

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

Attending

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson - UUSJ Secretary, Mt. Vernon Unitarian Church, Rep.

Pat Karlsen – Cedar Lane UU Church, At-Large

Nancy Sorden – Washington Ethical Society, Rep.

Lisa Johnson-Firth – Bull Run UUs At Large

Martha Ades – UU Congregation of Fairfax, Rep.

Lavona Grow – UUSJ Co-Chair, UU Church of Arlington, At-Large

Al Carlson –UUSJ Co-Chair, UU Church in Reston, Rep.

Catherine Scott – Cedar Lane UU Church, Rep.

Marilyn Hathaway – Cedar Lane UU Church, Rep.

John Gubbings – UUSJ Treasurer, Cedar Lane UU Church, Rep.

Emma Sue Gaines-Gerson – Paint Branch UU Church, Proxy

Rev. Terry Ellen – UUSJ Executive Director

Bob Schurter – UU Congregation of Columbia, Rep.

Rev. Cyn Snavelly – UUSJ Administrator

Ed Kringer – Accotink UU Church, Rep.

Catherine Higgins-Bisnett - UU Church of Rockville, Alternate

Ethel Gilbert - UU Church of Rockville, Rep.

Steve Buckingham – Goodloe Memorial UU Congregation, Rep.

The meeting was held at the UU Church of Rockville. The meeting was called to order by Terry Ellen at 9:30 a.m., followed by the opening ceremony and a welcoming to the UU Church of Rockville by Terrie Barr and Ethel Gilbert.

Opening Remarks by Lavona with preview of agenda

Introductions

Secretary's Report-Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson

A quorum was met.

Call for corrections to the minutes of May 4, 2013; there were no corrections and the minutes of that meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report-John Gubbings

John submitted and reviewed the Treasurer's report.

Moved to accept. Discussion on CFC contribution is recorded in previous year. CFC contributions do not always have names attached so if they want an acknowledgement and have them credited towards their congregation's Fair Share, then they should let Cyn know. Cyn sends out list of contributors (CFC/United Way) and asks people to claim them.

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

The 2012-2013 year is the only year we have been part of United Way. They had closed enrollment to all but direct service organizations for several years but opened enrollment for 2012-2013. We will not be part of the United Way for the 2013-2014 year as a new restriction limiting enrollment to groups with budgets of \$50k or more was put in place for 2013-2014.

The Treasurer's report was approved.

Grant Fund Program-Lavona Grow

A proposed resolution to set up a new grant program to replace Collaboration Fund grant program was distributed for discussion. The focus on collaboration was considered to be too restrictive, which may be why there were so few grant applications. It was proposed that the grants should be available for a broad range of social justice initiatives.

Lavona submitted a resolution to establish a new Social Justice Fund grant program.

A motion to amend the resolution was made by Lisa Johnson-Firth. The amendment was approved and a vote was taken on the amended resolution, which was also approved.

Below is the final approved resolution:

Proposed Resolution to Establish a New Grant Program and Policy for Use of Grant Funds - September 21, 2013

Whereas, no grant awards have been made during the 2012-2013 fiscal year nor through September 20, 2013, although the fund was promoted, leads us to believe that the narrow focus on collaboration may be too restrictive and no longer serve a need in the UU social justice community.

Whereas, there is annually a considerable surplus of funds in the grant account.

Whereas, most grant awards are less than \$500.

Therefore be it resolved,

- 1) that we retire the Social Justice Collaborative Fund and establish immediately upon passage of this resolution the Social Justice Grant Fund to allow grants up to \$500 to be awarded for a broad range of social justice initiatives arising from member congregations, and including support of the work of the UUSJ. The co-chairs will continue to have authority to approve expenditures for a variety of initiatives and consider requests on an ongoing basis and consider requests in a timely manner. The co-chairs shall establish reasonable criteria for grant awards selection.
- 2) that as in the past, funds raised may be used towards the budget balance if UUSJ goes into deficit at the end of the fiscal year. And that at any time, up to 20% of funds raised may be used for special needs furthering UUSJ's justice work as determined by the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees. Funds not expended for grants by the end of the fiscal year may be transferred to the general fund, less hold over

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

funds up to \$500 to remain as seed money for grant funds as determined by the Executive Committee or Board of Trustees.

