**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Miguel de Allende**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**(Conducted via Zoom)**

**February 11, 2021**

Members Present: Dan Neuspiel, President; William Dalsimer, 1st VP; Chris Chase, 2nd VP; Jane Wilkinson, Treasurer; Joseph Plummer, Secretary; Becky Langrall, Bonney McDowell, Joan Wolf, Jurgen Ahlers. Absent: Jim Harper

Ex-Officio: Rev. Tom Rosiello

Guests: Paula Peace, Ellie Goodwin, Gary Belkin, Margo Johnson

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by President Dan Neuspiel at 1:00 p.m.

**Opening Words**

Jurgen read words from the prophet Amos.

**Minutes**

After a change of the second for the motion to engage consulting accountant Alan Rodriguez, Chris moved, Bill seconded, and the Board approved the minutes of the January 14, 2021 Board Meeting.

**President’s Report**

Dan reported that he attended January 21, 2021, UUA-Southern Regional Presidents’ Webinar on Shared Ministry.

Dan discussed Mexico’s new requirements for a resident visa and RFC (Mexican Social Security number) for all non-Mexican board members of civil organizations (ACs). Bill, Bonney, and Joseph would need such visas. Noting a potential threat to the UUFSMA’s AC status from non-compliance with this requirement, Dan proposed a reasonable delay in filing the revision of the revised ACTA and the Fellowship’s application for non-profit status in Mexico while resolving this issue. Board officers’ RFCs are required for the ACTA filing, but a reassignment of officer positions to board members holding resident visas would be a less desirable solution. Pending further information on the impact of this requirement, the board agreed to delay the ACTA filing and will provide up to a year for individual members to resolve their visa status.

**Committee and Taskforce Reports**

**COVID19 Taskforce**

Bonney reported that the Task Force continues to update guidelines with the latest information on Covid-19 variants and social-distancing and masking recommendations.

**Care Team**

Joan reported no change in members’ needs for the team’s support.

**Membership Committee**

Chris reviewed proposed changes in the bylaws’ definition of fellowship membership. They would emphasize a new member’s agreement with the UU Covenant, Seven Principles, and their participation in the Fellowship. Jane proposed without objection encapsulating the criteria in a form that new members would agree to sign. Chris will circulate a draft membership bylaw amendment for the March 4 board meeting. A discussion of long-term members who cease participating in the Fellowship prompted a suggestion for designating “lapsed” members. Chris will consider that category as well as the definition of disruptive behavior in the draft. The committee’s summary report is attached.**[[1]](#endnote-1)**

**Welcoming Congregation**

Chris will send an invitation to the First Parish of Stow and Acton to participate in the Children’s Education Program, which will be making muffins during its next meeting. A summary report is attached.[[2]](#endnote-2)

**Sunday Service Committee**

Paula noted Denise Galipeau’s high level of proactivity and enthusiasm in her trial role as Sunday Service Manager. Other items from the committee are attached.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Dan reported that Diana Amaya is identifying Spanish and other language translation services for Sunday Services. The initial cost, which is not in our 2021 budget, may be sponsored by members. Vendor selection will entail a multi-step process. Tom is talking to a possible guest bilingual minister.

**Social Action Committee**

Becky noted the breakdown of grants as percentage amounts in the committee’s report. She will prepare a resolution for the March 4 board meeting to authorize regular annual membership in the UUA Social Action Committee. Chris requested that the donation be named in the budget.

Becky agreed that the committee will report on NGOs that offer opportunities to volunteer for fellowship members and UUs from U.S. and Canadian congregations visiting SMA after pandemic restrictions are lifted. Becky will add the UUFSMA’s 2019 one-time grant to Jovenes Adelante and 2020 funds for the SMA food security project to the committee’s history of UUFSMA donations to the SMA community. Other items reported from the committee are attached.[[4]](#endnote-4)

**Endowment Committee**

Ellie reported that new contributions will bring the Endowment’s liquid assets to more than $30,000. She also noted that donations from IRA accounts result in a reduced tax burden for endowment donors and member pledges. The committee’s report of conversations about the Endowment with thought leaders is attached.**[[5]](#endnote-5)**

**Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee Report is attached.[[6]](#endnote-6)

**Widening the Circle of Concern Taskforce**

The Widening the Circle of Concern Taskforce is meeting regularly and soliciting nominations for leaders of the small groups. The rollout of the project will occur after the annual meeting with selection of members in April and first meeting in May. A report of the taskforce will be added to the annual meeting agenda.

**Pledge Team**

Dan reported that, as of today, 2021 member pledges to UUFSMA total $78,723 toward $90,000 goal.

