diana Leslie spoke; see New Business, Item a.
6. Board Reports:
 - a. President Linda Savard: Linda submitted a written report.
 - b. 1st Vice President Bill Masco: Bill submitted a written report.
 - c. Secretary Bob Rancourt: Bob submitted a written report.
 - d. Director at Large Dave Carter: Dave submitted written reports for the Facilities and Furnishings Committee and the Sacred Grounds Initiative.
 - e. Director at Large Carol McDaniel: Carol submitted a written report.
 - f. Minister Reverend Ian W. Riddell: Rev. Riddell submitted a written report.
 - g. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu: Jerry submitted a written report. Jerry added

that the weekend's yard sale brought in proceeds approximately of \$6,300 plus another \$2,500 for a stove donated by Roger and Margaret Beaman! He also mentioned that Leslie Gebhart's recent Sacred Grounds Initiative fundraiser brought in proceeds approximately of \$4,000! It appears that the church is going to finish this fiscal year ahead of budget, even anticipating that the next few months likely will run at a deficit.

7. Old Business:

- a. Attitude of Gratitude: This month, the Board acted to have cards sent to: Leslie Gebhart for spearheading a Sacred Grounds Initiative fundraiser; Jane Betts-Stover, Janice Dunn, and Marilyn Walsh for their significant leadership and work in the very successful annual yard sale; Sue Caspari for her consistent cleaning, organizing, and replenishing supplies behind the scenes for the church; Roger and Margaret Beaman for their donation of a stove that brought in \$2,500; and Rabbi Jules King for encouraging his ministry to donate food and socks, which resulted in a significant increase in such donations this month.
- b. COVID-19 Protocols: Revising COVID-19 protocols was discussed. Linda reported that the COVID-19 Response Team is recommending that the church go to masks as optional at this time. Motion was made and carried that, effective immediately, masks will be optional. Rev. Riddell advised that, given this change, the COVID-19 Response Team will move to an "as necessary" meeting schedule instead of weekly meetings.

8. Unfinished Business:

- a. "Do the Work! An Antiracist Activity Book:" Due to the voluminous amount of business on the agenda, the Board tabled this activity until next month.
- b. 2023 – 2024 Budget: Jerry discussed next year's budget. He noted that this next budget represents only a modest increase from last year's budget with an approximate revenue total of \$307,000, which includes \$35,000 from reserves. He also noted that the budget includes the expense of funding the minister at 100%. The Board approved a motion to accept this budget for next year.
- c. Contract to Call Update: Jerry, at Sarita Gonzales's request, advised that the Settled Minister Selection Committee just had its first small-group discussion meeting. He also advised that only 41 members have signed up (about 30% of the membership) for the meetings so far and that more should be participating, so he encouraged Board Members to spread the word. He described the meeting in which he participated as educational, interesting, and productive, with which Bill, who had also participated, agreed.

9. New Business:

- a. Sacred Grounds: Diana Leslie discussed the status of projects within the Sacred Grounds Initiative and advised that Board review and approval for these projects will be sought once all information and materials are available.
- b. Choir Director: Bob led a discussion of staffing choir direction for the remainder of the choir year with the unplanned early departure of Choir Director Ament, expressing concern for adding more work to Rev. Riddell's already-full plate and additional work for Jeffrey. Discussion ensued. Arrangements were made to limit burdening Rev. Riddell with additional choir direction work by accepting Jeffrey Lesser's offer to lead the choir during practices with the assistance of temporary accompanists. The Board agreed to end the choir year early with the Easter service, which Rev. Riddell agreed to conduct as his last added activity of additional choir direction work. Jeffrey will receive reasonable additional compensation for his extra efforts.
- c. Slate of New Board of Directors Nominees: Linda reported the Leadership Development Committee's recommended slate of nominees for the next Board of Directors: Bob Rancourt as President; Julia Alberg-Burbank as 1st Vice President; Claudia Simmons as Secretary; Walter Gendell as Director at Large; and Jerry L'Hommedieu as Treasurer (with assistance from Gloria Kapp filling a new position of Assistant Treasurer—not a new officially-elected Board position but simply a volunteer). Linda also reported the recommendation that Barb Storms be appointed the next Leadership Development Chair. Motions were made consistent with the recommendations and all recommendations were approved.
- d. Calendar and Content Discussion: A budget overview meeting is scheduled following the service on April 16, and the Annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2023.
- **Strategic Goals**: The current draft of 2023 – 2026 strategic goals was reviewed and the Board agreed to share it with the congregation at the Church Council and Annual Meeting. Responsibilities and timelines, along with formal finalization of the entire document, will be done by the incoming Board.
 - **By-Law Changes**: Proposed By-Law changes were revisited and discussed. The proposed By-Law changes will be voted on separately but in the same meeting as the Annual Meeting. The Board voted to approve and put forth for voting all proposed By-Law changes.
 - **Church Council**: Linda reminded everyone of the upcoming April 8, 2023, Church Council, and confirmed its agenda. Bill, who normally would lead, will be unable to attend, so Linda will ensure coverage for Bill.

