

Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice Board Meeting and Retreat

Minutes as amended Feb 20, 2016

Saturday, November 7, 2015

Held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville, Maryland

Present: Martha Ades, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax; William Alsmeyer-Johnson, Mt Vernon Unitarian Church; Nancy Boardman, Paint Branch Unitarian Universalist Church; Pat Bradshaw, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville; Ed Butterworth, UU Congregation of Fairfax; Al Carlson, Unitarian Universalist Church of Reston; Bruce Griffin, Accotink Unitarian Universalist Church; Lavona Grow, Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington; Pat Karlsen, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church; Marti MacKenzie, Towson Unitarian Universalist Church; Gary Magnuson, Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Rockville; Kay Scott, Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church; Nancy Sorden, Washington Ethical Society; Larry Underwood, Bull Run Unitarian Universalists; Armele Vilceus, All Souls Church, Unitarian.

Absent: Patti Absher, Washington Ethical Society; Steve Buckingham, Goodloe Memorial UU Congregation; Carmelita Carter-Sykes, Paint Branch UU Church; Frank Corsoro, UU Church of Arlington; John Gubbings, Treasurer; Ed Kringer, Accotink UU; Sheila Malenski, Towson UU Church; Elizabeth Stevens, Administrative Assistant

Guests: Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, UUSJ consultant; Leah Rampy, Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, facilitator; Sarah Masters, UUSJ contractor

Lavona Grow: Thank you to our hosts for their hospitality.

Welcome and reflection: Gary Magnuson and Pat Bradshaw. Gary shared a reading from the hymn, The Fire of Commitment, by Jason Shelton.

Call to order at 2:06 by Lavona Grow.

Welcome from Rev. Lynn Strauss, UU Congregation of Rockville.

Introductions. All Souls is now a member of UUSJ and Armele Vilceus is their representative. She introduced herself sharing that she is originally from Haiti. She said she had always wanted to be part of UUSJ since she heard about it. She works for the World Bank and her passion is development work. She is Co-chair of Stewardship at All Souls and on five committees there.

Establishment of quorum. 11 members present. Lavona is holding Steve Buckingham's proxy. [13 members were present for most of the meeting.]

Lavona reported two resignations from the Board: Liz Echols from Davies Memorial Unitarian Universalist Church and Bob Schurter from the UU Congregation of Columbia. Steve Buckingham from Goodloe Memorial UU is likely to resign since he has moved to Frederick, MD.

Minutes. Discussion of minutes from the Sept 27, 2015 board meeting. Add Armele's suggestion that we implement a buddy system to pair new UUSJ congregations with those of long-standing. Lavona mentioned that UU Goodloe might benefit from such a program. Lavona also mentioned that the Treasurer's report is normally included in the minutes and so should be added. Bill moves that the minutes be approved as amended. There was a second and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report. Al Carlson presented the report on Treasurer John Gubbings's behalf. Current annual income and expenses are substantially more than previous years. The budget approved was aspirational, reflecting the desire for an Executive Director with more hours. More individual members and congregation members will be needed to fund this budget. There is a need for a consultant to restructure the Board for the organization. We applied for a grant from the UU Funding Program. We received \$5000 plus another \$5000 matching grant from them, which was matched through the Faithify campaign. However, we have not yet hired an Executive Director. So the amount of money on hand is substantial because we've raised more and spent less.

Lavona Grow: We don't anticipate hiring an Executive Director until the spring.

Gary Magnuson: How does the \$57,000 budget compare to previous years? Is it the most we've had?

Lavona Grow: yes.

Gary Magnuson: Is the consulting contract fixed price?

Lavona Grow: Yes.

Lavona Grow: A revised Executive Director succession plan was circulated and briefly discussed to get a sense of the Board. The Core Team wants the authority from the Board to move forward. The previous Executive Director was an 11-month position at \$28.50 an hour. The plan is to hire a new Executive Director at \$25-30 an hour for 20 hours a week. The budget is based on 20 hours. Should the position be hourly or salaried? We're leaning toward salaried, but we will weigh the pros and cons. Let's review changes in the timeline. We are considering changing from 60 day position advertising period to 45 days. There may be a problem with the holidays. There will be a special Board meeting to meet the Executive Director candidate.

Gary Magnuson: Is there any benchmarking with similar positions for recruiting in this time period? This is a critical hire for us.

Lavona Grow: We can float the job description before it's officially advertised. We did collect many job descriptions for similar positions including the director of Standing on the Side of Love. We can do more. Anyone else have experience? We will advertise on idealist.org among other places. Can we get

a thumbs up from the board? Benefits for the new Executive Director are being considered, probably four weeks annual unpaid leave, federal holidays, and attending General Assembly every two years.

