

**Report of District President's Association Observer at UUA Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**Kathy Burek, President, District President's Association**  
**August 30, 2012**

This meeting was rescheduled from August 23, 2012.

Trustees Participating: Tom Loughrey, Clyde Grubbs, David Friedman, David Jackoway, , Gini Courter, Graham Kreicker, Jackie Shanti, Jeanne Pupke, Joan Lund, Lew Phinney, Linda Laskowski, Nancy Bartlett , Pat Manley, Susan Ritchie

Observers: Kathy Burek, DPA Observer, Michele Deakin, *UU World*; Jim Key, Moderator Candidate

October Board Meeting Preparation: Moderator Courter mentioned several volunteer opportunities to be discussed later. These relate to preparing the board for a discussion at its October meeting of renewing covenant and the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force Report.

GA 2013: She also noted that more time would be needed for business meetings at General Assembly, since we conducted only a minimal amount of business this past GA. Bylaws amendments, covenanting and discussion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force Report are major items for the agenda.

October 2012 Board Meeting Schedule: First Vice Moderator Jackie Shanti provided an overview of the plan for the October Board meeting in Boston.

- Possible time for training/refresher in Policy Governance ©
- Multiculturalism training—a full day is needed to do this right
- ENDS work is split up to allow more time for discussion and reflection on “Gathered Here” information
- Discussions of covenanting and the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle TF report would occur in the “business” blocks
- The Board also needs to choose appointees during business hours
- There are also blocks for work groups
- Free time is schedule for some evenings
- Given the amount of work on the board's agenda, they will need more reports in writing before the meetings so they can ask questions and discuss
- Pat Manly said that she was moved at the Board's April meeting by attending worship at local conversation. She asked if the Board can we find time to be able to do that in October. Gini said the Coordinating Council could look at the agenda, but doesn't think it would be possible this time. The Board has visited all of the congregations in the area of UUA HQ, and visiting a new one would require going farther away. The Board will be worshipping with a congregation at the Philadelphia meeting in January, and can also worship at a local congregation in April.

Monitoring: Trustee Donna Harrington presented recommendations from the Governance Working Group for Executive Limitations Policies 2.09, 2.12 and 2.13. The board previously received the

monitoring reports for comment, and the Working Group's recommendations. (UUA Executive Limitations Policies may be found at <http://www.uua.org/uuagovernance/manual/limits/index.shtml>).

- 2.09-Grants, Contracts, Partnerships; The Working Group recommends the Board reject this report and ask for a rewrite outside of the monitoring schedule. We had asked last year for a rewrite to address elements of policy, and that the report would focus on demonstrating consistency with ENDS. This report talks about excellent issues, it talks about compliance with law, but didn't address the ENDS. We would like this report redrafted quickly by the end of Sept to enable us to close out this issue in October.
  - The Governance Working Group will be proposing revisions to format/content for monitoring reports. The revisions will be presented at the October meeting. The Working Group will also propose revision to 2.09.
- 2.12 Presidential Emergency Incapacity-We need to provide more clarity for staff regarding our thinking. We are recommending we accept this report. We have concerns relating to the operational definition. The rationale should support selection of the operational definition. We aren't asking for a rewrite outside of the cycle. We note that unless we are specific about our concerns in minutes, it is hard for staff to know what the concern was.
- 2.13-Election Practices—The Working Group recommends the Board request a rewrite by Sept 20. It is fairly urgent for the President and Board to be in alignment, since this is an important election year. The concerns are consistent, and representative of the Governance Working Group. We are looking at the operational definition. There doesn't appear to be a good way to determine if the policy is being applied successfully. For example, "Staff will provide timely and high quality information"—what is meant, how measured, by whom? How would we know if we had done a good job?
- Trustee Harrington: Moved recommendations of the Governance Working Group (didn't catch who seconded).
- Discussion:
  - Comment-I don't disagree, but concerned that in each of these, we had a number of trustees who didn't have a problem with the monitoring report. As a group, our understanding of some of these issues isn't consistent. (Didn't catch who said this).
- Motion passed: no opposition or abstentions.