- Board Transition/Orientation: The Board scheduled a tentative orientation and transition meeting for the incoming Board for July 8, 2023, from 8:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the church.

10. Process Monitor Report: Dave advised that the Board ran a little bit long on time.

11. Extinguishing Chalice and Adjournment of Regular Board Meeting: Linda adjourned the regular Board meeting at 7:38 p.m. PST and extinguished the chalice.

Respectfully Submitted:



Robert L. "Bob" Rancourt, Jr.
Secretary

APRIL 18, 2023

Approval Date

Attachments: Written Reports Addendum

Addendum to Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes
Written Reports of Board Members and Committees

Written Reports of Board Members and Minister:

- a. President Linda Savard's Written Report
- b. 1st Vice President Bill Masco's Written Report
- c. Secretary Bob Rancourt's Written Report
- d. Director at Large Carol McDaniel's Written Report
- e. Minister Rev. Ian W. Riddell's Written Report
- f. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu's Written Report

Committee Reports:

- a. Facilities and Furnishings Committee
- b. Sacred Grounds Initiative

Written Reports of Board Members and Minister:

a. President Linda Savard's Written Report:

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert
President's Board Report
March 21, 2023

Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Ministry (DIBM)

We did not hold a March DIBM meeting. Steven Toporoff has agreed to join the DIBM.

Nominating Committee

The committee has candidates that they would like to put forth for the Board of Directors for the 2023-24 fiscal year. They have also been working to rewrite some of the By-laws to change the committee to a Leadership Development Committee. New language will be voted on at the congregational meeting in April.

Personnel

Vanessa Ament, our Choir Director resigned. Rev. Ian and Jeffery, our accompanist have been leading the choir. The board will explore when and how to hire a new Choir Director.

Hospitality

Hospitality needs additional members to organize and serve Sunday coffee hour.

Additional

The contract to call task force is putting together their small groups for discussion. The task force is moving ahead smoothly.

Over the past month, I participated in the Covid Response team, production meetings, chalice circle, the pledge drive, and the stewardship meeting. We are no longer gathering vaccination data; however, I continue to keep the records of those who attend Sunday service. I continue to meet monthly with Rev. Ian to plan our board agenda and to discuss business of the church.

I also have been working to finalize our bylaw revisions and have been teaching a sign language class that I offered at the auction.

Submitted by: Linda Savard, Board President

b. 1st Vice President Bill Masco's Written Report:

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert

1st Vice President Board Report

March 21, 2023

Participated in the successful pledge drive including manning the table in patio soliciting pledges.

Met with John Ressler regarding the proposed design for pavement on the sacred grounds pathways.

Continued participation in the Finance Committee, Script2Stage2Screen and Sacred Grounds.

In addition to normal programming in the AV group, ordered retainer clips for the "muff" on the Madonna mics.

