

Board of Directors
Regular meeting July 13, 2023

Directors present: Lee Knox, Susan MacDonnell, Phyllis Culp, Allen Zeesman, Anne Geyer, Jurgen Ahlers, Chris Chase, Michael Murphy

Absent: Tom Rosiello, ex officio

Visitors: Dan Neuspiel, Cathy Canepa, Phyllis Vince, Janet Freed, Robin Loving, Margo Johnson, Paula Peace, Eleanor Goodwin, Bart Jarvis, Richard Snyder

Called to order at 3:04pm

Opening words from President

Recitation of Board Covenant

1. Motion to accept the minutes of the June 8, 2023 Board Meeting.

Move to accept: Susan MacDonnell, Second- Lee Knox, no corrections, Unanimously approved

2. Motion to accept resignation of Christie McGue, from the Board, as of April 14, 2023.

Move to accept: Jurgen Ahlers, Second- Anne Geyer, no discussion, unanimously approved.

Question from Lee if we need membership approval for a Board member election to replace resignation mid-term.

Dan responded- process for filling vacancy between election cycles. – up to the board to approve selection of candidate. From ByLaws:

7b. Vacancies in Offices of Directors and Officers

Vacancies in the positions of Officers and Directors may be filled by Qualified Voting Members before the next annual membership meeting for the election of Officers and Directors by a majority vote of the then current Directors.

Chris Chase volunteered to speak with a few prospects to see if they would agree to fill the remaining term. Current board members can send names of people they suggest directly to Chris and she will contact them. Deadline to contact Chris with names: July 18th

Dan suggested we could appoint two now so we'll have leeway for future vacancy/quorum

Consensus agreement, we'll vote them in at beginning of August meeting.

Chris requested information on person's strengths, skills when names sent to her.

3. Report from Healthy Community Team (Phyllis Vince, Janet Freed)

All board members received the five documents ahead of meeting to review.

Phyllis Vince provided overview of their team's work. She spoke about the meaning of having a HC team as having an important symbolic function – UUFSMA wants to set a tone, to rebuild trust.

Team members would be available to individuals as well as committees as a sounding board

- Not there to solve things, but to encourage the discussion, so those involved can solve it
- To surface and give voice to unmet needs and expectations

Since HCT is new, function will be evolving and relationship with the board will evolve, understanding need of fellowship

Discussion included:

Proposing a launch, want to plan with SSC to give a talk to during a service, put all materials on the website; would like to have a table at the Volunteer Fair on Sept 24, perhaps make a quarterly announcement in newsletter to keep HCT in people's awareness

Some concerns about increased load on the board to respond to conflicts referred by the HCT
Phyllis foresees board only hearing about significant conflicts that require more than informal discussion with HCT. Jurgen wants to be sure we go into Exec session if such instances are HCT issues discussed.

Chris emphasized that UUFSMA had existing policies around de-escalation and thinks that these should be blended into the HCT materials if not already done. (Janet commented that these did in fact form basis of parts of the HCT's work). Wants to be sure we have a way to measure success – i.e., metrics

Brief discussion about need to clarify limits on HCT's role and future. Susan reminded the Board that the motion creating HCT on April 13, 2023, read:

***Moved:** to authorize creation of an HCT, made up of Phyllis Vince, Janet Freed, and Bart Jarvis, to propose their vision for a HCT. The group will submit a plan to the board at the May 11, 2023 board meeting.*

Important to be clear about any continuing role, and what the HCT relationship to the Board will be – an ad hoc team or a committee, which is a different relationship.

Motion to accept the HCT's report, to encourage them to communicate the content of it to the membership in ways that are appropriate, and to provide further guidelines to the board with respect to the board's role in implementing their proposal.

Moved by Allen Zeesman, Second- Lee Knox, further discussion

Lee Knox called the question for a vote, unanimously approved.

4. Discussion/Action regarding Finance Committee

Lee Knox presented information to the Board regarding her recent conversations with Gary Belkin, and his decision to resign as chair of the Finance committee.

Motion to accept resignation of Gary Belkin, on June 29, 2023, as Chair of the Finance Committee.

Moved- Lee Knox, Second- Jurgen Ahlers, no discussion, unanimously approved.

Lee Knox provided overview of the origins of the finance committee, their role and purpose. Board members received this information prior to today's meeting. Invited discussion on either finding and electing a new Finance Committee Chair or temporarily dissolving the Finance Committee.

Motion to disband the Finance Committee until the Board can better define its role and purpose, and find good leadership

Moved- Phyllis Culp, Second- Chris Chase, no discussion, unanimously approved.

5. Review of requirements for Aug. 13 Special Membership Meeting (Dan Neuspiel.)

Dan provided overview of some basic requirements:

Finalize agenda no later than July 30

Once agenda is set, it cannot be amended at the meeting itself

Send out Budget, bylaw amendments, at least eight days ahead, August 5

Discussion of having hybrid meeting (Zoom and in person) or just Zoom.

If we have all zoom, we can't have it right after service... given them time to go time

PC- what about those with no internet or laptop, can't manage a zoom meeting

Discussion of pros and cons of the type of meeting

Motion – to leave the Aug membership meeting as a hybrid as already planned.