October Meeting: Governance Working Group would like to gauge interest in optional policy governance training in October.

- There appears to be a mismatch between aggregation of what trustees said in notes on monitoring reports, and the eventual conversation of the Governance Working Group. Training may help us get on the same page.
- At our meeting in April, there was interest in having Policy Governance © training over the summer. However, the major training session was available during GA, so that didn't work out. The trainer is available in October. Having a training session would be useful for those who haven't had training, and refresher for long term members

Moderator Courter asked for a show of hands (on the website). It appeared that 4 Trustees were interested in the training. Those not attending (~7) should also be asked about their interest.

Fifth Principle Task Force Report: Moderator Courter is seeking a team of three to five people to review the task force report and lead the Board's discussion in October. The group should also prepare an Executive Summary of the report.

Volunteers: Jake Morrill, Lew Phinney, David Friedman, Susan Ritchie, Joan Lund (convener), Clyde Grubbs

Kay Montgomery shared that she had a conversation recently with former UUA Moderator Denny Davidoff (member of the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Task Force), who has some different ideas than when report was written. The Board recommended that those working on the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle discussion for the board should touch base with Denny to get her thoughts.

Covenanting: Moderator Courter noted that the Board discussed making Covenanting a theme for the 2013 GA. This will not be a single year process, but needs to be started. She asked for volunteers to prepare for the Board's discussion in October.

Volunteers: Trustees Katherine Cullen, David Jackoway, Jackie Shanti, Jeanne Pupke (convener) and DPA Observer Kathy Burek

Update on Board Appointee Process:

Nancy Bartlett sent out clarification email earlier; she asked that Trustees read her email.

Dissolution of UU Fellowship of Farmington Valley: Kay Montgomery, on behalf of Tim Brennan, advised the Board that this congregation had voted to dissolve. Board approval is needed for distribution of assets. The congregation wishes to have its remaining \$6,000 distributed to the UUA and the UUSC.

Moved by Trustee Loughrey and seconded by Trustee Shanti: To allow the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of the Farmington Valley, which has voted to dissolve, to distribute their remaining assets to other UU organizations and congregations instead of to the UUA, subject to the approval of the President of the UUA.

Discussion:

- Issues shouldn't come to us if they are not significant. \$6K not significant. Could we have this handled elsewhere?
- Our Bylaws require this process
- Can we delegate this responsibility? Kay will check on that
- We should add to the list of bylaws we'd like to change
- We would need a criteria for delegation, so we could craft a Policy; Kay will take a crack at a draft
- This item would normally be on our Consent Agenda, but we don't have one for phone calls. We could have a consent agenda for phone meetings if we chose.
- Regarding a bylaws amendment. I (didn't catch who said this) wouldn't like the issue of dissolution to be in front of delegates in June. Discussing dissolution doesn't feel like good timing.

- Perhaps a solution would be to keep a running list of things we would like to see changed; also a comprehensive overview of bylaws
- Tom is keeping track of bylaws that the board has discussed needing change
- Tom also talking to Dan about delegation of financial issues
- We need a streamlined Consent Agenda process.
- There might be good purpose in having congregational dissolutions come to attention of the board
- For October, Tom will circulate the list of possible bylaws amendments, in the Secretary's Report
- Motion passes; one abstention

Protocol for Legal Opinions: Kay Montgomery discussed the process for seeking legal opinions, on the part of the UUA Board. She noted:

- Legal expenses were higher this past year than they have ever been. This is understandable, since unusual things happened. E.g., folding the UN Office into the UUA was wildly expensive. Kay is also conscious that the former practice of Kay being the watchdog is not being followed. Kay can do this for staff, but not for the Board.
- A suggestion was made that Kay put together a group of ~3 to work with her to develop protocols for board to ask for legal opinions
- The sense of the board is that they would prefer that Kay bring a draft protocol for the board to react to. Kay will draft a Policy for the Board's review.

