

**Pacific Northwest District of the Unitarian Universalist Association
Board Meeting**

2-4 May 2008
Eugene, Oregon
Minutes

Friday 2 May 2008

Board members present: Dick Jacke (President), Amber Alexander, Tom Clouthier, JW Harrington, Margaret Keip, Jerry Regan, Marcia Shaw, Allan Warrior

Staff present: Diane Brinson (Administrator), Janine Larson (District Executive)

Guest (late afternoon): Dan Hotchkiss (Alban Institute)

Board President Dick Jacke **called the meeting to order** at 9:08 a.m., in the fellowship room of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Eugene. For our chalice lighting, JW read a passage from Peter J. Gomes book *The Good Life*, ending with “We do not do virtuous things in order to be happy; rather, we are happy because we do virtuous things; and we are only truly happy when we are doing what we are meant to do and being what we are meant to be.”

After a “**check-in**” by each participant, we settled roles for the meeting.

Process observer: Allan

Gatekeeper: Margaret

JW will not be able to participate in the Sunday session; Amber agreed to record minutes of that session.

Dick noted that the Persony™ “webinar” would be at 2:00; and that the approval of minutes would not be on the consent agenda, because the minutes had not received sufficient e-mail votes to be on the consent agenda. Tom moved and Margaret seconded the approval of **the agenda for this meeting**. The motion was **approved by voice vote**.

By voice vote, the Board **approved of the minutes of the 28 February-2 March Board meeting**.

Dick played segments from a video recording “Strengthening Lay & Professional Leadership” by Gini Courter and Rev. Rob Eller-Isaacs. One theme was the importance of mission and vision to the health and vitality of our congregations, and the UU movement at large. The last segment ended with the question “If your congregation were 10 times as bold, what might you envision [as the state of] Unitarian Universalism in your community in 10 years?”

The Board engaged in a discussion of “dialogic monitoring.”

We (organically and informally) described this as (1) a very few metrics for each ends statement followed by (2) back-and-forth discussion that elicits (a) major trends relevant to religion, UUism, and UUism in the Northwest, (b) whether we’re making progress toward the particular end, (c) whether the staff have what is needed, (d) how we could better monitor the particular end.

We repeatedly reiterated that the key Board roles are vision, goals, and linkage. After members and Janine discussed the importance and difficulties of congregational linkage, Dick

reminded us that our Sunday agenda includes a focused discussion of linkage. (Janine suggested that we work to identify trends in our own sub-regions – whether through linkage visits or otherwise).

We repeatedly returned to a sense that successful Board work would energize the Board.

The Board reviewed the monitoring report on our Global Ends Policy (see the written document). Dick reminded us of the purposes of our discussion: (1) does our reading of the report lead us to generate additional sub-ends; (2) how do we feel about the progress indicated in the report; (3) how do we feel about the appropriateness of the indicators used.

Should we have a sub-end regarding welcoming and gathering participation of youth and young adults? We discussed the UUA and District goal to better integrate youth and young-adult activities within individual congregations, and the question of how to infuse youth ministries and young-adult ministries with spiritual awareness. Jerry suggested that we develop such a sub-end.

How do we better serve very small and relatively large congregations? Our discussion of this included a concern for the structural and budget split between District and continental services.

In response to the sub-end regarding “involvement with local or regional ecumenical, interfaith or secular groups,” Marcia reminded us of the “10 times as bold” question: can we have bolder goals? Subsequent discussion noted that many ministers and individual congregants are heavily involved, but seldom do the individuals generate involvement by (or in the name of) congregations. Jerry suggested that we as a Board link with UUMA and LREDA boards toward this end. Marcia suggested that we develop a more specific sub-end on this.

In response to Margaret’s question about how the Board’s limitations statements guide the District’s work toward these ends, Janine said that the Board’s policy that the District serves congregations (rather than individuals or interfaith groups) is an important and helpful guide.

Marcia moved to **approve the monitoring report**; Amber seconded; **the motion passed by voice vote**.

We agreed to **charge two task forces to help us move toward developing new sub-ends regarding (a) youth and young adults ministries and (b) interfaith and ecumenical involvement**. “Better” sub-ends would be simpler and more meaningful. Each committee will provide us with relevant information and resources before our August meeting, and will lead a Board discussion in August. **Amber and Jerry agreed to serve as task force (a); Dick and Marcia agreed to serve as task force (b)**.

We reviewed the 3/31/08 Budget Status Report, distributed by Janine and the April Annual Program Fund report, distributed by Jerry.

It’s not difficult to foresee financial difficulties of our congregations and the District.

Janine reported that she has not yet revised the Budget Projection because the fiscal situations of some of our congregations are still deteriorating in the continuing economic downturn. (By our next meeting, Janine will have revised the spending plan to reflect new forecasts).

We discussed the importance of:

- establishing and accounting for mission in budgeting and soliciting congregants’ gifts and congregations’ APF payments;
- improving congregations’ comprehensive conceptions and programs of stewardship;

- Board members' helping their congregations understand spiritual and moral leadership through generosity.

