

## Off-site GA Planning Team - Minutes –June 28, 2011

**Present:** Mark Steinwenter, Linda Laskowski, Randy Becker, Lew Phinney, Larry Stritoff, Eva Marx

**Absent:** Don Plante (Lynda Shannon and John Hawkins have requested that their names be removed from the list)

**Next meeting:** Noon ET, Tuesday, July 5 (Have a happy Fourth!)

These notes are a bit more detailed than most. Will return to more of a summary next time.

Congratulations and JOY to all--complete with fireworks from Linda!

Opening words by Randy (and Margaret Meade).

**Check-in.** Mark observed that systems worked remarkably well and expressed delight at the creativity of the volunteers, especially Christopher. Mark also realized the importance of Gini's embrace of this project; her support made an enormous difference. Larry's goal was to bring GA to offsite delegates, which he thought was done in a fantastic way. Linda was so proud; camaraderie among tech folks was wonderful. **She asked Larry to send out chats.** Randy had a problem knowing when to speak and apologized to Linda for speaking before she made her motion. The teller had placed him in the wrong (procedural) queue. **Mark noted the need for a fail-safe for when the teller makes a mistake.** Linda remarked that those are the kinds of mistakes that are obvious from the floor.

**What worked? (although this was mostly a discussion of what didn't work.)** Mark has more than 200 notes and no time to assess systems issues. **Larry observed that volunteers need training in Robert's Rules.** The majority of offsite participants preferred to watch streaming despite the lag and did not use phone (this was confirmed in feedback survey). (An aside—Esther Hopkins did not mute her phone and could be heard singing hymns with plenary.) Randy was on the phone virtually all the time; streaming functioned as instant replay when he missed something. He observed that lag time for putting questions to be voted on the screen was half the problem; Gini doesn't tell people what they are voting on so why should questions be posted for offsite voters? Discussion then moved to the communications among offsite participants and the potential for communication among onsite plenary participants using smartphones and other handheld devices. People don't take advantage of congregational discussions onsite. Fifth Principle Task Force recommends that people sit with their congregations, districts, and regions during plenary. Need a WiFi signal in plenary so delegates can communicate. Ways to connect are not the same onsite as offsite..

Larry asked whether it would be better to get an offsite vote earlier. Mark said that conversations shift too quickly, e.g., calling the question. **Randy said that was why he**

**was recommending a generic voting screen;** delegates can change their votes until the polls close. People watching the video and not using the phone would completely miss the vote. Larry suggested a sportscaster who can type as events occur. **This timing issue is why the voting manager needs to understand Robert's Rules.**

Lew said that a way to **edit ResponseWare** is needed. Mark responded that he/his staff may need to write something if we don't continue to use ResponseWare.

Linda said that we need to take seriously the person who spoke about hacking. **Need to learn more about hacking—consider later.**

**Follow-up survey.** Suggestions for additional items continue to emerge. Since 19 people had already responded, we need to continue with the current instrument. Then we can send out additional questions. **Linda will send a reminder e-mail to those who have not completed survey. Larry will send us the link to survey responses.** Because he wanted to respect voting secrecy, Mark did not track who was voting. Linda asked whether we know which PINs were exercised to vote. Mark said that the voting manager's laptop has been erased. **In the future he will copy the voting manager's results.**

**Future responsibility for offsite participation.** Who will be responsible? Who holds the power and the purse strings? What are the governance issues?

**Next steps include reports to the Board and the GAPC and a business case connected to both reports that includes recommendations on how to go forward.**

Mark observed that future responsibility for offsite participation might lie with the GAPC or GACS, perhaps a group chartered by the GAPC that combines staff and volunteers, similar to the live streaming process. Consider the distinction between authority and responsibility. Randy suggested that voting is a function of governance, therefore a mixture of GAPC, staff, and an appointee not beholden to anyone, i.e., the general population. Linda suggested a team (as opposed to a task force) of the GAPC that reports to the Board and General Assembly. "Team" implies that the process has been institutionalized. Lew pointed out that policy to implement the offsite bylaw amendment is on the Board agenda. Larry suggested a separate Offsite GAPC to plan the process. Lew anticipated that the GAPC would object; consequently, this needs to be a new component of their portfolio. The current Offsite Team needs a GAPC member who has credibility with the GAPC. The new GAPC chair needs time to sort things out.

Mark responded that, because much is decided by September or October, Offsite **cannot afford to wait.** Need to contact Walt and Tim. Much will be decided at the meeting planned for August. Process is unclear. Need to make clear to the GAPC that offsite involvement can be even more powerful.

**Team composition.** Linda intends to continue with the team until the process has been shepherded through the Board. Mark will be on sabbatical for six weeks, then back in September, and gone for another six weeks. Mark will take the lead for the year if Linda

stays on until the October board meeting; he sees his value as technological, not political—**this is about offsite participation**, not solely voting.

What is needed is a consistent team who will stay in right relationship with the Board, GAPC, and Accountability Team. Linda will handle the political aspects. Randy's participation adds value as a user. Charlie Behrens brings an important perspective as a UU and partner of a minister. This offers an opportunity to engage him more broadly in UU activities. Perhaps he could coordinate/manage the project after Linda leaves in October. Larry will take over technology through 2012, which would free Mark to focus on relationships with other stakeholders.

**Next steps.** Mark will develop a business case and report on what happened. Linda will make recommendations to the Board based on Mark's recommendations. Mark and Linda will draft a report for the GAPC. Mark will figure out the finances and propose a vision for 2012 and beyond. He needs examples and invites postings of imaginings, examples, and ideas on Google.docs. Lew and Randy will draft rules to go with the bylaw amendment, including reasonable precautions to prevent hacking.

**Next week.** Touch base. Review survey results.

**Persony chat log.**

Nothing relevant.