Al Carlson: Can we move forward if we get good applicants at the beginning of the process? Do we have to wait for the full 45 or 60 days?

Leah Rampy: You run the risk of having to say to someone that they weren't considered when they did meet the deadline.

Lavona Grow asked for thumbs up and everyone gave a thumbs up.

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel introduced herself. She wants to hear everyone's comments on the Executive Director position description.

Retreat: Visioning our Future and Hiring a New Executive Director

Leah Rampy: I'm going to ask you to move out of the weeds. You were in a lot of detail just now. Step back and look at UUSJ with the lens of the future. You just had a large gala and you were honoring people in that event. What would you find to be exciting in 2020? What is UUSJ known for in 2020? What would it get an award for? What are the one or two things you would like to be able to say that UUSJ has accomplished or stands for five years from now? (participants moved into six small groups to discuss the questions.)

Reporting back to the full group:

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel: We're known nationwide as the UU voice working on national, and emerging into global, policy and advocacy issues and we're bringing that back to our congregations.

Gary Magnuson: We weren't afraid of being recognized. It's important to bring it back to our congregations and make them aware of social justice issues.

Nancy Sorden: We would be recognized by our local congregations.

Marti Mackenzie: UUSJ earns reputation as the most effective faith-based lobbyist and opens an office on Capitol Hill.

Armele Vilceus: UUSJ awarded effective advocacy award by Congressional caucus for being best-prepared and most influential national lobbying group. Now almost all religious organizations in the Capital region engage in social justice.

Larry Underwood: Galvanizing local congregations and other faith-based groups to advocate for relevant social justice issues, e.g. climate, gun control, income inequality.

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: This presumes a lot, the money to make it happen.

Leah Rampy: It leaves out the how. What would be energizing to work for?

Leah Rampy: Let's do a case study. Listen with your Board hat on. How does this case fulfill the mission? What's the strategy? Did it have the right resources? What was the opportunity cost? How did I support this? How should my congregation have supported this? How should I have supported my congregation in supporting this? Do we have what we need? What might need to change? What would need to be changed by the Board and what would need to be changed by the Executive Director?

First case study: Annual Gala

Martha Ades: The purpose of the Gala is to raise money to give out as grants. There is an 8-page summary report of the lessons learned. This is a summary. There were big changes this year: from a restaurant to a church, a new committee, new staff, buffet-style instead of plated. 89 people attended and we gave out 8 awards. 15 congregations were represented and 6 ministers were there. Overall the event went well. The church venue was more welcoming and gave us more control, which helped with things like accommodating dietary needs and doing our own decorations. There were glitches, but they were all behind the scenes, fortunately. Specifically we had trouble identifying the dietary restriction folks. We had an outside moderator who stumbled a bit. Having the event at a church took a lot more resources than a restaurant. We needed more of a spotlight on the grants we give out. Total profit was about \$1600, a little less than in the past. The expenses were larger in a church than in a restaurant, including the need for a liquor license. Also, previously Open Door contributed \$500 towards event expenses, but they discontinued that. The registrations came in late. Is that avoidable? Overall, it was a good event with good compliments received.

Leah Rampy: Thank you Martha.

Lavona Grow presented Martha with flowers to thank her for chairing the Gala Committee.

Pat Karlsen: We typically had politicians as masters of ceremony in the past.

Nancy Boardman: Why was a liquor license needed?

Martha Ades: Virginia state law requires it when you're selling alcohol.

Gary Magnuson: We alerted the social justice committee at Rockville about this event, but because there was no direct connection to Rockville, people didn't understand why they should come.

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: Did anyone at Rockville remember that Rev. Lynn received an award in the past? Last year Mount Vernon had two award winners and it improved goodwill within the congregation for UUSJ.

Gary Magnuson: Maybe awards don't draw.

Al Carlson: We as UUSJ want to be recognized for the work we do. These awards recognize people who usually aren't recognized for the work that they do. I think it's very valuable.

Bruce Griffin: If the objective is to raise money, this doesn't raise enough for the amount of work it is. Mostly Board members came. UUSJ is a group unto itself. Congregations are where the people, the money, and the energy are.

Larry Underwood: What is the purpose? If the purpose is to recognize people, then it's fine. If the purpose is to raise money, then it needs work.

Leah Rampy: We're talking opportunity cost here.

Nancy Sorden: The event was stellar. The food, venue, awardee speeches were all excellent. We need more people to see it. We need to devote more resources to publicity.