Participated in the first "Contract to Call" small group meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Bill Masco

c. Secretary Bob Rancourt's Written Report:

Monthly Report
UUCOD Secretary Bob Rancourt

- A memorandum addressing AB 506 (revised requirements for adults working or volunteering with a youth organization effective 01/01/2022) remains in progress
 - An accompanying lobby flyer/poster is drafted
 - Further review and implementation are pending
- On February 19, 2023, the UUCOD Choir (of which the Secretary is a part) held an informal potluck picnic at Palm Desert Civic Center Park
 - With Dr. Ament's resignation, arrangements should be made to staff choir direction for the remainder of the choir year (typically May)
 - Jeffrey Lesser is willing to assume her duties through April with the temporary assistance of accompanists, which has already begun
 - A year-end bonus of a reasonable amount is suggested to recognize Jeffrey's assumption of additional work outside the scope of his contracted work
 - Remuneration of reasonable amounts should be provided to the accompanists temporarily working the choir practices
 - Rev. Riddell is helping too, but to have him to lead and/or accompany the choir in addition to his current ministerial duties is inequitable, as it exceeds the scope of his contractual 80% ministry
 - Jonathan Fast, a church and choir member, previously led the choir during the early pandemic and is willing and able to do so again in May as a temporary stopgap measure
 - Remuneration of a reasonable amount is suggested
 - Some (if not most?) of these additional staffing expenses will be offset by savings from Dr. Ament's departure earlier than was originally contracted
 - An alternative is to end the choir year early this year at April's end, but the choir as a group has expressed interest in keeping the regular schedule through May
- On March 17 and 18, 2023, the annual UUCOD Garage Sale was held
 - During the week preceding the sale, the Secretary assisted with pick-up and delivery of large, bulky items
 - Secretary helped set up both days and breakdown the first day
 - Per Jane Betts-Stover, it was a success
 - Jane Betts-Stover led the effort, did a significant amount of work, and should be recognized

March 21, 2023

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d. Director at Large Carol McDaniel's Written Report:

Social Justice:

They are meeting on zoom tomorrow. Nothing much changed this month.

Audio:

A new procedure to track who and when people work has taken place. If someone is needed to work, Sheryl E. contacts those who can fill the position. The new volunteers have shown up erratically.

Since I'm "at large", I want to mention that a few Yard Sale volunteers said that they would like to know how the money made will be spent. One specific wish was for the microwaves in the kitchen to work.

Carol McDaniel
3-21-23

e. Minister Rev. Ian W. Riddell's Written Report:

Minister's Report to the UUCOD Board

March 21, 2023

The Rev. Ian W. Riddell

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 met for our regular meeting on Zoom this month.
- 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 continue to meet with congregants in need of connection and conversation by phone and Zoom and in person.
- This month, I continued making phone calls with the goal of calling all members and friends for a pastoral check in in the next few months.

B. Administration, Governance, and Staff

- I continue to meet as needed 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.
- Upon Vanessa's resignation as our choir director, I consulted with our current Lead Accompanist, Jeffrey Lesser. Jeffrey has experience directing ensembles and was interested in helping out by leading the choir for the remainder of the church year. I will also be helping with this as the choir needs a conductor on the Sundays that it is performing in service. I have shared in leading a few choir rehearsals, but this will primarily be Jeff's responsibility through the end of the church year. For rehearsals where I am not there, we are hiring a pianist so that Jeff can lead the singers with support.
- The Committee on Ministry is working in teams on our upcoming offerings: "UUCOD Right Relations" 101 and "Microaggressions and Loving Communication". We will be announcing the dates of these events soon.
- I meet monthly with President Linda Savard and First Vice President Bill Masco to plan the agenda for the monthly Board meeting and coordinate on other issues.

- I met with our Safety Task Force to review and revise proposed procedures to respond to crisis situations. The team will meet next Monday to walk through our property with Mel (from Facilities) using a safety checklist provided by Church Mutual to determine areas we need to attend to in terms of physical safety.

C. Membership and Committees

- I attended the March meeting of the Membership Committee planning for our upcoming newcomer classes and membership ceremony. I participated in the class on February 26 talking about UU history.
- I have made appointments and met with many of the prospective members and will make appointments and meet with the remaining few in the next week.
- We postponed the March DIB ministry team meeting as more than half our members were away or otherwise unable to attend.
- We welcomed several new members at our February 19 service!

