

**MBD Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes
June 7, 2008**

The meeting was held at the MBD offices in Watertown.

Present

Directors: Geoff Beckwith, John Laurenson (Secretary), Pat Manley (Vice-President and Chief Governing Officer), Lynne Merl, Lilli Nye, Melissa Quirk (President), Jacki Rohan.

MBD Staff: Terasa Cooley (District Executive), Liz Strong (Program Consultant).

MBD Moderator: Sheldon Bennett.

UUA Trustee: Paul Rickter.

The meeting was called to order at around 8:45am.

Administrative Matters

ACTION: Minutes of March 1, 2008 meeting were amended and approved. The Secretary was asked to add a Task section at the end.

Greg Buckland will be the new Young Adult and Youth Advisor.

Follow-Up from March's Growth and Marketing Conversation:

- Terasa's draft survey appears that it will be very useful.
- How to foster growth on congregational or denominational.
- We don't know if stronger identity with denomination will help or not.
- Will consider further resources and re-present at a later meeting.
- Liz suggested that we consider the recent survey developed by the Pew Family Foundation.
- 20 to 30 year olds considered the optimal target group.
- African American churches are growing and doing well. Take a closer look at these and other congregations that are growing.
- Liz feels that the Learning Congregations program has aided in reducing parochialism within the District by offering a broader picture of the denomination.
- Terasa feels that healthy congregations appear to be the ones most open to diversity in ministry.

DE Service Evaluation

Board needs method of assessing District services.

Terasa has created a draft survey. The questions were developed to create more awareness of resources available.

- Questions are also intended to reflect the Board's interest to create more awareness of services.
- The current evaluative tool is not sufficiently comprehensive.
- Melissa suggested including more questions which asked for more information about the congregation's internal situation.
- Lilli suggested questions that asked about the respondent's knowledge of the District.
- To create a benchmark, the survey will be sent to all District members and program participants with e-mail addresses. The interest is to gather information from as many District UU's as possible, not just those who attend events.
- The survey may include a voluntary request for personal information.
- Lilli wondered what role the Board would have with the evaluation process. How we will be intentional about getting a full spectrum of responses, not a skewed sample.
- Will the information gathered be used to determine whether District ends are being met?

Review of Ends Policies

The Board continues to approve of the ends accepted in December, 2007. However a few concerns were raised:

- Paul: Consider a reordering of the items to give them a better sense of "flow."
- Geoff: What's the process for MBD members for feedback (include in survey for ranking.)

- Melissa: Add a question can be ranged from 1 to 5.
- Lynne: The language used is "upper-class." Consider using language that is more inclusive. Terasa will rework the wording for the website.

Revisit Developing Board Stakeholder/Constituent Process

The Board has made many attempts to create connection in the recent past:

- Original survey was never used effectively.
- Board members were "assigned" to congregations.
- Evening dinners were arranged bringing together specific congregational leaders with Board and District staff.

With *Whom* do we need to make connections? How can the Board know that effective connections are being made?

- Terasa: who do we invite to the newly structured Annual Meeting? This can be complicated as "lay leaders" may mean different things to congregations.
- Who do we get input from to know that we are meeting our ends? –Proactive outreach to specific individuals or everyone?
- Congregational presidents are logical choices. Are there other reps that are appropriate to include?
- Denominational Affairs committees are phasing out in many congregations. These duties, however, might be best taken on by church leadership.
- Presidents' Convocation appears to be one successful means for the Board to make connections. How to institutionalize?
- If a delegate is determined by a church board, is that the person who should be the liaison.
- Geoff: Suggests creating a denominational link directly with the church boards.
- Terasa: Recommends that Board members take on 5 to 6 congregations.
- Paul: Suggests that this should be a conversation to be held in September, just after Ingathering.

ACTION: The Board agrees this is a task to assume.

- What do we want to ask? The new survey will generate a lot of information. This could be used as an initial tool to develop the connections.
- Who is the optimal congregational contact person to call and initiate a conversation around their opinion of the work of the Board?

TASK: Terasa, Melissa and John will coordinate.

AM Review

Board will assume more responsibility in shaping the delegate experience. It was agreed that the new general meeting format was optimal in creating the opportunity for creating relationships between the Board and delegates. One thought was that the congregational liaison be one of the three delegates to the meeting as well as the congregational president. Delegate "job descriptions" will be developed.

TASK: Geoff and Lynne will develop proposals for later consideration.

Setting Meeting Schedule and Discussion Topics:

Melissa developed a process for leading the discussions. Topics will be identified after GA. The discussion for September, *Conflict*, will be changed.

Comment [JL1]: Shall we post this on the website?

District Executive Incidentals Report

Submitted in writing.

District UUA Trustee's Report

- 3000 will be attending GA this year. Paul will be moderating a forum with UUA presidential candidates for 2009.
- UUA Trustees are making progress in moving toward Policy Governance. Policies have been approved and ends are being developed.

- Youth ministry is being revisioned on UUA level. The YUU Steering Committee is being discontinued. Transition group will continue to support youth matters for one more year.

President's Report

- Melissa and Pat completed orientation for Geoff and Jacki.
- Melissa will be attending GA, including the District Presidents' Meeting and the UUA meeting for ends setting.
- UUA starting PG training as it pertains to UU District Boards in Dallas, TX, September 11–13. MBD will split costs for those members attending.
- Harlan Limpert has specified that a bonus raise for the DE will be shared between the UUA and MBD.
- MBD Ingathering at GA, Wednesday, June 25, 4:45-6pm, will be facilitated by Terasa and Melissa.
- Article about Nominating Committee.

TASK: Melissa and Geoff will review current nominating policy.

Comment [JL2]: Forget what this is.

Discussion: Who Do We Serve and Support?

The discussion was facilitated by John and based upon 4 articles on denominational affiliation and connection. The following are highlights:

- Cannot give services to all 55 District congregations at once. The concern of allocation of finite resources.
- The closer the proximity of congregations to the UUA, the less connection to it.
- Nationally, the oldest UU congregations are found in the East. Diversity in organization and style varies widely.
- How to respond to congregations that may not be acting in a healthy manner, as determined by the DE. Can the Board create priorities to support the DE in complicated situations; a kind of "triage."
- If Fair Share is a criteria for District involvement, then should we be looking at whether a congregation that is not contributing at the FS level is increasing towards FS?
- Creating ministries of trained volunteers that can act in specific situations as a means of augmenting the DE's work; i.e., The Transformation Team.
- Board to create a "safe" place for from which difficult judgments by the DE can be made and supported.
- Creating a "tracking" tool for congregations in crisis (or facing chronic challenges) that may require consultation beyond the District.
- The UUA also sets policy to guide the work and decisions of the DE.
- Promoting a model of prioritizing a congregations needs. Offering examples of how other congregations have faced and handled similar challenges.
- Inviting congregations to join "Healthy Congregation" teams.
- Develop a tool to assess conflict situations: "What will this involvement entail in terms of time and resources?"
- Should the Board specify the time in percentages to be allotted to congregations in particular situations requiring District services?

TASK: Though the Board does not typically become involved in operational matters, Terasa made it clear that the work of the DE, often involves informed judgment calls about congregations who may ask for her help. They may not like what the DE has to say. The DE needs to know that she has the support of her work by the Board. The Board agreed that this work might be best supported by creating a Committee on Ministry for the DE.

Comment [JL3]: I don't recall how this was to be formed. Were directors to be involved or how was this to be set up?

As this particular topic underlies the relationship between the District and the member congregations, it was agreed that it will be continued at a later meeting.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Laursen, Secretary