Strategic Plan Progress Report-Terry, Lavona and John

It was recommended to put the history of UUSJ on the website as UUSJ Vision: Amplifying the UU Voice for individual board members to use in their fundraising activities.

The Strategic plan was reviewed by section.

Terry talked about meeting with UUA Washington Office staff and talking to Susan Leslie, UUA Congregational Advocacy and Witness Director with UUA on collaboration. They (UUA Witness Ministry and Standing on the Side of Love Staff) are in need of help.

Lavona covered changes to Section 3.1 – to include UUSJ co-chairs and Board members, as well as the Executive Director in outreach to ministers and lay leaders of congregations.

John Gubbings discussed the fund raising workshop at the Foundation Center that he and Lavona went to, and share some of the things they learned. Some non-profits choose board members for their proven ability to raise or contribute money.

Some Foundations we may solicit for funds ask for a list of Board members and what percentage of them contribute to the organization. Many non-profits have an advisory board who do not vote but represent institutional memory. We should “park” and set aside time to discuss this at a later date.

The Foundation Center no longer provides free training, so we are looking into Board Source to provide training programs for our board.

Priority Issues - Lavona

Lavona suggested that the board needs to discuss criteria for choosing our priority areas. Currently our primary focus areas are Immigration, Economic Justice, the Environment, and LGBTQ issues.

Need to keep track of how we choose priorities, to develop some sort of historical document so that in the future we know how our focus areas were chosen.

Advocacy 101 Presentation – Steve Buckingham

Steve Buckingham presented an in-depth overview of IRS restrictions and limitations on the use of money and staff and volunteer time for advocacy and lobbying by non-profit organizations.

Lobbying – Three type of advocacy

Lobbying

Narrow limits on use of resources

Advocating for or against for specific legislation is definition of lobbying and is limited

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

Lobbying is limited to non-substantial level/resource.

Saying we need immigration reform – that is advocacy.

If we say I like “Senator X’s” bill that is lobbying.

Start out doing issue advocacy and then crossing over into lobbying can happen very easily.

If you say immigration legislation should include path to citizenship and if senator says what about bill X? When you answer you’ve crossed into lobbying.

Un-substantial part time staff and volunteer time count towards the IRS limits on the amount of resources we can use.

Issue advocacy

Educating legislators

Mobilizing - Witness – rallies – attending events – bringing our values to issues

Political campaigning

We cannot get involved in partisan politics at all.

Cannot advocate for a candidate.

Cannot forward info on fund raising for candidates.

Lavona read from notes from a 2006 conference call with Elizabeth Heagy on lobbying and 501(3)c status which included information on UUSJ’s 501 H election. (The notes are attached to these minutes.) Steve said UUSJ was a disqualified organization <http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f5768.pdf>. {We are exploring this issue.}

Certain groups are eligible and certain are disqualified.

Disqualified groups are (not necessarily limited to) – churches or association of churches.

We are to report lobbying activities to make certain that we do not exceed percentage limitations.

If we spend more than 20% of time, money, volunteer effort on lobbying for specific legislation you could lose tax exempt status.

You can expend up to 5% for grass roots lobbying.

UU Legislative Ministry of Maryland became a program of the Annapolis church so funding limits counted against the whole of the church’s budget.

We must do very careful record keeping to make sure we do not cross the IRS limits. Terry said that UUSJ staff members have always kept track of their time on lobbying and advocacy activities.

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

If you do communications on any issues do not mention specific legislation. Otherwise it counts towards the 20% limit.

UU Virginia Legislative Ministry - Lavona

Lavona had attended the initial discussion and information-gathering session on March 23 in Williamsburg at the Tidewater Cluster meeting and talked about UUSJ, its activities, its history and about the activities of the Arlington Church.