Armele Vilceus: If this was advertised to the social justice network, it would draw more. Publicity needs to start a year ahead.

Nancy Sorden: Every year it has been stellar.

Leah Rampy: It fits the strategy, but it's not clear that it fits the resources. Is it the best use of resources? The congregations are not supportive enough. What should the Board do?

Al Carlsen: UUSJ is trying to get congregations to work together. They are all going in different directions. We can achieve more working together. We should have an award for collaboration, not focused on UUSJ, but collaboration in other ways on social justice.

Pat Karlsen: This Gala wasn't started as a fundraiser.

Ed Butterworth: I want to echo Al. We want to recognize people working across congregations. And everyone involved would get recognized.

Second case study: Climate Action

Lavona Grow: This was leading up to the Action of Immediate Witness Act for a Liveable Climate and mobilizing for the Pope's visit and also the Grandparents March for climate change. This wasn't intentionally planned, it came from the Green Activists. We ramped up in March and April and engaged people across the country with 15 groups including the UU Ministers Association and Commit2Respond. UUSJ became the platform at General Assembly. People spread the word, both to those who were there and those who weren't. Doris Marlin was the point person. We had clipboard teams that gathered 500 signatures. But we never planned what to do if it passed. Then the Grandparents March came up. We co-sponsored that. 22 regional UU's came to it. Hopefully they will stay engaged. Then we worked on the Pope's visit. There's an AIW national group. Our location made us the implementers for that group. We drafted a letter to Todd Stern, Special Envoy for Climate Change at the State Department, which we delivered in person. We got recognized as being an organization capable of doing that.

Leah Rampy: There was a fast at FERC, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. A group of us went in solidarity with them. There was a service at All Souls and we supported the Franciscan Vigil. We

participated in the Moral Initiative for Climate. There was a celebration at Cedar Lane. UUSJ provided communication, promotion and registration.

Lavona Grow: All of this was a three-month effort. There was an intern providing the staff support. The new administrative assistant, Elizabeth, kept the calendar up to date. There was a considerable amount of staffing costs and opportunity costs. We're starting to be recognized as the go-to UU's for advocacy. The UU Ministry for the Earth looks to us about what is happening legislatively. I've been invited to the Washington Interreligious Staff Community.

Leah Rampy: This fulfills the mission.

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: The delivery of the letter was dumped on us by Commit2Respond. The UUA doesn't help. We need to get money from them.

Martha Ades: Lavona's getting all these calls. Who is UUSJ? Is there a wider UUSJ? At my congregation people don't feel a part of it.

Leah Rampy: In both case studies, more congregational support is needed.

Al Carlsen: We need a critical mass of people. My son was involved with UU young adults, pulling together people from other congregations. It was actually called Critical Mass. When you involve more congregations, you're able to do more. Interestingly, this wasn't started by the congregations, it was bottom-up. The lesson might be not to go through social justice committees, but to get individuals involved.

Lavona: There were opportunity costs for me, personally. I am Board Chair and acting Executive Director, and I do the advocacy. We can't seem to move forward. We're busy, but we're not doing long-term work. People are frustrated because there's no Executive Director. But the good news is we haven't let go of everything.

Marti MacKenzie: I'm newer. When I joined the Board I understood that I'm responsible to get my people and congregation involved and to keep up the enthusiasm. It can be done.

Executive Director Succession Planning

Leah Rampy: What's the role of the Board? What's the role of the Executive Director? You're not as far along on the Executive Director search as you'd like to be, and part of the reason is that we haven't heard from Board members. The Board needs to take its responsibility for strategy and fiduciary responsibility.

Gary Magnuson: The R&R [Rights & Responsibilities] was never shared with me as a new Board member (by the previous Board member). I was told to get involved as I could. Now I understand better. We should have a goal to speak for 6000 UU's (National Capital Region). The Executive Director needs to

give us an exciting agenda to enthuse congregations. It should be a doable agenda, regional or national. Expectations are too low for Board members.

Nancy Sorden: PR can be done by the Board but the Executive Director provides tools and training. Tools include handouts and web pages. We need a more unified look.

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: The Board holds the Executive Director accountable.

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel: Whose responsibility is it to say no to opportunities?

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: The Executive Director and the Board chair have that responsibility. The Board needs to help.

Lean Rampy: This is a critical point. You need to protect your new Executive Director. At a high level that responsibility to say no applies to the Board. At a day-to-day level it applies to the Executive Director.

Ed Butterworth: When we say no, we can be clear that we don't have capacity. We don't want to squash ideas.

