

Final – UUSJ BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 15, 2019

UU Congregation of Rockville

Members Present

Martha Ades, at large, Secretary
Pat Behenna, member, Paint Branch UU Church
Peter Bishop, member, Washington Ethical Soc.
Carmelita Carter-Sykes, alternate, Paint Branch UU
Suzan Chastain, alternate, UU Church Arlington
Bob Denniston, at large, Board Chair
Terry Grogan, alternate, Reston UU
Lavona Grow, at large, UU Church Arlington
John Gubbings, member, Cedar Lane UU
Charlotte Jones-Carroll, at large, River Road UU
Emily Koechlin, member, All Souls Church, Unitarian
Jack Lebowitz, member, River Road UU
Marti MacKenzie, member, Towson UU
Gary Magnuson, member, Frederick UU
Bob McCarthy, member, UU Congr of Fairfax
Sean McCarthy, member, UU Congr of Rockville
Mike McCord, at large, Treasurer
Betsy Osterman, alternate, UU Congr of Columbia
John Peterson, member, Accotink UU Church
David Strauss, at large (as of 7/1/19), Rockville UU
Larry Underwood, member, Bull Run UU

Staff Present

Pablo DeJesús, Executive Director
Sara Abdelkhalek, Advocacy Consultant

Guests Present

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Webmaster, Mt. Vernon UU
Doris Marlin, All Souls Church, Unitarian

Action Items:

- Martha Ades to add appendix documents to March meeting minutes
- Pablo DeJesús to update UUSJ calendar for September conference and October Gala
- Board members to refer people to be part of UUSJ's issue groups
- Future Board meeting to address organization and authority line for task groups
- Pablo to add Immigration film Festival to UUSJ calendar
- Bob to formalize formation of Board Committees
 - Form SCCC review committee – Larry Underwood, Jack Lebowitz, Martie Mackensie, Carmelita Carter-Sykes

- Form membership committee – John Peterson
- Bob to schedule regular Board meeting and Strategic Planning meeting to not conflict
- Add Terry Grogan to Awards Review Committee
- Development committee to produce best practices for getting donations

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Bob Denniston at 1:35pm. Opening words were provided by Rev. Rebekah Savage from Rockville UU. She is working on her PhD and referred us to a book titled “Emergent Strategy” by Adrienne Maree Brown for its focus on environmental justice and spiritual practices.

Introductions were made around the table. New members introduced were Pat Behenna, Paint Branch UU, Suzan Chastain, UU Church of Arlington, Charlotte Jones-Carroll, River Road UU, Emily Koechlin, All Souls Church Unitarian, Sean McCarthy, UU Congregation of Rockville, John Peterson, Accotink UU. Other new board members not present are Liz Echols, Davies Memorial UU and David Shilton, UU Church of Arlington. The Board Covenant was read aloud by those in attendance. A quorum was reported with 12 congregations and 4 at large members represented. Twenty-five people total attended.

The **minutes** from the March 9 meeting were discussed. Martha Ades reported that two addenda will be added to last meeting’s agenda. The first will be Anna Rhee’s report. The second will be the proposal presented to the Board by Evan Junker of Reach Our Goals. After the Board asked the Core Group, at the March 9 Board meeting, to further review the proposal, a request for comment was sent to the Core Group and to those who had expressed interest in being on the “going national” group. After receiving positive comments, on April 3 the Executive Committee voted to approve the proposal and the first Strategic planning meeting was held on June 1. It was attended by 18 people.

Sean McCarthy pointed out that only the Executive Committee can vote on actions between the Board meetings and that the minutes of the Executive Committee actions held at the Core Team meetings should be made available to the Board Members. Bob Denniston explained that the Core Team is an expanded Executive Committee with people added for insights into various topics.

MOTION: Lavona Grow moved to accept the minutes with two addendums added. Peter Bishop seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Gala – Martha Ades explained the plans for the Awards Gala that will be held on Sunday, October 6 at Arlington UU. The Gala/Awards team selected 10 award categories which have been published to ministers, social justice leaders and Board members. Only one award per person will be given. Deadline for nomination will be August 26 with awards being announced the first week of September. There was discussion about the funds raised being used as general fundraising monies. The proposed 2019-2020 budget includes a \$2000 Gala income line item. It is suggested that UUSJ start advertising the awards and gala on its webpages now. Another suggestion is to think of ways to buy sponsorship for the event as a way of fundraising. Terry Grogan volunteered to help with the Awards reviews.