An organizing meeting for a Virginia Legislative Ministry was held in Fredericksburg on September 14th.

Steve Buckingham from Maryland UU Legislative Ministry (UULM) talked to the attendees at the organizing meeting about UULM history.

Roles & Responsibilities of Board Members

Lavona highlighted certain specific roles of Board members.

Board members should periodically review these themselves, especially before board meetings.

Al empathized asking church treasurer if the contributions/checks from their congregation have been mailed.

Ed mentioned that while doing recruitment or fund raising activities it helps to highlight specific activities.

Board members should widely distribute the UUSJ e-news to acquaint their fellow congregants with UUSJ and its activities.

Nominating Committee Report – Nancy Sorden, chair, and Pat Karlsen

Someone wishing to be involved with our issue advocacy task forces does not have to be a UUSJ board member.

(The report is attached)

Executive Director's Report - Terry

(Terry's Report is attached along with the addendum to it.)

Program Committee Report - Pat Karlsen, Chair

(Program Committee Report is attached)

Awards Gala Committee Report – Pat Karlsen

A copy of the Oct. 20 Awards Gala flyer was handed out.

Communications – Bill and Lavona

The website has been converted to a new format and theme. A copy of screen shots of the website was handed out.

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

The website has a static front page and the posts, that formerly appeared on the front page, are now under the “News” menu item categorized in to five categories (e.g. UUSJ, Congregational, etc.).

Added a “Quick Links” box to the front page that will allow quick access to certain portions of the website such as the focus areas, as well as certain time specific links such as the Gala Diner registration.

We are in the process of learning to use the features of Salsa.

We have a very reliable, knowledgeable, and prompt technical assistant in Kiley Mitti. She has helped with keeping our Wordpress software up to date, done back ups, and has provided important help in converting to our new Wordpress theme.

Needs

Pictures

We need pictures taken of our programs and out activities to use on the website. When taking a picture please remember the important points: who, what, when, where, and “why should I care”. It is important to think like someone who does know anything about the people in the picture. What would the picture mean to them? So send along a write up that answers the questions above.

Do not worry about cropping or sizing. Please send the full size picture and the web folks will take care of doing that.

To the best of your ability try to eliminate busy distracting backgrounds.

Content for Focus Areas

The content documents for all of our focus areas are very old. A couple of them are simply a PDF file of links (e.g. Economic Justice).

We need updated documents that speaks to the efforts by UUSJ in these areas.

Next steps

Talk to congregational leaders and ministers about what they know about UUSJ and what they want from it.

Next board meetings 11/16/2013, 1/18/14, 3/15/2014, 5/10/2014

Lavona closed the meeting with two readings and the meeting was adjourned.

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

Nominating Committee Report 9/16/2013

UUSJ Committees

Standing Committees

1. Development Committee:

Kay Scott

Bo Hammond

1 open position

2. Executive Committee:

Al Carlson, Co-Chair

Lavona Grow, Co-Chair

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Secretary

John Gubbings, Treasurer

Pat Karlsen, At Large

3. Finance Committee:

Mike McCord

John Gubbings, Treasurer, non-voting member

2 open positions

Membership cannot overlap the Audit Committee.

4. Nominating Committee:

Nancy Sorden, chair

Pat Karlsen

1 open position

Terrie Barr, outside consultant

Special Committees

5. Advocacy Oversight Group:

Lavona Grow

Pat Karlsen

1 open position

6. Audit Committee:

Ed Kringer, Chair

Ed Cochran

1 open position

Membership cannot overlap the Finance Committee.

