

UUSJ BOARD MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 21, 2019 VIA ZOOM

For participation, see attached table.

Action Items:

1. Pablo: publicize AA job description
2. Everyone: sign into Reach Our Goals (Evan Junker's email link) to take online course
3. Everyone: send thoughts on SJ awards criteria to Martha Ades
4. Content Groups: consider proposing budget for dues if UUSJ to join networks

Motions approved:

1. June 2019 Minutes as revised
2. John Gubbings as interim treasurer
3. Membership Committee established (Peterson, Magnuson and one more tbd)

The zoom meeting was opened by Chair Bob Denniston at 10: 00 a.m. with a quote from Stephen Hawking on climate change.

A quorum was established with 10 congregations (plus one more by proxy) and five at-large members present, along with one alternate, one observer and the Executive Director. At one point, Evan Junker, consultant for strategic planning, joined as a guest.

Motion: Minutes from the June 15 board meeting which had been revised to incorporate online suggestions, were further revised to incorporate the inclusion of reference to the \$8000 earnings from the December 2018 Congressman Raskin event, and then approved as revised. Secretary Charlotte Jones-Carroll also noted that, as requested at the June meeting, the Core Group meeting minutes for July, August and September were shared with the full board. The Chair indicated there were no decisions taken in those meetings requiring board-level ratification.

Motion: Given the departure of Treasurer Mike McCord, the Chair announced that John Gubbings has agreed to serve as interim Treasurer. This was endorsed by the board.

Treasurer's Report: Although Mike McCord was not present, he had sent extensive information and tables as his final report, both for the past fiscal year (which ended June 30 after the last board meeting) and for the months of July and August, which form part of this meeting's record.

- A discussion of the "fair share" contributions from congregations focused on one which had had difficulty in making the fair share (owing, as Emily Koechlin explained, to the lack of a major tenant until recently, creating financial tightness) and others who had contributed at the established level but might be facing either tightness in the coming year or growing membership.

- Gary Magnuson asked how long the rate of \$4.75/congregational member had been in effect, leading to a discussion of the timing of UUA's determination of membership size (February) versus when UUSJ letters go out indicating the fair share amount (November-December).
- Charlotte queried about the status of Goodloe Memorial UU, which had closed, and made a generous donation to UUSJ, as its UUSJ delegate was still participating in the board meeting. With regard to Goodloe's board member, this position would disappear, but the person filling the board position could be proposed at a future board meeting as an at-large member, if appropriate.
- Pablo and Bob reminded that the bylaws allow that the fair share be determined annually, and that there are also individuals' contributions and most importantly, the newly-formed membership committee will feed into the strategic planning process to consider how board composition might need to change, in part as UUSJ goes national.
- After further discussion of the extent the board and development committee needed to get involved in the fair share determination, Bob and Pablo proposed continuing with the existing practices for the time being, pending completion of strategic planning and membership committee review and recommendations. No objections were made.

Administrative Assistant position: In response to a query, Bob reported that the job description for the AA position had been under review since June, some changes proposed and accepted, and now he considered it ready for Pablo to publicize.

- Pablo indicated he would do that the week of September 23, both to all board members and in idealist.org.
- Sean McCarthy suggested this also be circulated by Megan Foley to the region-wide cluster group, as other congregations were doing with their vacancies. This was agreed, with the caveat per Lavona Grow that the AA needed to be a local person, while the cluster's reach is wider; publicity should be clear on this.

Policy decision on UUSJ joining as member with dues required: Charlotte as convener of the immigration task group had put forward an example of a partner (Detention Watch Network) which UUSJ might join, which would involve modest annual dues, in our case of \$100. There was not a budget line item for this.

- Ensuing discussion led to the conclusion that springtime, when the next year's budget is prepared, is the appropriate time for allocating funds to this, that such funds would apply to all program content groups, and between now and then, any crucial membership decisions could be considered on a case by case basis. Such a line item might also cover conference participation fees.
- The current practices and policies related to events sponsorship could be amended if needed to cover membership dues and conference fees.
- It is critical to keep in mind that the UUSJ name is key.
- Content groups should propose joining groups if and when appropriate, for board consideration.

Gala update: Martha Ades summarized status: only two weeks to go, and only 44 people registered, so board members were urged to sell tickets on Sundays, making sure Martha had names from checks so she could register them online.

- A volunteer photographer and caterer had been contracted, but a bartender was needed, along with help at registration (Dave Strauss and Emily Koechlin offered). Awardees need to register, but each is allowed one free entry.
- The venue (UUC Arlington) has competing activities elsewhere on 10/6 so fewer than usual venue-based participants are expected compared to past galas.
- Discussion about promoting where no awardees were coming as well as where nominations had been made but no awardees declared yielded some thoughts about future galas, where for instance all nominees would be invited and mentioned, and awardees only announced at the gala.
- Selection criteria are being reviewed, Martha said, so anyone with thoughts on such could email her.

Climate Change Conference report: Though this was a UUJEC/UUSJ effort (with UUMFE supporting and UUSC sending funds), it had come down to a huge task for UUSJ, Lavona and Pablo in particular.

