

Commission on Social Witness Meeting



Notes – 2014 GA

Commissioners present: David Breeden, Caitlin Cotter, Susan Goekler (Chair), CJ McGregor, Christina Sillari

Staff/consultant present: Audrey Ferguson

6/24/2013

Susan Goekler convened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. in the Board Room of the Biltmore Hotel, Providence RI. After checking-in, the Commissioners reviewed the GA agenda and their assignments for programs and for staffing the exhibit. Susan shared some complications that arose during the GA Planning Committee reception: no volunteers have been recruited to help with vote counting for CSAIs or AIWs (as requested) and the plan to allow off site delegates to have their own AIW mini-assembly might be a problem if there is a rehearsal scheduled for the plenary hall at that time. We also need to find a room where we can count votes for CSAIs and AIWs.

We discussed the processes for CSAI mini-assembly, CSAI voting, and AIWs. We reviewed handouts on those processes that will be available at the CSW booth. We also discussed the orientation for the CSW volunteers.

Audrey distributed CSW caps for use during plenaries and while on duty in the exhibit hall. Susan will be giving a CSW report at the Friday morning plenary and would like all Commissioners to be present.

Audrey discovered that there is no 24-hour copy shop in the state of Rhode Island, so we will have to adjust the schedule to ensure that CSW Alerts are prepared in time for plenaries where they are needed. The Commissioners, staff, volunteers, and significant others will have dinner Sunday night.

Adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

6/25/14

Susan Goekler convened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Together we reviewed the submitted AIWs. Because 9 were submitted, we needed to select 6 that we would submit to the delegates for consideration. Ordinarily this decision would occur Friday night after signatures were also submitted. Because of the problem with finding a place to make copies, we decided to rate proposals with an understanding that if any of the top rated 6 did not obtain the required number of signatures, we could go with the next highest rated. Each commissioner had a full text copy of all proposed AIWs. We agreed to individually rate each using a 5 point scale for the published criteria 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 below (with 5 being high). We felt that any submission that did not use civil language would be disqualified or the proposer asked to revise. We also did not consider recent AIWs since we had not distributed a list of recent AIWs to proposers. We then shared our scores verbally and discussed the score if there were differences of opinion. For the most part, scores were comparable.

Published AIW criteria:

- 1) An issue that requires **immediate** action for our witness to make an impact
- 2) An issue that is **specific** and that is too narrow to merit three years of study and action that define the Congregational Study/Action Issue process
- 3) An issue that does not duplicate a recent AIW
- 4) An issue that is **grounded** in our Unitarian Universalist theology and practice
- 5) An issue that **fits** with our member congregations' capacity to take meaningful action
- 6) An issue that presents **opportunity** for our member congregations to become respected participants in public dialogue
- 7) An issue that is crafted in civil language

We reviewed processes for counting CSAI and AIW votes. For CSAIs, we will create piles of ballots for each number and then count the piles. For AIWs, counters will use slash tally marks to record the three selections on each ballot. Susan will have an excel spreadsheet for recording each person's tallies and add them quickly.

We discussed the plan for the CSAI mini-assembly and the schedule for the hearing on the new CSAI. We assigned AIW rooms to Commissioners and clarified that the offsite delegate mini-assembly would happen with a commissioner calling in to facilitate. Off site delegates would consider all three AIWs. Onsite delegates would be able to attend a mini-assembly for one AIW. We discussed how to lead the AIW mini-assemblies.

We agreed to meet Friday at 1:30 in the back of plenary hall to finalize AIW facilitation and meet with tellers to clarify ballot counting processes. Next meeting will be Saturday immediately after AIW mini-assemblies to begin reviewing proposed amendments.

Susan will prepare CSW alert for Friday and draft for Saturday tomorrow morning. Christina, David, and CJ each agreed to contact one of the AIW proposers not selected as soon as we determined tomorrow night the signature counts. Audrey will notify those selected.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

6/26/14

Susan convened meeting at 1:30 p.m. with tellers and Commissioners to meet one another and talk about mike procedures during plenaries and how to handle written ballots. CSW members then visited the counting room (Locker Room #3).

Adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

Audrey received signature forms and confirmed that the 6 we selected for submission had all received the required signatures.

6/27/14

Susan Goekler convened the meeting at noon, immediately after AIW mini assemblies. We reviewed each AIW and the submitted amendments. We decided which amendments to incorporate, and prioritized and provided rationales for those unincorporated.

Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.