

MidAmerica Region, UUA
Minutes of Board of Trustees Meeting
July 11, 2018
Approved August 25, 2018

Trustees present: Brian Bach, Kyrie Bock, Omega Burckhardt, Janell Hill, David Lauth, Tammy Lemmer, Mitra Jafarzadeh

Trustees absent: Dixie Collinson, Sarah Oglesby-Dunegan

Regional Staff present: Ian Evison, Sharon Dittmar

Call to Order: President David Lauth called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm Central and welcomed Janelle and Omega. He noted a change in the format of the meeting for this evening, and hopes to discuss ideas further at the August Retreat. The Retreat will also include a structured “get to know you” activity.

Opening Words

David shared a passage from Travelling Mercies by Ann Lamott on “finding our way home.”

Check In:

Attendees commented on milestones or items of note in their lives, with several members feeling thankful. Many well-wishes were extended to Janelle and Omega.

Review of upcoming dates

August 23-26: In-person Retreat at Mahoney State Park in Nebraska.

September 4: next conference call

Regional Assembly will be held April 5-7, 2019 in St. Louis.

An in-person retreat is currently scheduled for May 2-5, 2019 in St. Louis.

The second in-person retreat will likely be August 22-25, 2019 in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota.

Consent agenda items

After a review of the roles for Process Observer and Advocate, the following items were accepted by unanimous consent (no motion):

- Appointment of Timekeeper – David
- Appointment of Process Observer – Mitra
- Appointment of Advocate – Kyrie

A motion was made by Kyrie to approve the June 5, 2018 Board Minutes, after a second by Mitra, the motion carried.

A motion was made by David to approve the June 20, 2018 Regional Business Meeting Minutes. after a second by Mitra, the motion carried.

Updates from Regional and General Assembly

Comments from In-Gathering

Members in attendance felt the Regional Assembly and in-gathering went well. Sharon reviewed the answers to four questions that were turned in at the end of the meeting:

What has gone well for your congregation this year? What challenges has your congregation faced this year? How can the MA Board and staff be most helpful to your congregation? And What thoughts and guidance would you give to the MA Board as it considers moving the Region to the UUA's new AFP model?

45 feedback cards were submitted, which was approximately 20-25% of the total number of participants at the meeting. There were parallels in the top responses for what has gone well and what are the challenges: Minister (#1), Stewardship (#2), Membership (#3 & #4) and space (#4 and #3).

Generally responses to all four questions reflect a wide range of understanding and connection (or lack thereof) to the Region. Information that is coming in to Ministers and/or Lay Leadership does not always make its way to members. It was also noted that requests for support in social justice work is a new emphasis for congregations as compared to previous surveys and conversations.

Regional Leaders Group

David and Mitra, as incoming President and Vice President, attended a meeting of what has been called the District President's Association. They described possible changes in the structure and purpose of the group, which is now the Regional Leaders Group (RLG.) A proposed purpose for the RLG would be to function as a link between UUA Board and staff and congregations. It was noted that the transition from Districts to Regions and Regional Governance has not been uniform. In fact, we are still the only Regional Board in the country, and we already function in an advisory capacity in expressing opinions about priorities and activities of regional staff. Discussion followed. David and Mitra will keep us posted.

New APF

David provided a brief overview of the proposed changes, which includes a new funding formula requesting 6.75% of reported operational expenses rather than the previous calculation based on membership size. He noted that the first phase of the UUA change has already been implemented with a joint ask coming from UUA, with a portion coming back to the Region. The 2nd step is for the Region to commit to the new formula.

Ian reviewed plans and scheduling options for board facilitated conference calls to gather additional feedback from congregations. The only confirmed date and time is Tuesday, July 24 from 2-3 pm Central (3-4 eastern) with Brian and Tammy participating. Ian sent a doodle pool to establish additional dates and times, and board members are asked to respond asap to reflect their availability. The goal is to have two afternoon calls and two evening calls. A minimum of two board members are needed for each call, but there is no maximum. Information gathered on these calls will be used for further discussion and action at the August Retreat.

Bylaws Review Workgroup Update

Tammy provided an update on the status of the bylaws review workgroup. An initial meeting was held on June 13. The primary concern of the nominating committee is the difficulty in finding officers to fill vacancies mid-term. Some preliminary ideas were discussed, including the suggestion to have all Board members elected on an at-large basis and have the board members elect their leadership. The workgroup wants to gather additional input from across the region, and a special email address was set up for that purpose: bylaws@midamericauua.org. An article will be included in the next Regional newsletter, with the committee reconvening in September to review comments and begin drafting new language. Any suggested revisions will be submitted in time for consideration at the April 2019 Regional Assembly. Tammy will forward the notes from the first meeting with additional details. Bylaw changes are not required to go before the Board first, but the committee will keep board members informed of the direction they plan to take.

August Retreat Updates

Sharon sent a link to all members with information on the location of our August Retreat: Eugene T. Mahoney State Park <http://outdoornebraska.gov/mahoney/> between Omaha and Lincoln, Nebraska. We currently have 9 rooms reserved and need to give the State Park a final head count by July 22. The following staff and board members confirmed their plan to attend: Mitra, Brian, David, Tammy, Sharon, Ian, Janell (Sat and Sun), and Kyrie (Sat and Sun). Sarah, Dixie and Omega are asked to confirm their plans for all or part of the retreat by July 21 by contacting Sharon.

The general outline of the meeting includes dinner together on Thursday night, a full day of meetings on Friday and Saturday, and visits to one or more congregations on Sunday morning. (There is one congregation in Lincoln and two in Omaha.) Ian confirmed that the Omaha Airport (OMA) is the one to use for flights.

Process Observer Comments:

Mitra noted that the opening words were very appropriate and that they reminded her of the book Serving with Grace. She questioned if we utilized the consent agenda correctly. She felt there was a nice use of “silence” in asking questions and waiting for answers.

Advocate Comments: Kyrie reported that there was good participation by those on the call, and that the group did a good job of considering others’ perspectives, including those not on the call.

Closing Words:

David shared a meditation from All Souls New York, which publishes daily words of inspiration via email subscription.

Adjournment:

Tammy moved for adjournment and Kyrie seconded. The motion carried unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned.