

MASSACHUSETTS BAY BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MEETING MINUTES FOR JANUARY 16, 2010

Approved

Present: Pat Manley, John Laursen, Jeanette Ruyle, Jackie Rohan, Lilli Nye, Sheldon Bennett, Sue Phillips and Terasa Cooley

Absent: Paul Rickter, Laura Graham, Geoff Beckwith (resigned)

Chalice Lighting: John read several quotes about change.

Motion: *to pass the October 3, 2009 Board meeting minutes with corrections to Terasa's name and filling in full names of acronyms.*

Passed unanimously.

Terasa's report:

Revisited Faith Formation 2020 and the Life-Long Faith Associates report and how the study helps us to see more clearly how cultural changes that have left us behind and our current RE model isn't really working any more. We need to be exploring a new model, but we don't have it yet. The vision of the report is that of true intergenerational community, from which faith development emerges. Rather than directing our services primarily toward children, we need to be growing parents and adults who can hold children in their faith formation.

Greg Buckland has resigned. The unwieldy nature of the position has been difficult to manage. We don't yet have good models of service to either the youth or young adult sectors. Need to review various models and think strategically about how to move forward, especially given the likely restructuring of the district staff and work.

Annual Meeting Discussion

Last year's structure of having the Annual Meeting immediately prior to the Spring Conference was not entirely satisfactory. Now looking at April 11 for the Annual Meeting—an evening dinner, perhaps in Needham. Discussion of who we might bring as keynote speaker. Possibly Ginny Courtier? The Spring Conference is scheduled for May 1.

Administrative Business

Motion: *The MBD Board of Directors hereby resolves to authorize the establishment of a bank account at Wainwright Bank, and designates both District Executive and the Treasurer to be signatories, with either signature being sufficient per transaction.*

Passed unanimously.

Motion: *For signatory purposes at Wainwright Bank, we affirm that James Staton is currently serving as Treasurer, and Terasa Cooley is currently serving as District Executive for Mass Bay District of UU Congregations.*

Passed unanimously.

Nominating Committee and Board Elections:

Jeff Beckwith resigned and has not yet been replaced. In such a case, the Board of Directors may appoint someone to complete the term; still scouting for an appointee. Appointment needs to be reported at the 2010 Annual Meeting.

Pat intends to continue on as President. John intends to accept a second term. Lilli will most likely step off. This calls for another minister on the Board.

Mary Higgins has agreed to be our policy governance consultant. We need to plan date for a training.

President's Report (Pat Manley):

Pat attended the District Presidents Association (DPA) meeting, which includes Harlan Limpert and Ginny Courtier. The UUA transitioned to Policy Governance and Peter Morales announced changes in the organization of the UUA (see attached doc with new UUA organization). UUA Board asked to be represented at the meeting because of these changes, and wants to clarify the linkage between the district presidents and the UUA and other relationships.

Morales revisited the platform upon which he was elected. The enormous demographic shifts ask us to think seriously and creatively about how we will be the religion for our time.

How can we all row toward the same future? How can we free up the trustees to do linkage work with the real sources of authority? Most important issue was: If each of the districts has a different set of ends, and the UUA has a different one as well, how do we evaluate co-employed staff? At end of the day, all agreed to use the UUA's ends to evaluate co-employed staff. (See attached document: UUA Ends Statements).

Process question: Even though the District Presidents' Association agreed to this, is Pat, as our representative, in the position to decide on behalf of the whole MBD Board that we will, in fact, evaluate Terasa on this basis? John felt we did not have enough information to make a vote about it, and it seemed questionable as to whether Pat can make that decision for us. Would it mean that MBD must adopt the UUA's ends as our ends?

Sense of the conversation: The MBD Board provisionally affirms the use of the UUA ends toward the evaluation the co-employed staff, while reserving the right to reconsider upon assessment of its practical implications and value.

District Presidents' Association wants to convene all the boards together with Morales and Courtier, prior to GA. This would happen in Boston area, tentative date is June 4-5.

Regional Districts Identities

What does it mean to build a team across the NE districts?

Ballou Channing (South Eastern Mass, Cape, RI): 44 congregations, some of which have fewer than 20 members. Southern exurban area relates to Boston culture, southeastern (Brockton, New Bedford, Fall River) is rural and industrial, and the Cape with retired culture is very different again. RI parallels Boston culture. Rapidly changing ethnic demographic, but UU churches don't reflect this except for Providence church. Underfunded, not enough district staff resources. BC board is an operational board with 13 people and does not want to shift to policy governance. Cedar Hill retreat center was a drain on district resources. The controversy around selling it took five years to resolve, but it was finally sold and now the district has an endowment equal to MBD.

Clara Barton—resulted from a merger 10 years ago of Connecticut River Valley & Central MA, 495 west, all of CT except for Westport. This district reflects the cultures of its original districts, including some clashing of cultures between rural central MA with many small congregations as opposed to the CT area dominated by the congregational/UCC energy. This district is in the midst of a staff transition.