D. Lifespan Faith-Development

- I completed my 3-session class on our Common Read, *Mistakes and Miracles*. Five people are participating in the class. I will offer the class again (probably in April) on Zoom during the day so that more can participate.
- I have been planning for a second offering of this class to be held on Zoom on Monday afternoons starting March 27

E. Worship

- We have service leaders planned through the end of June and the Worship Team and I have begun brainstorming possible service leaders and topic for the summer and early fall.
- I continue to lead the weekly Production meetings. In our production meetings, we continue the practice of reflecting on the service the day before and noting any issues we need to address.
- Our AV Team is working well these past months. There have been small glitches which they have solved with calm and excellent attention. I think the stream continues to be high quality. We have also welcomed several new volunteers who have been spending time shadowing current team members and some of them are already worked into the ongoing schedule.
- I led or participated in worship several times these past months:
- Feb 19 – Rooted in Love: Living into Right Relations and the Beloved Community with Lance Phillips as Worship Associate

- Feb 26 – All Creatures Great and Small: Blessing of the Animals with Julia Alberg-Burbank as Worship Associate. Unfortunately, due to weather conditions (cold!) we did not hold this service outside and invite people to bring their furry companions. We will plan to do this again in the fall when we can be more certain of the weather.
- March 19—Enter, Rejoice, and Come In: Radical Welcome and Hospitality with Julia Alberg-Burbank as Worship Associate
- We continue to welcome guests and old friends to our pulpit: Rev. Sarah Millspaugh, our UUA Regional contact (March 5) and Rabbi Jules King (March 12).

F. Denominational Activities

- I regularly consult with local and regional colleagues on issues affecting our congregations.
- I continue meeting monthly as a mentor to a person in the ministerial formation process for feedback, support, and context setting as they move through the credentialing process.
- I am currently attending the Spring retreat for the Pacific Southwest chapter of the UU Ministers Association. I serve our chapter as part of the nominating team.

G. Prophetic Outreach, Interfaith Activities, and Local Collaboration

- I am part of the Desert Interfaith Council and am Zoom host for our monthly meetings.

H. Personal and Professional Growth

- I continue meeting monthly with a coach for ongoing support, learning, and accountability as I minister to the congregation in our diversity transition work. My coach is Rev. Julica Hermann de la Fuente
- I meet monthly with a small group of colleagues in our region in reflection, sharing, and collegial support and learning.
- I also meet weekly with my therapist and continue weekly Spanish lessons.

in peace and deep love



My weekly schedule is as follows:

Currently, my days off are Friday and Saturday.

Upcoming Travel Schedule:

o Professional Retreat: March 20-23 UUMA PSW Chapter Retreat in Phoenix, AZ.

- o Study Leave: April 10-16 at home at Camp DeBonneville Pines
- o Vacation: May 2-8

f. Treasurer Jerry L'Hommedieu's Written Report:

UUCOD Treasurer's Report
February 2023

As of February 28, UUCOD held deposits of \$285,946.75 which includes \$155,388.02 invested with UUA in its UUCOD Investment Fund. Of the total amount, \$225,274.99 is held in either dedicated or restricted funds. This leaves \$60,671.73 in available, unrestricted funds.

UUCOD's investment accounts regained value during February. The MacLean Endowment Fund value increased by \$7,936. The UUCOD Investment Fund increased in value by \$8,789; gaining \$5,388 for the eight months since opening the account. UUCOD ended the month holding \$19,437 in pledge payments for FY 23-24 in reserves. We also collected \$1,097 in donations for a scholarship through Safe Schools/Desert Cities as part of our February Share the Plate Program.

