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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**

**(Conducted via Zoom)**

**August 12, 2021**

**Members Present:** Dan Neuspiel, President; William Dalsimer, 1st VP; Chris Chase, 2nd VP; Gary Belkin, Treasurer; Joseph Plummer, Secretary; Jurgen Ahlers, Becky Langrall, Bonney McDowell, Christie McGue, Joan Wolf; Rev. Tom Rosiello, Ex-Officio

**Guests:** Eleanor Goodwin, Margo Johnson, Paula Peace, Richard Snyder, Betse Davies, John Simsarian

A quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by President Dan Neuspiel at 1:05 p.m.

Dan Neuspiel read Opening Words by Richard S. Gilbert on the topic of centering oneself.

Bill Dalsimer moved and Bonney McDowell seconded approval of the agenda as submitted, and the agenda was accepted unanimously.

Bill moved and Christie McGue seconded approval of minutes from the July 8, 2021 Board Meeting; the minutes were approved with a notation that the August 25 planned outdoor gathering of members was postponed after the board meeting.

**President’s Report**

Dan clarified board decision-making regarding the proposed Minister in Residence Program. He noted that the board has not endorsed this proposal, but the board supports the Committee on Ministry’s plan to hold small group discussions in September to inform members about the proposal, gather ideas, and hear questions. The small groups will not make any decisions. However, they will provide information and ideas to inform the board’s deliberations on the proposal and its funding if the recommendation moves forward. Members will then decide on the process in a democratic process consistent with the UU 5th Principle.

Former Board member Dick Snyder was invited to offer his views. He apologized for angry and offensive inferences in his prior public statement. He expressed concerns over 1) a proposed survey of member support for social action grants; 2) an initially proposed allocation for 2021 Fellowship operating expenses larger than funds allocated for Fellowship social action grants, which were subsequently equalized in the final 2021 budget; 3) a board plan to hold a public budget hearing to gather members’ input prior to the 2022 annual meeting; and 4) limitation of budget matters during the 2022 annual meeting to a yes-or-no vote by members on a final budget presented after the earlier budget hearing. He added that these changes represent a departure from prior years, when a 50/50 split between money donated to San Miguel NGOs and fellowship expenses have been presented. He requested that the past practice of a 50/50 budget-grant allocation be formalized in the UUFSMA Mission Statement. Further comments were postponed until later in the meeting.

**Committee and Taskforce Reports**

**Covid-19 Task Force**

Bonney McDowell noted recent negative changes in the pandemic environment because of the Covid Delta variant. For UUFSMA-sponsored events, she advised heightened caution for group meetings, limiting indoor meetings of no more than five people; and wearing masks when meeting outdoors. The Task Force advises cancellation of September’s in-person discussions of the proposed Minister in Residence Program and waiting to see whether to advise cancellation of the proposed first in person Sunday Service in October. The first in-person gathering of the Sunday Service tech team remains on track.

Following this discussion, Dan proposed, Becky Langrall moved, Chris Chase seconded, and the board approved a motion to limit UUFSMA indoor meetings to no more than 5 persons.

**Care Team**

Tom Rosiello reported an increase in requests for pastoral care because of concerns over vaccinated people becoming infected by the Covid Delta variant.

**Membership Committee**

Chris reported on the draft revisions of the UUFSMA Disruptive Behavior Policy and Procedures, which is being updated with appropriate and clarifying language, places personal safety and inclusion on an equal footing, and provides guidance for difficult situations. She noted that additional procedures may be needed for the return to in person meetings. Bill recommended a preamble to place the policy in the context of UU Principles. Conflict and de-escalation training and management may need further elaboration. Bill agreed to draft a policy preamble for review at the September board meeting.

**Children’s Education Program**

No discussion

**Sunday Service Committee**

Paula reviewed the plan for the Sunday Service Tech Team to return to the Aldea on September 19. The current team members will be vaccinated, wear masks, and practice social distancing in a well-ventilated room. It is not known whether a new member will be vaccinated.

She asked for continued board and Covid Task Force guidance ahead of the proposed first in-person Sunday service, for arrangements to control attendance and social distancing, requirements for vaccinations and protective masks, and communications. Tom will prepare two service programs for the occasion, one for in person gathering and a second fallback Zoom-only service. An updated Covid Team recommendation will be presented during the September board meeting.

Paula also reported on the committee’s reorganization into smaller teams that manage clusters of Sunday services. This redistribution of service management will replace the present modality of the whole committee managing the entire Sunday Service calendar. Paula continues to research the most economical sourcing of new audiovisual equipment to broadcast in person services online.

