



Final Minutes - UUSJ Board Meeting

April 7, 2018

UU Congregation of Rockville

Attendance:

Board Members Present:

Martha Ades, at large, UU Congregation of Fairfax
Peter Bishop, member, Washington ethical Society
Al Carlson, member, Reston UU
Bob Denniston, at large, Board Chair
Lavona Grow, at large, Arlington UU
John Gubbings, member, Cedar Lane UU
Osk Honeycutt, alternate, Bull Run UU
Pat Karlsen, at large, Cedar Lane UU
Ed Kringer, member, Accotink UU
Bob McCarthy, alternate, UU Congregation of Fairfax
Sean McCarthy, member, Rockville UU
Mike McCord, at large, Treasurer
Rev. Karen Scrivo, alternate, Goodloe Memorial UU Congregation
David Strauss, alternate, Rockville UU
Larry Underwood, member, Bull Run UU
Adam Wasserman, member, UU Congregation of Fairfax

Board Members Absent:

Jane D'Ambrogio, member, Towson UU Church
Carmelita Carter-Sykes, alternate, Paint Branch UU Church
Frank Corsoro, alternate, UU Church of Arlington
Linda Doyle, member, Mount Vernon Unitarian Church
Jana Kirkman, alternate, River Road UU Congregation
Jack Lebowitz, member, River Road UU Congregation
Roger McIntire, member, UU Congregation of Columbia
Martha Neuman, alternate, All Souls Church, Unitarian
Rachel Perry, member, Davies Memorial UU Church
Armele Vilceus, member, All Souls Church, Unitarian

Staff Present:

Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director
Sarah Masters, Consultant

Guests Present:

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Mt. Vernon UU
Gary Magnuson, Frederick UU

Meeting Notes

Bob Denniston opened the meeting at 2:05pm. Sean McCarthy welcomed all to Rockville. John Gubbings provided an opening reading. The group read the UUSJ Board Covenant and then all introduced themselves. A 5-minute one-on-one sharing followed personal introduction of new members..

A quorum was determined to be present and minutes from the December 9, 2017 meeting were approved.

John Gubbings moved to accept the nomination of Mike McCord as new treasurer. Peter Bishop seconded. Unanimously approved.

Treasurer's Report:

Mike McCord presented the Treasurer's report that shows budgeted expenses as about the same as actuals for 2016/17. As budgeted, we are drawing down our reserve to pay salaries which consume almost all of our non-grant income. Our net income position is better than forecast but is only temporary until all grant funds are spent. See attached report for details.

Our ongoing issue is how to cover salaries with our actual expenses being a little behind because we haven't paid an administrative assistant (AA) after Elizabeth left at the end of January.

Fair Share Discussion:

Discussion followed about the Fair Share contributions. If donations specifically designate it an individual contribution monies can be included in a congregation's fair share. Other contributions are listed along with the congregation donations but not counted toward the fair share. The first \$40 of any individual contribution goes to membership. Different churches have different practices so donations are not consistent. Mike McCord explained that budget-wise we have to look at all contributions as income. Peter Bishop pointed out that the Washington Ethical Society's fair share contributions are all in-kind for use of their facility and services (for which we are most thankful).

It is noted that there is a correlation in amounts contributed to Fair Share and distance from core DC, in most cases. But Bob pointed out that some of the smaller congregations do a better job of meeting their fair share. Peter Bishop would like us to do some focus on individual member contributions. Gary Magnuson thinks an outreach effort might work well by using existing members. Osk Honeycutt suggested building a buddy relationship between like congregations. David Strauss reminded us to keep the senior ministers in the loop which should be a Bob and Pablo role. Lavona Grow reminded us that we have previously met with ministers along with Board reps and SJ leaders to talk about what is strategic for each congregation. Pablo pointed out it is harder for the minister or financial team to cut the UUSJ funding if there is a strong team supporting UUSJ at the congregation.

Gary Magnuson asked about outreach efforts to get lower-contributing contributions to increase their donations. Pablo DeJesús agreed we need more outreach to these congregations but we need to pitch it to them with UUSJ's value-add. We now have a year's worth of valuable Advocacy Corps work to use as marketing. Gary Magnuson believes congregations are more in tune now that we have Trump as a catalyst. A suggested tag would be "If your congregation wants to get involved with Federal Issues, this is it!" We need to build on the enthusiasm contained in the Advocacy Corps.