**Finance Committee**

Margo noted that the committee has several candidates for a new member. Margo and Gary are assessing an alternative means for paying staff in their national currencies—pesos and U.S. and Canadian dollars.

**Treasurer’s Report**

Jane reported that $16,000 of the Endowment Fund has been invested with the UUCEF. The Budget Report has embedded comments in pop-outs of its spreadsheet cells, and they provide information about calculations of individual items.

Dan proposed and the board approve funds for administrative staff to join the Association of UU Administrators at a cost of $100 for one and $150 a year for two staff. Becky noted that staff ought to use the group as an opportunity for career development and professional friendships. Diana Amaya has indicated her wish to join. Paula will encourage Denise also to join.

Bonney noted the fiscal crisis at Cruz Roja due to the pandemic. A Blue-Plate Special will be scheduled for March 21.

**Minister’s Report**

The Committee on Ministry will meet Tuesday, February 16 for the first time and plan for the first Resident Minister after the return to in-person services. On March 11 Tom will begin a two-hour, online weekly course on UU history that will extend for three weeks. The launch of Tom’s monthly UU Chat group is delayed. Building on the joint Sunday Service with First Parish of Stow and Acton, Tom will organize a joint service in April with the UU group in Lake Chapala as well as other Mexican UUs. UU Course sessions will be open to all members.

**Old Business**

**Administrative staff**

Dan noted that weekly meetings between staff and board members are improving communication and morale, an opinion shared by Chris and echoed by Jane and Tom.

**Envisioning the Future Report**

Dan asked the board for updates on the implementation timeline of the report, and none were offered. Jurgen and Chris will discuss the timelines for Envisioning Our Future projects and the integration of the various projects with each other.

**New Business**

**Annual Meeting**

Reflecting a consensus from earlier discussion, Dan said the revised ACTA and Bylaws will be included on the agenda of the March 21 Annual Meeting. Joseph provided a brief description of the eBallot Voting technology to be used during the meeting.

Dan noted that the Nominating Committee Report and the Notice of the March 7 deadline for other nominees will be sent to members by February 21. Other Annual Meeting materials will be sent to members by March 7.

A quorum for the annual meeting is 20 percent of all members. Votes for board and committee candidates will occur ahead of resolutions. Members will be asked to use the chat box for simple questions or request to make statements. They will then be called upon in order and be unmuted for their statements. Tom recommended two people be assigned to review and screen chat box postings and direct questions to specific board members for answers.

The draft March 21 Annual Meeting Agenda is attached to these minutes.[[7]](#endnote-7)

**UU Association**

Dan reported that the Fellowship is eligible for five delegates (in addition to Tom) to the 2021 General Assemblyand urged board members to consider attending. The assembly’s theme is “Circle 'Round for Justice, Healing, Courage.” Registration is open and is $200, and the first 4 members who request it may receive $100 in reimbursement.

Dan invited board members to attend the February 27 UUA online workshop“Is Your Congregation Ready for a New Day Rising?” Dan will query the Widening the Circle Task Force members about attending.

Upcoming 2021 Board Meetings have been scheduled for Thursday at 1 p.m. CTZ on March 4 (Opening Words, Joseph), April 8, May 13, and June 10.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 pm CTZ

Minutes recorded and submitted by Board Secretary Joseph Plummer

**Attachments**

1. Membership Committee

   • 44 households welcomed to participate in Feb 21 New Member Ceremony.

   • Bylaws supplement has been drafted.

   • Two extenuating 1:1 services have been provided.

   • Feb Mixer served 5 enthusiastic participants and 1 host.

   • Newsletter photo series includes Board, Endowment Committee, and Care Team. Many more are in process. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Children's Program

   • Cooking with Kids, Session II: Energy Bites was successful. Session III: Muffins is scheduled for Feb 13, 11:30 a.m.

   • Children were invited to First Parish service.

   • 30 Days of Love resources, Week 2, were sent to parents. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Sunday Service Committee

   * Denise Galipeau has been of tremendous help in the current trial period and partnering is going smoothly with other staff & SSC co-chairs
   * Joint Sunday Service Jan 31 w/ First Parish Stow/Acton, MA was rewarding and challenging
     + Upcoming Inter MX Joint Sunday Service will be Apr 25 w/ Lake Chapala UU, CDMX, Puerto Vallarta
   * Guest Local Musicians – well-received pre-recordings were included Jan 24 (Almitri Tzigane, Yoremem Jacobi)
   * New for recent services: 2 Slideshows were produced of Fellowship/SMA; Offering music video; Pre-service screenshots about website; separation of Covid Report from Announcements
   * ZOOM Sunday Services to date (through Feb 7) – 46 services.