Treasurer’s Report (report attached) – Mike McCord presented the general financial situation, noting that the UUSJ budget has gone from about \$50,000 to \$90,000 in three years. Income is up, primarily

due to the December Rep. Raskin event. Our expenses are lower due to no expenditures for an administrative assistant. The grant review of the current grant shows about \$1600 left with one month to go. The new grant will be included in the upcoming budget. Mike said we are not self-sustaining on advocacy as we get free accounting and no expense for facilities. We have some flexibility but don't have a clear plan for funding national action with current funding. Pablo DeJesús pointed out that when we voted to go national we planned to build on success of advocacy and then lean into support for fundraising.

Discussion of the **Congregation Donation Report** shows that there is a disconnect between scheduling of funds donated versus the UUSJ budgeting cycle. Goodloe made a large bequest as they dissolve their congregation. Pablo DeJesús mentioned that they might want to build an affiliation with the Goodloe Learning organization. Gary Magnuson reported that the Development Committee looks at the congregation donations as the bedrock of our financials. Bob Denniston asked the Development Committee to come back with some best practices for getting donations. Peter Bishop supported the interest in going outside our region to get funds and how to get individual members outside our region.

Pablo DeJesús encouraged us to talk up UUSJ when we visit UU churches while traveling. Lavona Grow gave an example of a member who took WHWN bookmarks to hand out at churches she visited across the country.

During a discussion of membership and how to get more members and donations from outside DMV groups, Mike McCord shared the percentage of our income from various sources – congregations 36%, online donations via Democracy engine 27%, large donations 13%, personal checks 12%, Combined Federal Campaign 10%, other checks 1%.

Lavona Grow reported on activity coming up at **General Assembly**. UUSJ will share a table with UUJEC. Also UUSJ will hold a poster session on WHWN. People interested in WHWN become part of our pool of contacts but don't necessarily lead to memberships at the moment of engagement. Also the strategic consultant, Evan Junker, will hold an appreciative inquiry session for us addressing advocacy.

Lavona Grow announced that we were successful in obtaining a new **UUSJ grant** which will start on July 1, 2019. The amount was \$12,000 base funds with \$4,000 challenge amount if we raise matching funds. The grant assumes we will put \$6,000 of our own money into the grant programs. The \$4,000 match is for growing organization and getting new donors/funders, with importance of looking outside our area. The grant will support advocacy visits to the hill, the WHWN campaign and a new storytelling pilot program.

UUSJ could apply for future UUSJ grants but they would have to cover different work. There are some foundations (Mott Foundation, for example) that might be possibilities. Ginger Essink has volunteered to look into grants for us.

The **Development Committee** presented a report of its actions. David Strauss explained that government agencies are prohibited from giving religious group grants and many private foundations have similar rules. It is hoped that a Virginia-based event similar to the political speaker we had in December in Maryland will bring in similar revenue (about \$8,000). Speakers were not available for the

Fall so the event will be scheduled for 2020. A group of volunteers helped send out postal fundraising letters which has already shown some results. Peter Bishop and Pablo DeJesús will be contacting large donor prospects in July. Gary Magnuson presented a check to UUSJ for \$730 from UU Frederick as their special congregation donation to support our work. Many other congregations have not fulfilled their give-or-get obligation. Gary offers his methods and ideas to other Board members to get their congregations to donate for the give-or-get program. The Development Committee will work on a presentation on possible membership levels.

Membership ideas included;

- Have different levels of membership with different rewards/acknowledgments for each – David Strauss
- Have different levels of prices for Gala tickets – David Strauss
- Talk about importance of regional UU groups like ours to your congregation – Bob McCarthy
- Need to be more inclusive; levels sound elitist and it sounds like some will not count as much as other – Carmelita Carter-Sykes
- Look at national picture to see how groups are getting by with little amounts; Recognize that all have different abilities to give – Peter Bishop
- Ask those who can to give more – John Peterson

The **2019-2020 Budget** was presented by Mike McCord. This budget is more realistic than aspirational as last year's was. Mike answered the question that yes UUSJ is able to pay an administrative assistant this year but wondered if our price point gets us what we need. Gary Magnuson would like to see a budget that allocated what UUSJ is budgeting and spending for going national. Mike explained that our budget is cost-based, not mission based, as that works best with Quick Books. Sean McCarthy and Peter Bishop both supported the idea of a 1-page alternative budget that tracks going-national efforts. Charlotte noted that a program budget would be good but going national was not really a program.