Excluding the increase in fund values, February's expenses of \$19,552 exceeded revenue of \$13,098, resulting in a negative cash flow of \$6,454 for the month. UUCOD ended the month with \$67,714 in excess revenue for the year-to-date but up to half of that amount will be used for deficit spending for the remainder of the fiscal year. The Beamans organized the donation and sale of an industrial kitchen range which netted \$2,500 for the church. Gardening expenses increased as two irrigation valves needed to be replaced and a fallen Palo Verde tree needed to be removed from the grounds.

Much of February was devoted to UUCOD's annual pledge drive and development of the budget for next fiscal year. UUA is transitioning its retirement plan management from TIAA to Empower. During a blackout period we have suspended payments to the retirement fund but will resume in March. As part of this process, we determined our Office Administrator's eligibility for the retirement program and will begin contributing to her retirement plan in March, including a lump sum payment for accrued benefits. With Vanessa Ament's departure, we don't anticipate filling that position until the Fall which will result in a small decrease to expenses. The Sacred Grounds team is working on construction plans and seeking bids for some hardscape improvements on our grounds. A start date is yet to be determined.

Jerry L'Hommedieu
March 7, 2023

Committee Reports:

a. Facilities and Furnishings Committee:

Hi Dave,

Big discussion regarding the remodeling of the bathrooms for gender-neutral rooms. An agreement was reached to send it back to the biopic committee for more information.

The Door to the community room has failed to lock, and a repair call has been made and will be completed on Monday.

The front door had a similar problem and was repaired.

The door stop to the sanctuary has been replaced.

That's all I can think of.

Mel

b. Sacred Grounds Initiative:

Concrete

The main one is the concrete work for the Celebration Garden, Garden of Hope, and the patio expansion. I'm not sure what your concerns about it not being thoroughly planned are. These are the projects that we have talked about several times at the Board meetings, and John R presented concepts a month ago. The garden descriptions are on the UUCOD website. There is a meeting tomorrow with Stan Asaro to finalize the plans and get a bid. Perhaps your uncertainty comes from the turnover on who is leading this project. It has shifted from Mel, to Sue Engel, and now to Diana Leslie and Leslie G. John R is doing the design work.

Let me know what procedures you are concerned about. I have asked Diana and John to forward his final design to the Board after the meeting tomorrow. At the previous Board meeting, I asked if any Board members wanted to be more involved in the design process and got no takers. There was enthusiasm for his concepts and agreement that we would send his final to the Board by email as a courtesy to ensure that no one had objections but that we didn't require a formal design approval.

Once we get the bid from Stan, it will require your signature on the contract. Rancho Mirage also requires two permits. An Intrusion Permit, Minor Modification permit that we are completing.

The next step for these gardens (after concrete) will be planning for plantings in October. That includes plant selection, landscape design, and fundraising.

Separately, the Celebration Garden and the Garden of Hope designs also include short trails leading to benches. Those aspects will occur as funds become available. I'm prioritizing the plantings ahead of that since the planting really needs to be timed in October.

I think we have done a good job of following the proper procedures and keeping everyone informed. Let me know if there is something else that you want.

Weed Pull party

We are scheduling a second Weed Pull party targeting the schismus grass later this month.

California Naturalist Capstone Projects

A new item for you relates to the California Naturalist class at UCR. Dave Emmerson, Sue Engel, and Mel are all taking the class. A part of the class is to do a Capstone project, and the three of them are putting together plans for the demonstration of native species gardens at UUCOD.

This has been part of the Sacred Grounds vision, making a demonstration garden of 4-5 different ecozones such as desert wash, blow sand, and mesquite. Their capstone will be to create landscape designs and proposed signage. They would like to make, these into examples of attractive gardens to educate and encourage the general public to move to native landscaping in their own yards. The class ends in just a few weeks, so their output will be just the plans, with implementation to occur over time. In particular, October would be a good target for planting if we can get it together.

The demonstration gardens are not part of the approved Phase One projects, so we will need to bring those plans to the Board once they are developed.

Along those lines, one of the ecozones that we have talked about in Sacred Grounds is more lizard habitat, created largely by adding more rock. Dave has started collecting some rocks (he is working with the BLM to make sure it is all legal) that we will use along the southern edge of the property to provide lizard habitat.