

Minutes of UUSJ Board of Trustees Meeting – March 17, 2022

Participants: Charlotte Jones-Carroll, Chloe Ockey, Joseph Santos-Lyons, Norma Flores Lopez, Mariano Vera, Eleanor Piez, Pablo De Jesus, non-trustee observer John Peterson
Absent: Beyssa Buil, Peggy Clark, Johannes Favi, Serena Lowe

Rev. Eleanor Piez provided the Chalice Lighting. Secretary Chloe Ockey confirmed the presence of a quorum. Agenda (see website) approved as presented. Consent agenda items (see agenda) accepted without objection. The meeting was recorded.

Work Plan (circulated to trustees privately): Executive Director Pablo De Jesus presented his latest version of his work plan for implementing UUSJ's programs for this fiscal year and the next. Board members thought it was good but ambitious. Some urged focusing only on a few of the goals. In the end, the plan was accepted.

Financial Report: Treasurer Mariano Vera noted that he had experienced issues with Truist, our bank, which had transitioned its website to reflect merger of banks and with our bookkeeper, whose computer had to be replaced and software re-installed. Nevertheless, no major financial issues occurred. Though congregational donations are lower than projected, donations from individuals are higher. Expenditures are on track or lower than expected.

Draft proposed budget for FY22-23 (circulated): Pablo presented the budget, which is in a new more consolidated format, but also clarifying which expenses would be funded by grants and which by our own resources. He noted that the budget includes a new part-time communications person to enhance UUSJ outreach as we continue to transform into a national organization. A different person might be engaged to develop a communications plan initially. Also, given likelihood that the current advocacy consultant will move on next fall, Pablo proposes engaging an advocacy adviser with higher level experience. Charlotte, who had worked with Pablo, noted that the Finance Committee had reviewed and endorsed the budget proposal and new format. Board training and UUSJ presence at General Assembly of UUA was also contemplated. To achieve the program objectives, more funds will need to be raised from congregations, individuals and grant sources, compared to this fiscal year. One area not considered in the reviews leading up to this board meeting was the inclusion of contributions to the Executive Director's retirement fund. Charlotte proposed adding this, even though it would call for further fundraising, because it was in line with UUA benefits policies. There was no objection to adding this. The final budget for next FY will be presented at the June board meeting for approval. Any further comments can be sent by email to Pablo.

Spring Fundraising initiative: Development Committee head Eleanor Piez shared plans to do a solicitation for donations/contributions in April. She asked board members to help do outreach to all donors who had given \$100 or more, by offering testimonials (50 words, 30 seconds video) by April 5. Each member was asked to reach out to ten people. All board members should also be donors at whatever level is possible.

For the Record:

*UUSJ's whistleblower policy had been approved by virtual email vote earlier this calendar year, a policy we can now report to IRS that we have.

*Former trustee Kat Donovan had failed to attend board meetings without excuse since August and her removal was approved in accordance with bylaws at the December meeting, with a period until January 31, 2022 for her to appeal. She was notified but made no response, so her removal was confirmed.

Nominating Committee members: Nominating Committee Chair Chloe Ockey moved that the following individuals be named to the Nominating Committee for terms effective March 17, 2022 through June 30, 2022: Trustee Rev. Peggy Clark, non-trustees Deb Bauder, Emily Koechlin, Gayle Boyd and Rev. T. J. Fitzgerald. (Bios available online). Charlotte seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Future of Membership Committee and policy on congregational members: Discussion over the past months on alternatives to "covenants" for congregational members had settled on language that sought a liaison within the congregation for UUSJ to work with and encouraging contributions to UUSJ. Our website would have a simple form for congregations to express interest in "partnering" with UUSJ. Pablo still hoped for more language that would represent an understanding with a congregation that would last through changing ministers and liaisons. Norma, a member of the Development Committee, emphasized how crucial it is to build relationships and urged board members to engage congregations to become partners, advising what UUSJ can do for them.

Charlotte alerted the board that she proposes we abolish the Membership Committee as a standing committee (it could always be re-instated as needed for ad hoc needs) since its function to defining membership and setting contribution levels was finished. This would be an item in June board agenda, involving a change in bylaws (and a related change in policy would be needed to eliminate the requirement of a covenant for congregational partners). A small membership team of volunteers would continue to work with Pablo.

Other matters: Board members expressed concern about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. UUSJ focuses on national – rather than international – issues, but the immigration policy area does involve federal policy. Pablo also noted that he gets requests to join sign-on letters outside of our four main areas – such as vaccines for global South. How should UUSJ proceed. Conclusion was to focus on our work plan, not stray too far outside that, but where on the margin, show support via solidarity with other organizations, not new initiatives of UUSJ.

Meeting was adjourned.

Charlotte Jones-Carroll, note-taker