1

As of 9/16/13

7. Communication and Outreach Committee:

a. Information Technology

Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson

Lavona Grow

Kiley Mitti, paid consultant

b. Outreach

open positions

8. Immigration Task Force: temporarily on hold

Hal Fuller

Judith Johnson

Dean Wanderer

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

9. Program Committee:

Pat Karlsen, chair

Marsha White

Nancy Boardman

10. Social Justice Awards Gala Committee:

Terrie Barr, chair

Pat Karlsen

John Harris – for Nomination review and Award selection only

One open position

11. Strategic Plan Implementation Committee:

open positions

Other Committees

Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures Committee

To be determined

Immigration Project Oversight Group :

(Immigration Steering Committee)

UUA immigration grant oversight no longer needed.

Retired as of June 2013.

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

As of 9/16/13

Executive Director's Report

The ambitious strategic plan we have laid out for ourselves is underway. The major overhaul of our website and internet communications abilities is largely accomplished, so that now we are learning to use its capabilities and iron out the learning glitches. Much credit goes to Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, Lavona Grow, and Cindy Snavely for pulling off this huge accomplishment. We also purchased a new, professional-quality display board for general purposes and for our display at the UU History gathering this fall in DC, where Hal and Lavona will be doing a presentation on our UUSJ history.

We are working on staffing the various committees needed to fulfill our vision and plan. I hope you look at the vacancies still apparent and help us fill them, since an engaged Board is foundational to achieving what we have set ourselves to do.

Lavona Grow, Al Carlson, John Gubbings, Steve Buckingham (wearing both UUSJ and UULM hats) and I met August 16th in Annapolis with leaders from the UU legislative Ministry of Maryland (UULM) to discuss the implications of our new focus in terms of clarity of boundaries, both in terms of operations and for fundraising purposes and general financial health. A very good conversation ensued, and we are still in dialogue. Also of note, the Virginia congregations are forming a planning committee to establish the UU Virginia Advocacy Network, which is meeting for the first time September 14.

Our program initiatives are listed in the report from that committee, with which I have been involved. There has been a lot of collaborative outreach on our part to design events with other allies, most notably for young adult programming with Pam Sparr of Ministry for Earth and Andrew Mertz, our District's youth and young adult advisor, on several young adult events. The Executive Committee also approved offering scholarships from our past unused UUSJ grant monies to young adults wanting to go to Power Shift this October 18-21 in Pittsburgh. We are using our new web capabilities for the application process.

We have also been working on a renewal of our past well-received "Inspired Faith, Effective Action" events with the UUA on social justice best practices. This latter involved a meeting of Lavona Grow, Al Carlson and I with Taquiena Boston, UUA Director of Multicultural Growth and Witness, and other UUA staff at their Washington office and further contact with Susan Leslie, UUA Congregational Advocacy and Witness Director. Due to major reorganizing going on at the UUA, we are still in process on this. We had previously met with Rev. Craig Roshaven, head of the Washington office, about cooperative ventures, but his position was cut in the UUA downsizing.

I conducted services at Towson, Silver Spring and Cedar Lane this summer. A 50-50 offering was taken up at the last on our behalf, and we are in process of scheduling a meeting with their new Minister, Abhi Janamanchi, who is eager to meet with us. I also represented us at the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, along with Lavona Grow, Bob Denniston, and Bill Alsmeyer-Johnson, among others.

Our Annual Report is nearing completion and will be available soon. We are making some changes to make it more appealing and user-friendly.

So also our E-News is changing as we go to our new distribution capacity and Facebook and Tweet capabilities. There will no doubt be some trial and error as we adjust.

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

We are working with the Fairfax congregation, which is studying a resolution on climate change to come to a vote there in November. They have sent out a request urging other congregations to do something like this. And I am keeping apprised of the current effort among UUs to divest from fossil fuels. This is a huge issue and deserves our attention, since various congregations are engaged in considering it.

It is hard to keep straight with so much going on, but our changes are signs of growth and vitality. I urge you all to do what you can for forward this effort.

With respect and affection for all of you engaged in the often difficult but equally necessary work of social justice,

Terry

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

Program Committee Report

The Program Committee of Pat Karlsen, Chair, Nancy Boardman, and Marsha White has been involved in a number of different initiatives. Terry has been working with them.

