

MidAmerica Region, UUA
Board Meeting Minutes
February 2, 2021
Approved March 2, 2021

Trustees Present: Rae Jane Araujo, Dorit Bergen, Hans Kelson, David Lauth, Autumn Mahoney, Jim Moir

Absent: Tammy Lemmer

Staff Present: David Pyle, Sharon Dittmar

Call to Order:

Hans presided. The meeting was called to order at approximately 7:44 EST.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

Dorit moved approval with second from Hans. Several minor errors were pointed out. The minutes were approved.

Action on Nominating Committee Recommendations

Members reviewed information received regarding three mid-year nominees:

Merideth Smith, being affirmed as an appointment to the Camp Unistar Board
Patty Notch, nominated for the MidAmerica Board
McKenna Revel, nominated for the MidAmerica Board

Motion by Rae Jane and seconded by Dorit to affirm/appoint the three candidates. The motion passed.

Hans suggested that confidential information may have been shared in error during the recent nomination process. David P. said he would take look into it, and if confirmed, take action to prevent future errors.

The mid-year appointments take immediate effect, and Tammy will be tasked with contacting the appointees.

Discussion

A chapter from ***Widening the Circle of Concern***
Living Our Values in the World

David L. facilitated the discussion.

Rae Jane started us out by sharing a pithy observation about a recommendation that we should avoid “acting as if we are better than others”. She said, “Don’t be Mighty Mouse!”

Sharon referenced her work with congregations, emphasizing that relational work needs to be prioritized, especially if there are identity or racial issues. Better to slow things down and make sure those who are impacted can be heard. If relationships are broken, it will do little good to rush ahead to some half-baked resolution of conflict.

David P. liked the emphasis on training of leaders, something congregational staff are planning for. He specifically mentioned the idea that UUs should ground accountability toward groups/organizations rather than individuals.

Sharon and Autumn spoke to their experiences with individuals being given the burden of providing accountability and the problems that can arise.

David L. reminded us of the MidAmerica Assembly where the leadership made errors in planning for the intersectionality topic. David P. said that the leaders reached out to an individual in an attempt to recover from the errors. It ended up being hurtful. What we sought was not really accountability but a request—“just rescue us!”

David P. asked how we might get partnership from somebody else’s organization? (Someone said that partnerships often arise out of personal relationships.) Can we build the groupings to obtain accountability? While admitting it was a sketchy comparison, he described how the US military creates Inspector Generals who enforce accountability.

Hans responded by asking if accountability is offered, will UU leaders be able to listen?

Another question that came up—if we identify an accountability partnership, does that mean “they” will want to take that role?

We discussed how organizations and congregations resist culture change—surely much of what appears in *Widening the Circle* counts as such.

David L. shared an experience with accountability oversight that felt like it was being imposed from above. He said that the experience was tense, and people felt defensive. “How can we invite accountability?”

Members were skeptical about how much the idea of intersectionality could allow congregations to prioritize social justice issues not directly associated with anti-racism work. There seemed to be consensus that work against racism and oppression is multi-faceted and ought to be more-or-less continuously pursued.

Next Chapters.

At the next meeting we will discuss *Religious Professionals* from ***Widening the Circle***.

Our Recent Calls to Congregations

Most of us reported successfully contacting our target congregations. One congregation failed to respond.

Members were told to enter the responses into the online Google form.

We assigned targets for February.

Regional Lead Report.

David P. said that the draft budget is not needed by April, because the MidAmerica business meeting will not happen until June. Our business meeting will occur during General Assembly, late morning on Saturday, June 26.

Three plans were described for making use of the UUA Common Endowment Fund to invest MidAmerica dollars that are not immediately needed. David P. is considering several plans for how we might make use of earnings year-to-year. He said that he would “run the numbers” for our upcoming budget and present all three options at our next meeting.

National Advisory Council.

Rae Jane participated in the report to the UUA Board by the National Advisory Council (electronically). In a 45-minute meeting, it was apparent that there was little institutional knowledge on the part of the Board—much of the time was spent in education members. Rae Jane thinks, that the National Advisory Board may be rethinking its purpose. Their next meeting is February 24.

Financial Integration Process

David P. shared several documents that outline a potential process for financial integration of MidAmerica with the larger UUA. No decisions were needed at this time.

Closing:

Rae Jane provided a closing.

The next meeting is slated for Tuesday, March 2.

Adjourned at approximately 9:40 pm EST

Respectfully Submitted by

Jim Moir

Secretary