- The first day (organized by Rob Keithan and Doris Marlin of All Souls and UUMFE) saw 57 participants listening to multiple speakers emphasizing the impact of climate change on front-line communities. Days 2-3 were, Lavona noted, almost like a different conference; little intersection between these days and the first was evident.
- With 50 registered for all three days, Day 2 was spent training people how to lobby (supported by IIC and FCNL) and getting people into the ten teams.
- On Day 3, with 24 scheduled meetings and more drop-ins, 53 offices were visited by the teams which represented 14 states. Over 800 advocacy letters were delivered (and more delivered Wednesday and Friday).
- Organizing and logging these was very time consuming. As not all team reports were in yet, Lavona could not give a final summary but she had recommendations for any future efforts like this:
 - (i) should UUSJ do more and how? Discussion needed.
 - (ii) go with fewer partners and be clear up front about expected help and/or funding,
 - (iii) Plan on more administrative staff and a program committee focus on logistics next time, if there is one.
 - (iv) consider not logging in all the letters.
- A full debrief is planned for October 10.
- Pablo noted that the disconnect with partners had to do probably with the big climate strike a few days after the conference, a serious distraction for partners.
- A number of board members thought this was an energizing effort and a learning experience.
- Lavona will go to the UN in NYC for the Climate Emergency faith-based discussions with UN groups week of Sept 23. Aly Tharp (UUMFE), Rev. Susannah Tuttle (IPL board

member and North Carolina IPL director), along with UUSC staff Salote Sogo (besides UUSC head M. C. Morn and Rachel Freed, program director) were also included. This shows that the UUSJ Advocacy program goes beyond just Hill visits to greater depth of advocacy.

Strategic Planning: Evan Junker, Reach Our Goal, consultant, joined the zoom meeting for this part. He reviewed the strategic effort so far (two major meetings of the board), mainly on inputs, values and strategic partnerships.

- Groups had been set up to refine values, to write up a covenant and (for longer term) governance.
- Pablo should be setting up meetings between these groups and Evan in the near future, so they can produce reports before the next session in January.
- Evan noted that UUSJ board members are probably still in the “denial/loss” stage of the change roller coaster, but this was all predictable.
- All board members were encouraged again to sign up for the online course (free) that Evan’s organization was providing and indicated that any calls to him re queries or planning are part of the contract.
- Evan can be scheduled online at: (<https://reachourgoals.com/contact/contact-evan>). Evan is trying to get permission to use a case study from another organization.

Advocacy: Lavona reported an updated flyer was on UUSJ website for use by congregations. Pablo should send the ½ page handout too.

- Advocacy Corps went out in July on immigration (detention centers and funding of enforcement), August had an AC day on advancing economic and climate justice without any WHWN letters, September was about Climate Change, with lots of letters.
- The new content group on Democracy will have its third meeting in October.
- Sen. Udall has sought out interfaith groups for a significant effort on democracy before 2020 election (Rep. Sarbanes D-MD could also be a possible partner on this). One issue is the policy/practice of signing onto bills (per request from Hawaii Senator whose staff contacted UUSJ to sign onto one).
- Sen. Booker (NJ) has also contacted UUSJ to sign onto a bill regarding climate stewardship awards.
- Lavona explained in response to a query that signing onto a bill is similar to signing on to an interfaith letter. We need a written policy. Pablo reminded board of UUSJ’s two identities, one is as a faith group, another trying to ally with impacted people. We need to think through all the parameters and take care about partisan partners, or secular ones. Time growing short, this issue will have to be referred to Advocacy Oversight committee, after looking into guidelines of our partners like FNCL on this matter.
- Lavona also noted that Gary Magnuson has agreed to help consider more systematic tracking of follow-up to AC visits.

Motion re Membership Committee: This is a new committee, not one of the standing committees authorized in by-laws. The board needs to approve its establishment to look into matters related to our strategic direction (regional vs national, individual vs congregation, etc).

- John Peterson and Gary Magnuson have agreed to be on it and are working on this already. A third person is needed.
- The motion to establish was approved.
- Nominating Committee help was sought with identifying the third person.

Development Committee: David Strauss gave highlights.

- The direct mail campaign of last spring produce around \$3000 net, a 5.5% response rate. Future ones are planned. (See the Executive Director's report)
- Also person to person calls (Pablo and Peter Bishop) to larger donors (over \$500).
- David hoped the Northern Virginia event with a featured speaker similar to the Congressman Raskin gathering last December would help bring in funds.
- The "Give or Get" campaign among board members has had a very low response rate. The latter was explained – each board member is expected to give personally or get in some way above the fair share from his/her congregation at least \$500. A past board meeting had approved this.
- Also explained: the mass direct mailing of last spring had been partly to test the database of past donors, since the penultimate letter appeal had been several years ago. Over 580 letters were sent, of which many came back as bad addresses. (See the Executive Director's report.)
- The plan is to have a new end-of-year appeal, as we do each year.
- Development Committee is also discussing the script for calls to the larger donors, as some prefer the approach to be one of thanks and appreciative inquiry rather than a new ask.

The meeting ended around 12:30.

Submitted by Charlotte Jones Carroll, Secretary