

MBD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2010

PRESENT: Frank Clark, Sue Phillips, John L, Lilli, Paul, Teresa Cooley, Pat Manley, Jackie Rohan, Jeanette Ruyle.

ABSENT: Sheldon Bennet,

CHALICE LIGHTING

CHECK IN

MOTION to accept minutes made and seconded. Approved.

MBD STAFF REPORT (Teresa and Sue presenting):

Working on new staff arrangement. Possibility of hiring Harvard Divinity student to help district assess opportunities for young adult ministry.

New website almost launched.

Interviewing candidates for the newly-formed staff position of Director of Leadership Development (will help develop lay leaders who can build leadership, skills and momentum in their congregations). Other positions will be held by Sue Phillips as Director of Congregational Development (she will still have oversight of Program Development, but her focus will be on congregational development) and Deb Levering as Director of Faith Formation.

They are rethinking programs, trying to use multi-modal ways of reaching people and being accessible: Leadership retreat facilitations, big Learning Congregation programs (has been expanding into Clara Barton), Webinar format (this allows us to do technical training that bigger events make difficult.

The big chunks of time are necessary for certain kinds of training, but there may be more ways to do this—eg, each staff person preparing to provide one major training three times a year in three places.

Questions about how much to charge, accessibility vs. need to generate program income.

Looking at how to connect high growth potential congregations to other such congregations in other districts, congregations would apply for status and would have special access to MBD staff and resources.

Overarching excitement about the rich and new potentials for programming, expanding and developing the already successful programming.

UUA BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORT (Paul presenting):

UUA Board meeting in San Antonio—great meeting, very expensive, great party thrown for the Board by San Antonio congregation. We should do this when they meet in Boston—never been done. UUA budget is down, investment income is down, there are going to be staff cuts—about 15 people.

After January meeting had first electronic Board meeting, held vote electronically
Three-pronged shifts/changes now being created:

1. Smaller board – there will be districts that don't have a seat on the board (there are currently about 30 people on board). May change to 8 members, with Moderator, Financial Supervisor and UUA President. The Board has been trying to move away from Board members as representatives of their individual districts, toward all members representing all districts, all congregations and UUism as a whole.

Paul will write up something about how a UUA board member gets nominated, becomes a candidate, since he's rolling off at the end of this year—as of GA?)

With smaller board, will meetings be more compact? Shorter? Maybe shorter meetings with electronic meetings in between or smaller clusters meeting.

2. How we deliver services will be more regional.
3. Changing how we do GA. Much desire at the board level to have GA being a deliberative, direction-setting group event fulfilling more effectively its governance role. Less celebration, mass gathering and training, more direction setting. Will GA be held less often, meeting every other year?

BUDGET DISCUSSION (Teresa presenting):

Teresa: MBD may come in a little in the red at end of year—perhaps as much as \$2000, due to absorbing June 4 & 5 meeting and an upcoming training that Teresa and Sue want to take with Heinrich.

MBD Board policy limitations accept an overage of up to \$10,000 bottom line, but as a courtesy to MBD Board the Exec keeps board apprised.

Feels important to have all monitoring reports from Exec by end of this fiscal year so as to start clean since the picture will look quite different next year.

MOTION to approve budget as presented. Approved.

ANNUAL MEETING UPDATE:

Speaker is Terry Sweetser, VP for Stewardship and Development, former District Executive of Ballou Channing, will speak about the courage in changing structures and processes, both at UUA and MBD and how that relates to Unitarian Universalism.

Teresa needs to work with Sheldon on structure of meeting. What do we need to do beside vote for new board members and vote for budget? Nominating Committee has been working. Only one more Board position to fill. MBD Board will need a new Secretary with Lilli stepping off.

How to make annual meeting an engaging experience for delegates? Discussion about duplicating process of conversations we had last year with constituents, but this year with regard to linkage between constituents and board. This has particular relevance given new connection to CBD and implications for the shared MBD/CBD steering group.

John raises the fact that planning the annual meeting is a Board responsibility—John and Lilli will work with Sheldon to plan meeting. MBD office needs specifics about what

we're doing and what we'll need for the meeting a week in advance of the meeting. John and Lilli will work in the next week and send something to Board in about a week.