Moved- Lee Knox, Second- Jurgen Ahlers, unanimously approved

6. Hospitality Committee report (Jurgen Ahlers)

Aldea contract successfully negotiated and is in effect till December 2024.

8-9 people currently on the Hospitality committee, they are meeting on July 14th

Jurgen will report to board in August, and will circulate minutes of their meeting.

7. Q&A Document for circulation to membership ahead of August 13 (Jurgen Ahlers)

Board has received a copy of the final Q&A document

Motion to accept the current final draft of Q&A and send it out to the membership as soon as practical.

Moved- Jurgen Ahlers, Second- Lee Knox, discussion

Allen - doesn't have an issue with the Q&As, has problem with the sessions where wide ranging questions can be asked that we can't answer specifically

Lengthy off-motion discussion

Susan MacDonnell called the question; Lee asked for a vote on the motion on the table:

Motion to accept the current final draft of Q&A and send it out to the membership as soon as practical.

5 in favor, 2 abstentions

Some further discussion on merits of the Q&A sessions, who to host, etc. Lee asked if anyone was opposed to the idea of the sessions generally. None opposed

8. Pastor's Report (submitted separately by Tom, all members have received)

Report to be considered as part of the minutes of the meeting

9. Discussion on merits of hiring a consultant, as included in Tom's report

Lee reviewed her conversation with Tom on July 10th, in preparation for the board meeting.

From her overview:

Tom and I talked at great length this past Monday. In that conversation, Tom suggested this Consultant, Mark Ewert, in connection with helping us design a more effective Pledge Drive (which Tom is hoping will happen this Fall.) This is the same consultant that Tom has recommended to help us "heal the divide" in our fellowship, AND to help us start a foundation.

The motion that was passed at the Annual Meeting, said the Board is authorized to spend up to \$20,000 out of our Reserves for a consultant to (and I quote) "work with our members in strategizing a plan of action, including, but not limited to, a separate social action foundation." (end quote) It doesn't say anything about helping us with a Pledge Drive (though we could use some help.) In his report, Tom mentioned a figure of \$3000 for the consultant to come to San Miguel for a week, stay at Tom's house and give us a report at the end of the week. Tom did not know if that included airfare.

Discussion began on this topic, then was postponed at Phyllis' suggestion until after the budget meeting on July 18th.

10. Motion to adjourn

Moved- Chris Chase, second- Allen Zeesman, no discussion

In favor – 6, 1 No

Meeting adjourned 6:16 pm

Attachment: Pastor's report

Respectfully submitted and approved without correction:

August 10, 2023

Susan MacDonnell

UUFSMA Secretary

Attached to minutes as Pastor's report:

I am sorry I will not be with you at the board meeting this month. At the same time as the meeting, I will be delivering the eulogy at the funeral of a longtime friend. He was a well known classical musician but has no family and as his executor all the arrangements etc have fallen to me. I have had to take some time for this.

The major event in my ministry since the board last met was attending GA. I felt our congregation was well represented and participated fully in the decision making process. The highlight for me was to meet with a group of ministers who had interest in coming to San Miguel, helping us with our social justice efforts by helping to support our NGO's and/or were interested in our guest minister program and our possible MIR position sometime in the future. A few of these ministers are bilingual and one is Mexican. I will also share more on the main initiative of GA, the proposed revision of Article 2 Of our bylaws, in my sermon on July 23. This week in Pittsburgh reinforced for me how important it is for us in SMA to be part of and fully participate in the larger movement.

I have been engaging with some pastoral issues from afar and been working on arrangements with our upcoming guest ministers. At the end of July Louise Green will arrive for about 4 weeks. She will be leading worship for 4 weeks which will provide some relief for our very overworked Sunday service committee leadership and for me. Louise will be doing several other things besides Sunday services including pastoral care visits and meetings with new members and especially Mexicans to help with ideas to better embrace these folks in our community.

I have started work on our Small Group Ministry program but I have had to slow it down a bit because of my schedule. The consensus of folks seems to be that they would like to call the groups covenant groups which is fine with me. More on this in a couple of weeks

Finally, The main issues that you will be focusing on in your agenda revolve around two matters: generosity and building or rebuilding community. This is an amazing time of opportunity for the Fellowship if we do not get caught in the weeds. The issues around a successful start of the foundation and the regular budget and moving forward of the fellowship really are the same, generosity and trusting community. These are areas where a consultant might be able to help us. I have mentioned Mark Ewert in the past and wonder if you would consider having him do an assessment and help us come up with a plan. This would involve a week's visit in person by Mark to SMA where he would engage with many people and speak at our Sunday service. The approximate cost would be \$3000 (I have offered that he could stay at my home) The assessment would result in a report to the Fellowship with an analysis of the situation and steps could be taken by us to move forward. If we wished further services from him he would tell us what they would be and cost but there is no obligation to anything further. I have made no commitments to Mark. If there is interest we could set up a meeting with him and a representative of our lay leadership on zoom to see if you wish to move ahead on this. If you have questions relating to this that you would like to first talk with me about, we can set up a time to do that as well.

I know there is a lot on your plate right now and a lot of stress. I hope you will all take a breath. Things may not be able to happen on the timeline you hope. Right now, good process is very important. We are still coming out of a perfect storm! How we do this is as important as anything we do. In time, All will be well!

Have a great board meeting and once again my apologies for not being able to be with you