Lavona Grow: The previous Executive Director's style was to let a thousand flowers grow. We're trying to bring that together. Leah is helping us focus. Our denominational culture is to let people run with their energy. It will be really helpful to empower our Executive Director to say no.

Martha Ades: The problem is that people who don't know about UUSJ don't have a way to find out. That's the role of the Board. I think we've felt like as long as announcements get out, we've done enough.

Marti MacKenzie: Prioritizing is important. This includes being aware of the calendar.

Gary Magnuson: Is this the same problem that social justice committees have in our congregations?

[Everyone said yes!]

Larry Underwood: We're working on this at BRUU.

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel: There's a tension between UUSJ and congregations' social justice groups.

Kay Scott: Anyone can start a task force at Cedar Lane.

Ed Butterworth: Fifteen years ago people coming to UUSJ were ministers and lay ministers.

Lavona Grow: We did a governance training a year ago. We are trying to get away from a liaison Board to a fiduciary Board. There are four issue areas, so we have four programs. We're at a pivot point now. Are we leaning in or out? We've been leaning out, meaning that we spread the word about what others

are doing. We need to move to leaning in, actually doing the work. We used to have a larger Board. We need to look at why we have Board alternates. Do we need two kinds of Board?

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: We should divide up the work. The Board has to participate, and hold each other accountable.

Larry Underwood: For the Grandparents March, we had five people from BRUU go, and now they want to do more, but can't find the mechanism to communicate that. We could help UU groups across the country put together a delegation.

Armele Vilceus: Why does Lavona wear two hats? Are there Board committees?

Lavona Grow: We decided to not hire an Executive Director until we could raise more money, so that we could pay more and have more hours.

Armele Vilceus: Why didn't or doesn't someone other than Lavona be acting Executive Director.

Leah Rampy: What should the Executive Director do?

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: Fundraising.

Gary Magnuson: Where does the leadership come from? A talented Executive Director gets the Board to do more.

Martha Ades: The Executive Director should know what's going on in the UUA and national issues.

Nancy Sorden: The person should know Congress and be a coalition-builder. They should find resources and partnerships.

Lavona Grow: Also interfaith connections.

Ed Butterworth: There should be an Executive Director and a Deputy Director.

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel: Should the Executive Director be lead lobbyist and campaign director? The consensus in the Board surveys was that we need a manager.

Gary Magnuson: Who is the face of the organization?

Lavona Grow: The AAUW model is to have a lobby core briefing for volunteers, then the volunteers go to Congressional offices. The Executive Director doesn't go.

Gary Magnuson: The Executive Director does the follow up.

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel: Do we want a lobbyist? That kind of person can't necessarily run an organization.

Leah Rampy: The consensus is that an Executive Director is managing the process. We might want to leave it open because the new Executive Director will have opinions.

Lavona: There are Board committees. Most aren't functioning. The Program Committee and the Communications Committee are working well.

Pat Karlsen: Would policy governance work here?

Lavona: Sally Patterson (provided pro-bono technical assistance last spring; cousin of Bruce) has agreed to help with governance. There has been work on governance recently.

Discussion of By-laws Change

Lavona Grow: The by-laws require that the Executive Director be a Unitarian Universalist. Should we change that? We need to decide now.

Gary Magnuson: Board should weigh in on the Executive Director job description and the Board should be recruiting candidates.

Leah Rampy: The Executive Committee could form a committee on by-laws (note: a task group was formed last year but has not been active since April 2015; there is no standing governance or by-laws committee.). Is it the general sense of the Board to change the requirement that the Executive Director be a UU?

Armele Vilceus: A best practice is to have no more than three committees.

Lavona Grow: Having a non-UU Executive Director would require a by-laws change.

Martha Ades: An Executive Director who is not a UU might not be credible to our congregations. We need to weigh the pros and cons.

Marti MacKenzie: I agree with Martha.

Al Carlsen: By taking out that requirement it doesn't mean we won't have a UU Executive Director, just that we won't exclude any candidates.

Lavona Grow: Rev. Louise Green is ordained in the United Church of Christ. Dan Furmanky from Standing on the Side of Love is Jewish. The Friends Committee on National Legislation, a Quaker group, has a Catholic climate change lobbyist.

Leah Rampy: You could say that a UU is preferred.

Ed Butterworth: We should open it enough to broaden the field of candidates, but include that the person have an understanding of Unitarian Universalism.

Pat Karlsen: We have to think about how it's perceived.

Motion:

Larry Underwood: I move to strike the requirement from the by-laws.

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson: Second.

The motion passed unanimously.

Lavona Grow: The sense of the board is that it's a preference that the Executive Director is a Unitarian Universalist.