JW moved to accept the BSR; Tom seconded; **the motion passed by voice vote.**

We spent an hour experimenting with the Persony™ computer-and-telephone-mediated teleconferencing system (“webinar”), facilitated remotely by Rev. Dr. Richard Speck (Executive of the Joseph Priestley District). We then discussed the results and the feasibility of using this to conduct Board business, to provide District-sponsored trainings, and to assist in Board linkage with congregations.

We were joined by Dan Hotchkiss (Alban Institute). With Dan, everyone present participated in a discussion of what the District does well, what the District does less well than our vision, and what the Board does to support and ensure the District's effectiveness.

- Does the District organization aim foremost to *serve* its congregations or to *affect* its congregations to move toward a shared vision (which vision might include congregations yet unborn)?
- Dan noted that before the merger, American Universalist regional districts were separately chartered organizations while Unitarian regional districts were departments of the Unitarian Association.
- Perhaps the Board could identify specific questions it would like to answer with respect to the District's overarching (or multi-year) goals, and spend substantial amounts of time and information gathering in answering those questions (developing those multi-year goals).

We discussed Saturday's end-of-session Board-influenced discussion with Leadership Council participants.

The District Bylaws (Article VI, Sec 4(b)) calls for an external audit every three years. Tom will arrange for an external audit (for the year ending 30 June 2008) if we are indeed at the three-year point, after comparing quotes from three firms.

Dick led a review of governance practices or written policies that are not included in our current governance policies – how should we proceed?

“Old Board policies”

The position of President Elect.

Decisions regarding current policy

Margaret moved that we **develop wording for a formal policy toward this end**, Marcia seconded; **Board approved by voice vote.**

The position of Past President.

The practice of two-year Presidential terms.

Provision of at least one full year's advance notice (at the AGM) of changes in congregational dues.

Executive Committee

The Board concurred that **the last four policies in the left column should not be added to current policies.**

Dick led the Board through an assessment of the Governance Policies (GOV).

- We agreed to develop metrics and to assign Board members to draft assessments of the Board's progress toward each policy, in time for a formal review next May.

- Margaret **moved that we change the wording in Line 182** from “for whose needs” to “for whom.” Tom seconded; **the motion passed by voice vote.**
- Margaret **moved that Lines 193 and 194 be deleted** (“The President of the Board is charged to make decisions on issues of Governance Process and Board-DE linkage within Board policies.”) because this is also stated in lines 201-202. JW seconded; **the motion passed by voice vote.**
- Margaret **moved that the sentence beginning on line 225 be deleted** (“Personal mileage, meals and lodging will be reimbursed at prevailing UUA staff rates, effective at the beginning of each fiscal year.”), so that Board members would be reimbursed at the IRS rate of 14 cents/mile; JW seconded. **The motion did not pass.**

The meeting recessed at 6:10 p.m.

Sunday 4 May 2008

Board members present: Dick Jacke (President), Amber Alexander, Tom Clouthier, Margaret Keip, Jerry Regan, Marcia Shaw, Allan Warrior

Staff present: Diane Brinson (Administrator), Janine Larson (District Executive)

Board President Dick Jacke **called the meeting to order** at 11:00 a.m., at the home of Olga Turner, the Eugene congregation’s president.

Returning to the question of Board linkage with congregations, the Board agreed that those Board members who wish to do so could make congregational visits as part of their linkage work. Those members who have not done visits before should have a discussion with Janine about the proper and improper roles of board members when visiting congregations, to ensure that the DE’s authority is not compromised. Dick will provide the list of questions last used in congregational visits, for those Board members who are interested.

The Board engaged in monitoring its own adherence to its Governance policies.

We have come up short by some measures, especially regarding responsiveness to minutes, calls for input, etc., between meetings.

The Board continued with a discussion of governance issues.

- We have scheduled Board meetings around District Leadership Councils as a form of linkage: a way to interact with congregations’ leaders. Moving the Board around the region in this way is expensive.
- Tom **moved to cancel the November Board meeting**. Allan seconded; after discussion of the implications for our conduct of business, **the motion passed**.
- Discussing alternative forms of linkage, perhaps we should re-establish individual Board members’ visits to congregations, perhaps in conjunction (or at least coordination) with the District Executive. Perhaps we could use a single question from the congregational survey (which will be mailed soon) as a conversation starter.
- The Board will have at least one vacancy as of February 2009. We discussed attributes needed in new Board members. Dick will circulate the e-mail address of Nancy Evans Jones, the chair of the nominating committee, so that individual Board members can communicate with her, if desired.

- **Dick volunteered to draft a policy regarding the designation and role of a President-Elect.**
- The Board discussed agenda items for the next meeting: Thursday evening through Sunday afternoon 14-17 August, in Seabeck WA.

Allan reported on his observations of meeting process on Friday and Sunday: we certainly did not hold to agenda order and timing, but we had good discussions in orderly fashion, with good work by the gatekeeper.

After closing words by Tom, Dick Jacke adjourned the meeting at 12:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
James W. Harrington, Jr.
Secretary
(with the assistance of Sunday notes from Amber Alexander)