AA position:

UUSJ defined the position and recruited candidates. But the final selection committee could not decide on a candidate and after looking at the budget the hiring of an AA is being rethought. Members of the Core Team are taking up the slack by doing most of the tasks that the AA is responsible for. But this use of volunteers is not sustainable. Some tasks will need to be hired out even without an AA. Elizabeth has already agreed to create an ad for the GA program.

Fundraising:

Sean McCarthy asked if we can get congregations involved with us nationally to provide some kind of fair share. Bob explained that we plan to do a Faithify campaign this Spring to broaden our appeal outside our region, but Sean pointed out we also need some ongoing support in addition to this one-time appeal. Lavona explained she has been working with Susan Leslie at the UUA but that the UUA runs a culture of scarcity and therefore we shouldn't expect any funding from the UUA. Susan does have some discretionary funds that should allow us to get a volunteer stipend for some work being done now and in the future. We have been doing some work supporting UUA and UUSC but the likelihood that they will help fund us at any significant level is not good. Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson believes we need to put more pressure on them. Pablo DeJesús explained that our bylaws allow us to have affiliate congregations which we can include at the national level. David Strauss suggested we ask for some dollar amount and say in exchange we will give you access and help with local visits. Lavona Grow believes we can get known with other congregations by doing some work for them so that they see the value we add to their efforts.

Bob Denniston, David Strauss, Peter Bishop and Pablo DeJesús will be working on development plans. Gary Magnuson may join them. Pablo presented statistics analyzing the click-through results of the end of year appeals. Our open rate on eNews was reasonable so maybe we need more word-of-mouth buzz. Our central challenge is how to get more people to recognize who we are. Ed Kringer pointed out that people receiving eNews may just be putting money in the plate after our appeal instead of making direct donations. Pablo agreed we need to work on a church-by-church basis. Osk Honeycutt says there really isn't any knowledge of UUSJ in her sphere and that we need more social media action. Pablo reported a good response to tweets from the March for Our Lives. Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson requested some help for the Communication Committee. But we still need to determine how to translate social media involvement into donations.

Karen Scrivo suggested we look at UU Society for Community Ministers as another avenue for support. Martha Ades suggested we look at Church of the Larger Fellowship for members. Pablo suggested that since we have several board members with relevant experience, it might be interesting to have a webinar or session led by UUs who work(ed) in the military or related industries to talk about the dynamics and challenges there are to being a UU affiliated with the military.

Budget:

Option A of the budget was presented which shows a deficit and includes hiring an AA in September. Option B, the austere budget, had been discussed by the Core Team but not presented because it was

felt an AA was needed. Mike explained that grants are not an issue with our budget because grant income and expenses zero out because grant funds are dedicated. Another option was to present a balanced budget which would not allow us to hire an AA. Mike recommends we maintain two months equivalent of expenses as a reserve. John said we need more than 2 months reserve. Ideally we could get some grants that would include some money for salaries. At the current rate we will be out of money late in the 2018-2019 year. Questions were asked about line 5243 – Consulting which is for Sarah’s time when needed and line 5242 Contact Management which is our communication software.

Discussion Points:

- Sean suggested looking for grants that include overhead. Lavona says most of our grants don’t have that provision. Gary would like to see a higher option budget that would push us to accomplish greater things.
- Peter Bishop also wants an aspirational budget that goes beyond just the level of sustainability.
- Ed pointed out that our grant was our aspiration on this current budget. Larry believes it is about how we present it – we need to say we can do more with an AA.
- Karen reported that people in her congregation are hungry to do something tangible.
- Mike pointed out that our budget is about what it was 5 years ago when he was last with UUSJ. He believes the Board could set what we should do above the core costs that this budget covers.
- Bob provided some historical background on staffing levels. When Rev. Terry Ellen served as executive director he voluntarily reduced his time to 10 hours/week to provide more hours for Rev. Cyn Snaveley when her role changed from administrative assistant to administrator, at a higher hourly rate. Lavona served as unpaid volunteer executive director for two years. Then Pablo was hired at 20 hours per week in July 2016.
- David believes the question is do we have something we can sell – yes; do we have a way to do that sale – no. We need to develop methods to make this aspiration happen.
- Sean says we have an existing product but need a big fundraiser (for raising \$ and raising profile) with snacks and with an invited speaker. We could charge for attendance with a super sponsor level giving more. Maybe a speaker from CASA or Congressman Raskin.
- Lavona said the last budget was supposed to be aspirational but it didn’t bring in more funds. The reality is we need core functionality support. We can only spend up to 20% of our budget for lobbying and keep our non-profit status; we are nowhere near the threshold at this point.
- Ideas for tags – “It will allow us to do more Advocacy,” “Imagine Tuesday on Capitol Hill”
- The Friends group, FCNL, is a model we need to aspire to. They have been doing this work for 70 years and early on their Executive Director travelled nationally to gather support.