MOTION: Gary Magnuson moved to have the Treasurer prepare an alternative mission-based budget for 2019-2020. Peter bishop seconded. Discussion showed interest in doing no harm to the accounting, to be within grant requirements and to support Combined Federal Campaign while keeping the bookkeeper doing the same cost-based accounting. Motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Peter Bishop moved to accept the budget as proposed. Martha Ades seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The **Nominating Committee** (Sean McCarthy, Marti Mackenzie, Larry Underwood) presented the names for officers for the coming year. The nominations for 2-year terms are Bob Denniston, Chair, and Charlotte Jones-Carroll, secretary. Mike will stay on as Treasurer until the Fall but a replacement is needed for him. The vice-chair is still vacant. The committee has asked the board to hold a future bylaws discussion on what happens when people become officers and leave their congregation responsibilities.

MOTION: Sean McCarthy moved to accept the slate as presented for Chair and Secretary. Peter Bishop seconded. Lavona Grow asked if the committee looked for people outside of the DMV – they did not. It

was mentioned that candidates do not have to be on the Board to be nominated. Motion passed unanimously.

Pablo DeJesús explained our co-sponsoring efforts for the **September conference** with UUs for a Just Economic Community (UUJEC), All Souls Church Unitarian, UUMinistry for Earth (UUMFE) – titled Building a Movement for a Green New Deal - Advocacy Conference on Environmental Justice, Class and Race. The first day will be speakers at All souls. The second day is policy day and the third day is an advocacy day on the hill. There was a question about student rates and if there is a task force set up yet. Both items will be discussed with the organizing group. Dates will be put on the UUSJ calendar. Lavona Grow reported on work of the **Advocacy Corps**. Each eNews contains information about the monthly trips to Capitol Hill. UUSJ has about 43 people in the Advocacy Corps pool with about 18-26 going on any one day to Capitol Hill. For earth month (April) 865 letters were delivered in May to 23-26 senators and Congress members covering 17 states. The June issue was the cost of health care, with focus on prescription drug costs, “surprise” medical bills, and medical bankruptcy. More information is on the “Advocacy” tab of the UUSJ website. It is important for UUSJ to build partnerships with congregations across the nation and to know that they will be consistent in supporting UUSJ and help target specific legislators. There may need to be a revision of the Advocacy Oversight Committee role to cover content areas not part of the priority issues. The WHWN tool kit is being revised. Lavona thanked Doris Marlin for blogging and tweeting during Advocacy Days.

Doris Marlin made a presentation asking the Board to support the **Strengthen Local Climate Commitments (SLCC) campaign** which encourages people to take on climate commitments within their own communities. A task force was set up to determine which level of support might be appropriate for UUSJ. Task group members are Jack Lebowitz, Marti Mackenzie, Carmelita Carter-Sykes, and Larry Underwood.

Open Discussion:

- David Strauss recommends UUSJ develop a workshop for GA next year.
- Jack Lebowitz mentioned that Bloomberg has set aside funds for clean energy grants – perhaps there is a possible grant.
- Charlotte Jones-Carroll mentioned the migration Film Festival which was helped initially by UUSJ will be held this year September 13-14 on the George Washington University campus.
- John Peterson asked if the Development Committee looked into membership on the board for congregations nationwide. Answer – no. Gary Magnuson said the committee had started to look at different membership plans. A membership committee needs to be established to review this. John Peterson and Gary Magnuson volunteered to help establish a committee.
- Pablo DeJesús announced the work trying to get involved with the iConsultancy Project of students/staff at the University of Maryland where UUSJ could get help utilizing the full

capabilities of Salsa, our constituent relationship manager. More conversation needs to happen to see if this is a viable option for helping UUSJ.

Next Board meeting is scheduled for September 21, but date will be reviewed based on Strategic Planning meetings. Bob Denniston read a closing reading.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:05pm.

Submitted by Martha Ades, Secretary