Northern New England—consolidation Vermont, NH and Maine. Approximately 73 congregation. Very distinct cultures expressed in these three states. A lot of small congregations, a few mid-range, only one or two large. Maine had a lot of Universalist churches originally, but many have closed up in the past decade (the district just found out it now owns 17 empty church buildings, which could turn out to be huge legal burden). Resistant to the idea of merging or sharing programs, staff, and funds with the other districts given that they already have challenges being unified in themselves.

Implications of these differences and cultural frictions for regionalization:

(See attached “Opportunity Map.”)

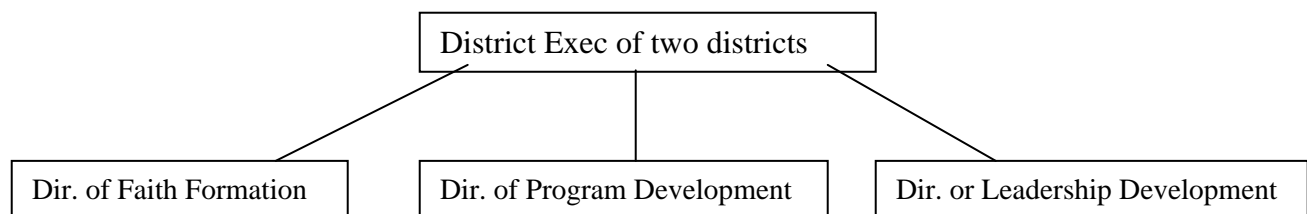
Trying to approach this in a creative, flexible, fluid way, not either/or.

- On one end of the spectrum of possible reconfigurations is collaboration and shared Programming while maintaining separate districts and staff.
- Other end of spectrum of possible reconfigurations is full regionalization, full sharing of all resources.
- One mid-way model: some shared staff, e.g. information technology, small church consultant, potentially youth/young adult/campus ministry.
- Another midway model: bi- or tri-district merging of MBD, Clara Barton and possibly Ballou Channing, sharing one District Exec. Consolidate DE and add specialized program staff (e.g. Program Director, Director of Faith Formation, Director of Lay-Leadership Development). This model has a lot of energy. Northern NE would stay separate, but perhaps trying to move toward complimentary skills to maximize potential for collaborating.

There is a value in forming networks across districts based upon church size—more valuable for large congregations to be in relationship with other large congregations than to be in relationship to its local neighbors. Similarly, small congregations benefit from networking with small congregations.

Something for MBD Board members to consider is making some effort to attend programs outside of the MBD, especially if we bring someone else with us, try to start stimulating idea of mingling, collaborating. Our board will need to think of ourselves as leaders and visionaries to move these possibilities forward. This is about serving the MBD/UUA mission.

Possible configuration for sharing staff between MBD and CB:



All of these staff people would serve both districts. Each staff person is capable of serving in a core capacity to serve congregation as needed—not so specialized that they can’t tag team for each other. (conflict intervention, developing/leading program, understanding healthy congregational functioning).

It makes sense for Terasa to assume the DE of the Co-Districts because she’s already walked the MBD through the development that would be necessary on the larger scale, and has the necessary but unusual skill set.

Clara Barton Board had this model proposed to them a week ago. Voted unanimously to embrace the above model as a two-year interim arrangement—not really interim positions, but an interim arrangement that allows for experimentation and discovery before making a full and final commitment.

Who would hire these staff people?

- For Dir. of Faith Formation: DE in consultation with CB Board
- For Dir. of Program Development: DE in consultation with MBD Board
- For Dir. of Leadership Dev.: DE in consultation with MBD & CB Boards

Job descriptions created by DE, in consultation with and affirmed by both boards.

Governance questions raised: Would we have to make by-laws changes? Does this new structure move toward the fulfillment of our district ends? Does it meet the ends with respect to serving the congregations in our district? If so, what would be the problem? We would have to assess whether this is within “reasonable interpretation” of the ends policies.

We need to be open to a discussion on the loss side. We gain benefits, but we lose some things also.

Our job today is not to vote on whether to approve this, but rather to vote to agree to enter into conversation with the Clara Barton District to see how this can be accomplished. Optimistic hope is that this new structure would be in place by July 2010, the beginning of new fiscal year. CB will be without district staff after this point if it doesn't happen.

Motion: MBD Board will continue to explore a plan to establish a two-year interim program to share a District Executive and program staff with the Clara Barton District, with the goal of beginning this new structure in July of 2010.

Passed unanimously

We should be prepared to meet for joint meetings outside MBD.

Possible joint meeting with CBD Board on February 13th or 14th, in Sturbridge. Pat will follow up.

Future Topics for Upcoming 2010 Meetings

- Social justice (Meck—program support specialist—interested in being part of that conversation). Sheldon mentions the idea of approaching this as “social witness.”
- Faith formation. We may not quite ready for this conversation and would benefit from forming a task force to look into the issues.
- Ongoing ends discussion

Vote to adjourn passed unanimously at 1:33pm.

Next meeting is March 20.