   [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Social Action Committee

   * Considered two proposals by Dan Neuspiel:
     + Theme-based grant giving and
     + Shifting the grant cycle to the spring after the Congregational Meeting once the budget has been approved, allowing the Committee to work with a single, agreed upon amount for grants.
   * Worked on the team’s mission, vision, and norms.
   * Accepted final allocations of grant monies at the $47,500 level based on the group’s survey feedback.
   * Discussed updates to the RFP, Review Template, and Steward’s Role.
   * Reviewed Jane’s recommendations re: NGO financial tracking and interim reporting.
   * Discussed a Blue-Plate Special suggestion from Paula Peace (supporting local musicians) and how we might track funds, per Jane’s recommendations.

   [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

   SUMMARY OF LEADERSHIP CONVERSATIONS REGARDING ENDOWMENT FUND

   During the Fall, 2020 the Endowment Committee held a series of Zoom and phone conversations with 30 Fellowship “leaders” referred to us by the Board of Directors. The purpose of the calls was to determine members’ hopes and concerns regarding the new Endowment Fund.

   Using a template for each conversation as a guide to ensure consistency, we heard some common themes reoccur and some individual suggestions and concerns.

   Consistent Themes:

   Primary reasons for Fellowship participation:

   * Community
   * Vetted social justice (one couple did not value this and preferred to choose its own organizations to help)
   * UU principles
   * Ministerial leadership (one couple expressed strong preference for Minister vs lay-led services)

   Primary reasons for giving to Endowment Fund:

   * Vetted social action,
   * It’s the right thing to do
   * Value the institution
   * More personal impact (than large US non-profits)
   * Will provide resources for the long-term

   Suggestions / Concerns:

   * The Committee should make efforts to communicate process for
     + decision making
     + priorities
     + governance
     + investment management
   * Emphasize future bequests rather than current donations so we don’t conflict with Pledge Drive
   * Emphasize smaller donations rather than trying to “hit a homerun”
   * We should integrate our future giving activities with the Social Action Committee
   * EF should not be used for general expenses
   * Need to tap into what makes people feel good when giving
   * Members of Pledge and Social Action committees fear that giving to Endowment may reduce donations to annual pledge drive resulting in smaller budget for social action (even though in the future Endowment Fund can result in greater social action giving)
   * Members of Social Action Committee hope to have opportunity to somehow advise Endowment Committee regarding future giving to NGOs

   Individual Suggestions/Concerns

   * We should conduct a Fellowship survey re future congregation spending priorities
   * Regular newsletter could be effective communication vehicle
   * EF should not be used to contribute to NGOs
   * EF should be used for very specific (known) causes such as a piano or new chairs, etc.

   [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. **Nominating Committee Report for March 21, 2021 Annual Meeting**

   The Nominating Committee of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of San Miguel de Allende presents the following nominations for vote by the Fellowship members at the March 21, 2021 Annual Meeting.

   **Nominations for Board of Directors:**

   The following individuals are being nominated to fill terms from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023:

   * **1st Vice President:** Bill Dalsimer (Has served on the Board in this position for two years and is nominated for a second two-year term.)
   * **Treasurer:** Gary Belkin (Nominated to serve his first two-year term on the Board. See short biographical statement below.)
   * **Secretary:** Joseph Plummer (Has served on the Board in this position for one year filling a vacancy and is nominated for a two-year term.)
   * **Member:** Rebecca Langrall (Has served on the Board for two years and is nominated for a second two-year term.)
   * **Member:** Christie McGue (Nominated to serve her first two-year term on the Board. See short biographical statement below.)

   For your information others serving on the Board of Directors whose terms will expire on March 31, 2022 are:

   * Dan Neuspiel: President
   * Chris Chase: 2nd Vice President
   * Bonney McDowell: Member
   * Joan Wolf: Member
   * Jurgen Ahlers: Member

   The following are leaving membership on the Board on March 31, 2021 after years of dedicated service to the Fellowship:

   * Jim Harper
   * Jane Wilkinson

   **New Members Biographical Information**

   **Gary Belkin**

   Gary received a B.S. in Accounting in 1966 and a J.D. in 1969, both from from the University of Illinois, Champaign.  He became a C.P.A. in 1966.  He served as the in-house tax counsel for Homart Development Co., a shopping center development company owned by Sears, until 1995, when Homart was sold.  He then established a private law practice where he focused on corporate, real estate, income tax and estate planning matters.  He has been active with Unitarian Universalists as a member of the Sunday Service and Finance Committees.  He was a lifelong resident of Chicago until he and his husband, Ed Tuder, moved to SMA part time in 2015.  They became full time SMA residents in 2017.