Jennifer Bevan-Dangel: Two new committees are needed: Development and Governance.

Lavona Grow: Pete Fontneau has agreed to be on Governance. We need to structure the officers. The Nominating Committee needs new members.

Nancy Sorden: I recommend that the Vice Chair moves to Chair and the Past Chair stays on the Board.

Ed Butterworth: We should consider a study group on the model AI shared of the Critical Mass group.

Lavona Grow: The Governance Committee will include Sally Patterson (advisory), Pete Fontneau, Bruce Griffin, and Nancy Sorden. They ideally will convene by mid-January.

The next Board meetings will probably be in February, and in late March (to meet the Executive Director candidate) .

Lavona Grow: We need a policies and procedures manual by the time the new Executive Director starts.

Ed Butterworth: The committees make the Executive Director job possible.

Gary Magnuson volunteered for the Nominating Committee.

Nancy Sorden volunteered for the Governance Task Group.

Board Chair updates

Lavona Grow: On immigration, it's the one year anniversary of DAPA (Deferred Action for Parents of Americans). We're drafting a letter to our members of Congress. There will be a deportation letter writing campaign and a walk from Arlington to the White House. Alert your immigration people.

Leah Rampy: The Executive Director will want to know what kind of support your Board of Directors offers. You need a strategy for the interim period and for supporting the Executive Director.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Sarah Masters.

UUSJ Treasurer's Report as of September 30, 2015

Cash on Hand (Current Assets):

Our cash on hand was \$44,725 on June 30, 2015 at the end of FY2014-2015. □ At the end of September 2015 our cash on hand totaled \$60,444 (\$11,662 in checking and \$48,782 in money market).

Current Situation vs. Budget Projections:

The 2015-16 budget set annual income and expenses at a level of \$66,709, substantially more than the previous year's budget of 35,634. The following notes explained the increased income and expenses: 1) Assumed 25 new members. 2) Assumed UU Funding program matches 5k collected and added to the 5K raised from donor appeals (this was achieved). 3) Added \$18,200 to increase Executive Director's hours to 20 hours per week. 4) Added \$750 for program expenses. 5) Added 10k for Consultant services called for in UU Funding grant proposal.

Budgeted amounts are spread evenly by month across the year, so significant receipts or expenditures in a single month skew budget to actual comparisons. Compared to our budget, our income is \$10,065 over (this includes \$5,000 in unspent UUA grant funds carried over from the previous year and thus not included in this year's budget, \$5,765 of Faithify funds and \$5,000 in UUA matching funds). Our expenses are \$8,609 under (about \$7,737 budgeted for an Executive Director has not been used to-date and \$500 of the amount budgeted for Consulting services was not used). Note: Nine twelfths (\$4,703) of an annual check from CFC last FY was restricted (did not show as income) and then recognized in July 2015 to smooth income across fiscal years – a comparable CFC amount was treated the same way last year.

Current Situation vs. the Previous Fiscal Year at this point:

□ Total Liabilities and Equity (includes SJ Grant Fund) at this point last year totaled \$31,941 versus \$60,732 this year. We have \$3,146 on the books for the SJ Grant Fund versus \$4,136 this time last year, reflecting two \$500 grants given last year.

Membership Renewal and CFC income from members compared to last Fiscal Year:

□ Total individual memberships this Fiscal Year is \$200 as of the date of financials used for this report vs \$120 same time last year. This membership income figure is misleading since it does not include \$985 of individual contributions to a congregation's Fair Share and \$5,029 of individual contributions through CFC (both of these figures together totaled \$6,327 this time last year). Note: Unless it is specified otherwise (e.g., a note saying part or all of a check is to be applied to a particular Church's Fair Share), all of an amount received above the \$40 membership will be considered an individual donation to UUSJ.

Fair Share Contributions:

Total of Fair Share contributions from congregations was \$4,157 as of the date of the financials, which is \$4,843 under this year's aspirational budget (since the budget for Fair Share was \$36,000 for this fiscal year, the budget-to-date increments by \$3,000 each month). **The new mission of UUSJ requires more hours of an Executive Director which will require motivating more congregations and individuals to give more, as well as increasing**

individual memberships. To the extent possible, additional funding resources will be sought.

UUSJ acknowledges the work of Linda Collyer, a volunteer CPA who does our accounting, including our monthly financial statements, and files our tax paperwork, on a pro-bono basis. The jobs of the Treasurer, the Executive Committee, and the board would all be much more difficult without Linda's efforts. □

Submitted by John Gubbings, UUSJ Treasurer, on October 9, 2015.