

MidAmerica Region Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes – Dec. 7, 2021
Approved January 4, 2022

Present: Jim Moir, Dorit Bergen, Rae Jane Araujo, David Pyle, Autumn Mahoney, Sharon Dittmar, McKenna Revel. Hans Kelson, Tammy Lemmer, Patty Notch

Tammy opened the meeting at 6:33 PM CDT.

Opening Words by Rae Jane

Check-in

Patty moved approval of the minutes of November 2, 2021 Board Meeting and November 13, 2021 Retreat, Autumn seconded, motion passed

Retreat Reflections

Concern about not yet addressing the purposes of this Board, pleased that we approved monies for anti-racism work, appreciated the opportunity to talk with Carey McDonald from the UUA, also want to revisit the purpose and mission of the Board at a spring retreat if we have one, question expressed about Mandy's resignation, did it relate to lack of clarity about mission and purpose of the Board? This lack of clarity does impact our ability to recruit new members. Nominating committee could use direction but maybe we should not rush the discussion of purpose, we did that before and it was not successful, Mandy's resignation is another example of issues that have been troubling the Board for some time, what is our purpose and power and how to use it, I love sitting in a room with UUs who care about what the heck is going on, appreciate the conversation with Carey McDonald but was left feeling really sad that this issue was not resolved without hurting people, many of the UUA senior levels folks had assumed that

regionalization was done the meeting with Carey pointed out that this Board still exists and that the UUA needs to be in relationship with us, conversation with Carey was on many levels and each one of them was worthwhile.

Spring Retreat

Should it be held during GA or should it be a weekend retreat in April or May in our region? Most Board members said they were comfortable meeting in person. Consensus is that we will have a region only retreat.

Regional Lead Report

David let us know that the UUA has granted an extension to our staff member through the end of March with regard to the vaccine. He is happy but wishes that decision had been made sooner. David thanked the board for having the conversation with Carey because that helped, not just the staff member but other people in similar circumstances. The UUA has announced that it will be revising a lot of its personnel policies in the next months. There is now succession planning in place for that staff position in the event it becomes empty.

David will take the last part of his sabbatical in January.

MidAmerica Governing Policies Discussion

We are missing a set of governing policies for the Region, policies that bring in mission and purpose work, the relationship between the lead and the Board, that bring in structure among other things. David thinks it's time for us to develop a policy based governing structure. He proposes taking the month of his sabbatical to draft a possible policy structure for the Region, including the Board's mission and purpose, succession planning for staff, reporting requirements, defining the Board's relationship to the UUA and the staff's relationship to the UUA. David would bring that draft to the conversations we will be having starting in February. David thinks we will end up finalizing different

pieces of the policies over time. If we do this governing policy writing well, it will also involve talking to the UUA to basically renegotiate the three party covenant. Board members reacted positively to this proposal.

What is the Board's reaction to the idea of pausing financial integration or maybe not doing it at all?...good to get policy written down, good to slow it down, we never came to any consensus, now is certainly not the time until we get some other things clarified, I don't want to make that decision now but if I was forced to I would vote no on integration, I would vote against if I had to vote right now, if for no other reason than I don't want to lose our autonomy, based on what's happened recently with our staff member. I would prefer to do the work to put the structure in place before we make decisions about integration. Getting clarity on what we are doing will help the conversation about why we are doing it – so it will help the conversation about mission and purpose.

Again, David has the Board's blessing to proceed with drafting governing policies.

Nominating Committee Charge

What would we like to give the Nominating Committee in terms of our needs and potential gaps. We would like to have an active religious professional as a voting Board member, we hope to have people of color on the Board, it would be nice to have someone from the southwest area of the Region, it would be helpful to have some diversity in terms of size of congregation, we currently don't have a lot of representation from small congregations, there will be two Board vacancies at least.

Regional Assembly Planning

Board needs to propose an agenda in January for the Region Assembly.

The Board reviewed the current process for how congregations propose agenda items for the Regional Assembly. This process is hardly ever used. **Rae Jane moved to approve the process as written, updating the names and dates as needed. Patty seconded. Motion passed.** The Board has the authority to put what we want on the agenda.

Process Observation

Thanks to everyone for showing up and doing the work. We managed pretty well, hope McKenna feels better, thank you for the reflections on the retreat, David will not be at the January meeting, he will report in February on the progress with the three funds authorized at the retreat, the Board will meet on January 4th, the packet will go out the Monday before, the Exec Committee will meet briefly to prepare an agenda for the January meeting

Closing Words from Rae Jane

Respectfully submitted by
Dorit Bergen
Board secretary