   **Christy McGue**

   Christie received a degree from the College of New Rochelle and had a fun and very fulfilling career with the Federal government, retiring in 2000.  In retirement she worked for her local land conservancy in northern Michigan saving farmland, dunes and watersheds on Lake Michigan. She has served on a number of local and national boards, most notably raising funds for the impoverished citizens of Gaza and the West Bank. She has been active with Unitarian Universalists as a member of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Grand Traverse where she served as a board member for several years. She currently serves as the UUFSMA representative on the UU Southern Region Chalice Lighter Grant Committee, on the Pledge Drive Committee and Social Action Committee. Christie and her husband, Bob Calt, purchased a house in SMA in 2013 where they live over half of the year, summering in Traverse City, Michigan.

   **Nominations and Voting**

   Active members can be nominated for any Board post available by request of ten or more active members. Such a request must be submitted to the Nominating Committee in writing or by email by **Sunday, March 7, 2021**. Please submit to John Simsarian, Nominating Committee Chair, at [jcsimsarian@yahoo.com](mailto:jcsimsarian@yahoo.com)

   Distance voting can take place for the Slate if you are unavailable to attend the Annual Meeting on Sunday, March 21, by voting in writing or by email to John Simsarian, Nominating Committee Chair, at [jcsimsarian@yahoo.com](mailto:jcsimsarian@yahoo.com) by **March 17**.

   **Nominations for Nominating Committee Members**

   The following members are nominated to serve two-year terms on the Nominating Committee from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2024.

   * Ed Short (Has served a two-year term and a one-year term and is nominated for a second two-year term.)
   * Elisa Gonzalez (Has served a two-year term and is nominated for a second two-year term.)
   * Donna Shubrooks. (Nominated for her first two-year term.)

   Nominations for the Nominating Committee may also be made by Members from the floor at the Annual Meeting, Sunday, March 21, 2021.

   For your information others serving on the Nominating Committee whose terms will expire on March 31, 2022 are:

   * John Simsarian
   * Ellie Goodwin
   * Francoise Yohalem

   The following individual will be leaving membership on the Nominating Committee effective March 31, 2021 and is acknowledged for his valuable help to the Committee and the Fellowship:

   * Bill Wilkinson

   **Nominations for the Endowment Committee Members**

   The following members are nominated to serve on the Endowment Committee:

   * Steve Singer (Has served one year on the Committee and is nominated to fill a one-year vacancy on the Committee.)
   * Joanna Kafarowski (Has served one year on the Committee and is nominated to fill a two-year vacancy on the Committee.)
   * Jerry Fastrup (Nominated to fill a three-year term on the Committee.)
   * Bob Doupé (Nominated to fill a three-year term on the Committee.)

   Nominations for the Endowment Committee may also be made by Members from the floor at the Annual Meeting, Sunday, March 21, 2021.

   For your information, others serving on the Endowment Committee are:

   * Steve Steury
   * Ellie Goodwin

   The following will be leaving Endowment Committee membership effective March 31, 2021 and have contributed significantly to the success of this Committee during its first important year of operation:

   * Tricia Singer
   * Karen Woolhouse

   Respectfully submitted:

   John Simsarian, Chairperson, Nominating Committee

   February 19, 2021 [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. ****

   **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP OF SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE**

   **AGENDA ANNUAL MEETING SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2021 AT 12:30 PM, Via Zoom**

   *The Mission of this Fellowship is to serve the spirit as each individual understands it, to serve the educational and pastoral needs of our own community, and to serve our multicultural community through actions that further social justice.*

   1. Member Sign-In and Establish Quorum: Joseph Plummer, Secretary
   2. Opening Remarks: Tom Rosiello, Minister
   3. Welcome and Annual Report: Dan Neuspiel, President
   4. Explanation of voting procedures: Joseph Plummer, Secretary
   5. 2021 Budget Presentation: Jane Wilkinson, Treasurer
   6. Discussion of Proposed Acta and Bylaw Changes: Joseph Plummer, Secretary
      1. Redefining Membership: Chris Chase, 2nd Vice President
   7. Nominating Committee Report: John Simsarian, Chair
      1. Presentation of slates:
         1. Officers and Board Members for 2021
         2. Endowment Committee Members for 2021
         3. Nominating Committee Members for 2022
   8. Vote on Budget, Acta and Bylaw changes, and proposed candidate slates
   9. Envisioning Our Future Report: Jurgen Ahlers, Chair
   10. Announcement of results of votes on budget, resolutions and elections: Joseph Plummer, Secretary
   11. Adjournment

   [↑](#endnote-ref-7)