Dan expressed reservations about unbudgeted costs and an absence of mandate from the fellowship for simultaneous, bilingual translation of Sunday services. He sought comments on alternative approaches to multiculturalism. Discussion elicited suggestions for a bilingual breakout room after services, continued easing into bilingual elements of services, translations of portions of services, and Spanish language items posted in the newsletter or otherwise communicated. Paula commented on the value of bilingual programming in welcoming Spanish speakers, children, and guests. Joan noted that bilingual programs represent a demonstration of politeness on the part of non-Spanish speaking residents of Mexico.

**Social Action Committee**

On behalf of the committee, Becky requested clarification of the board’s commitment to allocating fifty percent of annual budgets to social action grants and the counting of unspent revenue from prior years when determining the total annual budget.

Dan remarked on the source of Dick’s earlier comment that a 2020 survey demonstrated overwhelming support among members for a fifty percent allocation of budget revenue to social action groups. He noted that the survey sought members’ priorities for potential cutbacks in the already approved 2020 budget after the onset of the Covid pandemic and resulting loss of unpledged revenues appeared likely to force reduced expenditures. The survey disclosed that approximately half of respondents did not want to reduce the budgeted level of social action grants.

He also noted that a survey of members’ views on social action grants prepared earlier this year was not distributed at the request of the Social Action Committee. Dan said that the committee can conduct the survey whenever it wishes to do so. He added that with recent growth and turnover of membership in recent years, the views of the members on social action grants are unclear. He also noted that the board has already unanimously approved a motion to allocated 50 percent of projected income to social action grants in the 2022 budget. He then invited board members to propose resolutions if desired.

Becky proposed a motion for a policy that fifty percent of the fellowship’s annual budget be allocated to social action grants and that the budget include income not spent in the preceding year. The motion was seconded by Christie McGue. Dan then noted that the 2021 budget period will not produce surplus revenue to pass to the 2022 budget and that the board’s recent resolution for 50/50 allocation of 2022 budget revenue to social action grants specifically excluded contingency funds and income from grants now being sought for new programs. In discussion, John Simsarian responded that SAC proposes that the 50/50 formula would apply to the bottom line of the budget and include additions of funds from surplus funds. He added that this discussion should occur in open meeting with members rather than through survey of members.

After extended discussion identified uncertainties about the meaning of key terms in the original motion, Becky withdrew it for further clarification by the Social Action Committee.

In additional discussion, Chris moved for a Blue Plate Special to support the gang-member rehabilitation program of the NGO CASA, Christie McGue seconded it, and the motion was approved unanimously. The September 19 Sunday Service was designated for this BPS.

**Endowment Committee**

Dan proposed a closer working relationship with the Envisioning Committee to focus on specific long-term goals and targeted fund-raising.

**Committee on Ministry**

Bill reported that dates for implementation of the proposed Minister in Residence program is a moving target to become clearer after group discussions produce an assessment of members’ support. Board discussion addressed topics for the September small group meetings, selection of facilitators, capturing a record of discussions, role of the minister, and circulation of the minutes to members.

**Finance Committee and Treasurer’s Report**

Gary requested an additional $200 for a Dropbox Family Plan. He also noted that his direct access to the Frost Bank account is delayed while necessary documents are being delivered. He has removed passthrough revenues from the income statement of revenue and expenses for operations and reported separately as are exchange rate reports and cash flows. Reminder letters have been sent to pledgers. Sunday collections brought in 75 percent of the budgeted amount for the first half of 2021, creating a projected annualized shortfall of approximately $1,200. Sunday offering announcements will bring attention to this issue.

**Minister’s Report**

Tom noted fragile emotional state of members seeking his counsel because of Covid’s resurgence.

**Old Business**

**Administrative staff**

Dan requested that more board members volunteer for bimonthly Tuesday meetings that he holds with administrative staff.

**Envisioning the Future Report Followup**

Jurgen noted the need to continue to educate members about the report, specifically through newsletter articles.

It was proposed that the organization of UUFSMA archival material be assigned to Diana. Tom recommended requesting of members documents and other material related to the fellowship’s past that they may have. Bonney suggested that the ministry succession planning should be categorized as a project for the near term rather than in a four-to-six-year timeframe.

**New Business**

The proposal to create a Program Council was postponed for discussion at a future meeting.

Bill volunteered to provide opening words for the September 9, and Dan requested for volunteers to provide opening words for board meetings through the end of the year.

Future 2021 Board Meetings are scheduled for the second Thursday of each month at 1 p.m. CTZ as follows: Sept. 9, Oct 14, Nov 11, and Dec 9.

The agenda completed the meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m. CTZ

Minutes recorded and submitted by Board Secretary Joseph Plummer