

Board of Trustees

MEETING: September 13, 2021, 7PM Eastern Time

Pursuant to notice duly given, this meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Unitarian Universalist Association was held via Zoom conferencing.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kathy Burek, Barbara de Leeuw, Charles Du Mond (Co-Moderator), Suzanne Fast, Susan Frederick-Gray (President), Sherman Logan, Leslie MacFadyen, Elizabeth Mount, John Newhall, JeKaren Olaoya, Lucia Santini Field (Financial Advisor), Meg Riley (Co-Moderator), Tom Schade, Sam Trumbore, Bill Young (Secretary)

ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Andrew McGeorge (Treasurer), Stephanie Carey Maron, Imari Sherri Nuyen-Kariotis, Danielle Di Bona, LaTonya Richardson (Director of General Assembly Conference Services), Rita Cherubini, George Squires, Antoinette Scully, Ellen Plummer, Darrick Jackson, Dr. Meg Richardson, Jim Sargent, Jolly Hollaman, Byrne Crandell, Erien Babcock, Alex Sherwood, Marcus Fogliano, Larry Ladd, Carrie Stewart

Meeting Minutes

Co-Moderator Charles Du Mond opened the meeting at 7:05pm and Danielle Di Bona offered a reading. The Board and guests broke into small break out groups for a brief check-in.

Consent Agenda

The Board adopted the consent agenda unanimously. It included minutes from August 9, 2021 Board meeting.

Decision about General Assembly 2024 in Providence

Co-Moderator Meg Riley and UUA Director of General Assembly and Conference Services LaTonya Richardson reported back on the feedback the Board has received regarding Providence, RI as a potential site for 2024 GA. They also reviewed the existing contracts and considerations for canceling the reservation.

Elizabeth Mount made the following motion which was seconded by Kathy Burek and unanimously approved:

The future remains uncertain. Still, we know today from three separate polls of General Assembly (GA) attendees that there is no scenario yet where we should continue planning with an assumption that there will be a return to pre-COVID attendance at GA. This, coupled with our learning from the Commission on Institutional Change report and the significant accessibility concerns raised by our community regarding the Providence Convention Center and the Dunkin Arena, we authorize the UUA staff to negotiate a release of our obligations to the Convention Center and hotels in Providence for 2024.”



Climate Justice Organizer Position

Board members reviewed the request submitted at the August Board meeting to approve a non-budgeted expenditure of up to \$60,000 to hire a Climate Justice Organizer in the UUA's Organizing Strategy/Side with Love staff team for the remainder of the fiscal year. Board members noted the importance of focusing on eco-ableism as part of a wider climate justice portfolio. Kathy Burek moved, Sherman Logan seconded, and the Board unanimously approved the request.

Disability Justice Training Feedback

Co-Moderator Riley reported back about the Disability Justice training with Vilissa Thompson for UUA volunteers and committee leaders and noted a questionnaire will get feedback on the training from participants. Key learnings included the importance of writing volunteer job descriptions that allow people to apply who cannot meet in person or have other accessibility barriers. Some trustees noted their ongoing discussions from the Board's own disability justice training in 2020. Co-Moderator Riley shared her hope to invite Thompson back to a Board meeting for a check in with trustees and other volunteer leaders.

Bylaws Update

Barbara de Leeuw reported back on efforts to review and rewrite the UUA's Bylaws. She noted that the Deep Divers team which started reviewing bylaw amendments last year is supplemented this year by an additional smaller writing team. This smaller writing team includes Barbara as well as Sam Trumbore, Kathy Burek, Tom Schade and President Susan Frederick-Gray, and is meeting weekly. The writing and review team, which had already reviewed the bylaws through Article VII, is identifying complicated and nuanced issues to bring to the larger Deep Divers meetings, which will then frame them for broader discussion with the full Board and with and UU stakeholder groups. Key questions identified so far by the Deep Divers and the writing and review team include:

- Who is, who can be or who should be a member of the UUA? In addition to congregations as members, should individuals, groups or other communities be able to be full members? Does limiting membership and delegate voting congregations stifles innovation?
- While the UUA currently only counts congregations as its embers, UUA leaders often reach out to non-congregational groups as stakeholders. Should professional, identity-based or groups which act as important stakeholders have more role or definition in the Bylaws?
- How can we create clearly defined roles and accountability for UUA leaders, particularly for the Board, the General Assembly, the President and the UUA administration and staff? How do we balance the demands of top volunteer leadership, top paid leadership and the General Assembly?

Currently the group is going through each section of the bylaws with these questions: 1) Does this belong in bylaws? 2) If yes, does it need minor or substantial change? 3) If no, where does it appropriately belong (e.g. rule, policy or somewhere else). Discussion noted that the UUA's bylaws contain far more detail than similarly-structured organizations, which has limited flexibility and made it hard to complete basic changes and updates. Discussion among Board members also raise the former role of independent affiliates, the standards for congregation



membership, and how to increase meaningful democratic participation through the General Assembly.

Presidential Search Committee Update

Bill Young and Sam Trumbore reported that the PSC has begun its work. They noted that the Board needs to review the previous job description from 2017, and approve a new job description. They also related the PSC’s request future conversations and clarification on the different roles of the PSC and the Election Campaign Practices Committee.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:25 pm, the Board went into Executive Session for the purpose of considering appointments. The following appointments were later announced:

- Azim Mazagonwalla (Audit and Risk Committee)
- Christopher Harris (Audit and Risk Committee)
- Michele David (Employee Benefits Trust [Health Plan])
- Asha Mehta (Investment Committee)
- Nathalie Edmond (Ministerial Fellowship Committee)
- Kimberly Debus (Appointments Committee)

Trustee Leslie MacFadyen announced her resignation from the Board of Trustees effective immediately. Leslie shared the following statement:

“It has been a pleasure and honor to serve on the UUA Board of Trustees over the past 2 years. My work outside of the board specifically around preserving voting rights of all people and building a more secure Democracy have become more vital than ever and it is with a heavy heart that I tender my resignation from the UUA Board of Trustees.”

I have valued the work I was able to do with the Board and UUA staff, but lamentably, knowing my own limits and the need to center my own personal health and wellness have led me to this decision. I wish the board well in the work ahead and of course remain a committed Unitarian Universalist in all that I do in the world.”

The meeting ended at 9:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Carey McDonald

Recording Secretary