DREW TRIP REPORT: (Divinity/Doctrinal student at BU, interning 2nd year in Reading, previous work with MBD around growth. Applied to do field-based or congregationally based research in summer exploring issues around the District linking now taking place:

- Looking at linkage between Board and stakeholders—in MBD where there is extreme parochialism, people relate mostly to their congregations.
- Resistance in New England to institutionalizing linkage—how do we make pathways of communication that are a little less informal, more effective. The typical “denomination affairs committee” is often on or two people who don't meet. There's no formal mediation between big and small pictures. This has never really worked.
- How does the MBD Board want this linkage to look? What are we doing now, what needs to change?
 - Clearer guidelines for District Affairs (DA) committees in churches, or, remove DA Committee as a standing committee and have this function be moved into the congregational governing board.
- Teresa has asked Drew to look at how linkage is being done in other districts.
- This is a congregational development problem, congregations need to learn how to do this.

Digression back to Annual Meeting discussion and the weak linkage between congregations and Board. Various points made:

- If someone asked me, “why should I go to MBD annual meeting?” I wouldn't know the answer.
- Key note speaker might be a reason to go. Last year the link between the conference and the business meeting was the draw.
- Perhaps we need to see this as a 5 year goal, the creation of a strong circle of communication, a cycle of positive reinforcement in which stakeholders feel connected to the district ends and a shared sense of mission.
- Book by Dan Hotchkins “Governance and Ministry” says that true stakeholders of the district or denomination are not the congregants but the vision and the mission. Can Terry Sweetzer be guided to emphasize this? Annual meeting should draw people because it's a way to participate in strengthening the movement.
- Email about district shifts and linking may generate some buzz. All members of boards of every congregation should be getting emails from the district.
- Interesting parallels between this problem and GA—GA serves “GA junkies,” not people interested in steering the movement.
- We can't wait for small, personal conversions. How do we develop intentional processes and means by which congregations develop awareness of the district and denomination?
- People need to feel *invited*, and recognize that it's a distinction to come and be a part of things.

- People go to town meetings if they fear for how their lives will be affected by a decision or issue. How do we raise the stakes?
- Notice that board members are talking about our “personal conversation” stories, of how we initially related only to our congregation, but something shifted each of us toward a sense of meaningful connection to the larger whole. Could we build this kind of testimony into the meeting? Testimonials by a couple of board members, or build it into small group discussions. Possible way to phrase question for table discussion is: tell me a story of a powerful experience in which you felt yourself part of the larger movement of UU or something beyond your congregation.
- John and Lilli will write invitational text for congregations to raise people’s awareness of the meeting. Send it to the MBD’s presidents list and to administrators for newsletters. ASAP. People already received an invitation
- Andrew will contact each of the Board Members to discuss the linkage issues. His report is due in August. MBD Board can use this to create a set of goals for linkage in the MBD.

JUNE 4 & 5 REGIONAL MEETING (joint meeting of CBD and MBD):

John asks for guidance from Board regarding the MBD/CBD steering committee. What’s the group’s work/mission? Teresa says we don’t know what we don’t know yet, too early for the small group to be doing any “steering,” or even vetting specifics about how the two boards will work together or work with the staff. Suggests the steering group try to meet just prior to or after (at) the June 4 & 5 meetings, piggyback on the larger meeting.

Pat wanted feedback on a draft of a report regarding “Change on the Horizon” -- check with Pat about how she wants this represented in the minutes.

Teresa draws on whiteboard: Three streams of change toward regionalism, three contexts or dimensions that are affecting each other as we explore structural changes.

- Regional Staff: Colaborating, District Sharing...
- Internal UU: Reg. LDS (what is this?), Evaluate according to UUA Ends...
- Governance: BOT, GA changes, Regional Meetings...

These different dimensions interact and relay off each other, change in one affects change in another.

Paul mentioned that there was a hope that all the UU regions (boards) would meet on June 4 prior to GA. Not going to happen, but some efforts afoot.

Evening meeting on Friday June 4, dinner. Get schedule for this 6/4 & 5 meeting.

LUNCH

MEETING ADJOURNED 12:37 PM.