Stock Donations:

Peter Bishop moved and Larry Underwood seconded to accept the stock donation policy. See attached. Sean McCarthy volunteered to help with building the correct procedures. We need to get this new policy announced so that the people who have showed interest can donate.

Capacity Building:

As a followup to the march 17th Social Justice Leaders’ Roundtable, Martha Ades sought brainstorming for what UUSJ can do for congregations to build our support. Pat Karlsen said we need to get the youth involved in some project. Bob suggested continuing or perhaps expanding on the webinars on social justice issues we have been doing with UUJEC. John says we need to get different people involved from

congregations other than just the reliables. Cedar Lane is interested in ways to do advocacy to get families involved. Lavona mentioned the family lobby day done with Cedar Lane UU last April. Frederick also is looking for ways to get youth involved. Karen has experience in religious education and suggests we take what we have and make it family friendly and involve religious educators. Perhaps learning how to be effective in social justice work or lobbying 101. We could look for grants with the Religious Educators' group. Lavona says our current grant has some ability to include this including the three-hour training program that UUSJ currently has. Some religious educators might be able to take time to do some training or letter writing. Martha shared that her congregation wrote some curriculum for things they are doing which might be a possible avenue for a Faithify campaign.

There will be a membership drive this Spring followed by a survey for priority issues. The intent of the survey is to determine member interest for specific issues so that a top three priority issues can be determined for the next two years. The survey will be sent to all individual members and Board members.

Advocacy Report:

Lavona Grow reported on activity of the Advocacy Corps and reflected that we need to give information back to churches about who is participating in the Advocacy Corps. The one-year anniversary of the Advocacy Corps was celebrated in February. There is a possibility of having an annual UU advocacy day. We also could think of having a conference modeled on the conference of last year we co-sponsored with UUJEC. Once again this year we are working with UUMFE to have letter writing campaign during climate justice month with delivery to the Hill planned for May 8. We hope that it will branch out to other congregations using a pilot program being developed. We are piloting with the Des Moines congregation. Peter Bishop reported that a congregational outreach task force provided information on which senate and congressional districts might be flippable so that we could target those congregations as part of strategic outreach during Climate Justice Month and beyond. Lavona Grow reported we are moving forward with a data collection pilot program for which we have been given a bid by a local group. She also said we will apply for a Get Out the Vote grant as we did in 2016.

Witnessing:

Pablo DeJesús reported that we had good participation in our witnessing efforts at the March for Our Lives and again at the Act Now event. The challenge has been to get the congregations to gather with us even when they are participating anyway. We gathered only 58 names at the March for Our Lives event and did get some good tweets posted. We should get the bus lists from congregations who sent buses. (Frederick? Baltimore, Fairfax?) Maybe we should also have T-shirts to identify us. It was agreed we should find someone to be a coordinator for witness events. Martha suggested we include witnessing on the priority issue survey.

Announcements:

- EEI Task Force webinar, April 15, 7pm Zoom – an Oxfam American representative will talk about global inequality.
- UUSJ will have a poster session at GA. UUSJ will need volunteers to help support that effort. UUSJ has placed an ad in the GA Program.
- Contact Pablo to get him to visit your congregation or just to talk about how to work the situation at your individual congregation.

- UUSJ needs volunteers for a Nominating Committee, who need to be elected. Contact Pablo to be involved.

Next meetings:

June 2, Virginia TBD – possible to have a speaker

Meeting adjourned, 5:05pm

Submitted by Martha Ades, Board Secretary

Attachments:

1. UUSJ Treasurer's report through March 31, 2018 (2018-05-30 April 7 Board Meeting Final Minutes Attachment1)
2. UUSJ Financials (2018-05-30 April 7 Board Meeting Final Minutes Attachment2)
3. Acceptance of Donated Stock/Marketable Securities (2018-05-30 April 7 Board Meeting Final Minutes Attachment3)
4. End of Year Click-through Report - Memo (2018-05-30 April 7 Board Meeting Final Minutes Attachment4a)
5. End of Year Click-through Report - Spreadsheet (2018-05-30 April 7 Board Meeting Final Minutes Attachment4b)