Reminders: Moderator Courter had these reminders for the Board

- Read the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle TF Report; keep in mind many of the authors have changed their minds, in wake of Justice GA
- We will have a lot of monitoring reports in September; give yourself time to review the policies
- Question: Should the group looking at the 5<sup>th</sup> Principle Report find out about the changes in thinking? Yes, at least one person should follow up with Denny. You don't necessarily need to check with all of the group
- If we hadn't heard from Kay, we wouldn't know about Denny's comments...the group should bring a process for addressing the TF Report, not recommendations

**Other Issues:** Trustee Jackoway noted that this past weekend, the three MidAmerica district boards met to work on the formation of a MidAmerica Region. There was a question about the process of amending UUA bylaws and rules. Who should we talk to? Please talk to Kay. The MidAmerica Trustees and Kathy Burek will talk to her.

Process Observation: Trustee Jeanne Pupke shared her process observations, using the board's process observation checklist. Other board members commented. This section combines all comments without attribution. I couldn't always tell who was talking.

- Energy, focus, staying on task—it is very clear that phone conversations are difficult; e.g., members having difficulty connecting, noises in background. We are operating in a media environment that is not the best, especially for important discussions. Energy is quite commendable, given all of that.

- Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression/Multiculturalism—we did not address any of that in tonight’s discussion; some of that is topical. Comment: We did raise conversation at Coordinating Council about training for MC
- Board accountability to marginalized communities: I am thinking about people in flooded areas, especially given anniversary of Katrina and people feeling marginalized. We didn’t talk about that.
- Governance style—we tried hard to make that happen. There was reasonable agreement, but the issue was raised about diversity of opinion on monitoring; good that we were made aware of that
- The dissolution issue- one congregation died and we are not talking about that. We are losing one a year
- Home church always has MC on agenda; maybe we can put that on agenda each time
- Involving the DPA reflects growing partnership; the Board appreciates leadership in that group, Kathy Burek was asked to share that with the DPA.
- Affirmation of problems with phone.
  - Need to figure out how to deal with the technology; e.g., deal with I Pads, the screen-sharing; not a good platform
  - Gini-would be happy to be in these conversations; also Mark
- One Trustee noted that while we were waiting for the meeting to start, people were chatting, joking about the Republican Convention. Here we are as a national board of an organization that talks about embracing people. However we make assumptions about who is on the call. How would a Republican feel? One thing to talk about values and another thing to live them.

Moderator Courter closed the meeting: Thank you for the call tonight and for being here. Please hold the date for the September call—something might come out of the Coordinating Council or one of the working groups. These are likely to be non-voting items. I appreciate everyone trying to work with the technology.

Observer’s Observation:

- I continue to be deeply appreciative of the work that the members of the UUA Board of Trustees does on behalf of our faith.
- I value the board’s demonstration of its partnership with the District Presidents’ Association by including me in its work, e.g., the covenanting group.
- I was aware, as PSD President, that our Trustee, Graham Kreicker, had been hospitalized the previous week. I made a reference to that in the pre-meeting conversation. Several board members expressed their concern, but no other mention was made once the meeting started. I’m not sure all board members are aware of his illness. Does the board have a regular way of showing its care for its members? I remember that at the June meeting, the health of board members and spouses was noted and good wishes shared.
- I agree with the comments made during the process observation.
- One challenge for me as an observer is that I don’t have the documents the board is discussing, so I don’t have context for the discussion. The Prairie Star District Board has a

practice of announcing our meeting dates, and putting our agendas and advance documents on our web site. We include information about where any face-to-face meetings will be held, or provide information about how interested persons can listen in on our phone meetings. I don't see similar information about UUA Board meetings on the UUA website. Perhaps the Board has discussed this, and made a conscious decision not to provide this information. In that case, a statement to that effect and the rationale might be posted on the UUA website, in the interests of openness, transparency, and the democratic process.

With deep appreciation for all you do for our faith,

Kathy Burek, President  
District Presidents' Association