1. With Pam Sparr of All Souls and UU Ministry for Earth and Andrew Mertz, Joseph Priestley District Youth and Young Adult Coordinator, we are working on a fall young adult event showing Bidder70, the story of Tim DeChristopher. The date and place are still being worked out.
2. With these two we are also working on a spring environmental justice weekend event for young adults on the Patuxent River. Pam is working on a date with an African American River Keeper involved in experiential learning, the health of the river, and the lawsuit of the African American community there against the coal-burning power plant.
3. Also with these two, there is the possibility of a Ministry for Earth weekend training with young adults in environmental justice with Pam Sparr and Curtis Murphy, new young adult Ministry for Earth intern, as trainers in fall 2014.
4. UUSJ is cosponsoring the Oct 17 forum at the Fairfax County Democratic Committee on the growing wealth inequality in America community. We are currently in search of a representative to help plan it, though that is optional. The event (which will actually be located in Arlington) will be non-partisan and will feature the following speakers: Hedrick Smith, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of "Who Stole the American Dream?"; Lawrence Mishel, President, Economic Policy Institute; Thea Lee, Deputy Chief of Staff, AFL-CIO President's Office; Dean Baker, Co-director, Center for Economic and Policy Research; and Lori Wallach, Director, Global Trade Watch, Public Citizen.
5. We are working with Susan Leslie, UUA Congregational Advocacy and Witness Director, and Taquiena Boston, UUA Director of Multicultural Growth and Witness, to present an event on best practices in congregational social justice set-up and process, with special attention to advocacy and witness. Details are still in process.

UUSJ – Board Meeting Minutes – September 21, 2013

Lobbying and 501c3 Status Conference Call with Elizabeth Heagy August 3, 2006
Gary Mummert, Pat Karlsen, Linda Collyer, Cynthia Snavely, Terry Ellen present

As a 501 H-election non-profit, we need to measure our lobbying cost in dollars – only what we spend on salary, supplies, etc. Time that volunteers spend does not need to be counted. If we do a training session on what we want them to say when they lobby, then we need to count our expenses for that. But educating legislators about issues is not lobbying, unless we ask them to pass a specific bill, because lobbying is only defined as pushing for a specific piece of legislation. If there is legislation on that issue but you don't mention it, that is not lobbying.

As an H-election non-profit, we are allowed to spend **20%** of our total budget for lobbying. So out of a \$50,000 total budget, we can spend \$10,000 on lobbying

If a training we offer only has part of it devoted to a specific piece of legislation, then we only count the percentage of the training, plus staff preparation time, that is devoted to specific lobbying on legislation. The rest of the general training and its prep does not count.

To Gary's question of how do we know if IRS got our H-election application and approved it, the answer is that, first, the IRS wants us to have H-election, since it is easier all around, and so would not hinder it in any way, and, secondly, Linda has their communication to us on our 1023 application, so she is confident they got our attached H-election application.

To get 501c3 status, you have to prove educational or service intent, so you could not just dodge lobbying limit by having just volunteers do all the lobbying, with no paid staff time on lobbying. H-election is only viable if you already are a 501c3.

If we are allied with a nonprofit which is itself allied with politician, and he speaks for specific legislation at a joint event, are we responsible? The answer is no. That is fine, but keep it out of an election season, since we can't sponsor a politician. In general, stay away from candidates in an election season.

Grassroots lobbying can't be more than **25%** of our total lobbying. Grassroots lobbying is defined as trying to get non-members (general public) to vote a certain way on a piece of legislation. Getting our own UUSJ members to vote a certain way is considered **direct lobbying**, as is trying to get legislators to vote a specific way on a specific bill. Staff time spent on the Virginia constitutional amendment is considered direct lobbying, since in this case the general public is considered as if they are legislators on normal legislative bills. (??If we are working to get UUs to go to public to educate on specific legislative issues, what is that? My notes not clear.??)

If a speaker at our event speaks for or against a specific political person, follow with a disclaimer that we do not endorse particular candidates. We don't have to muzzle speakers. We just have to make clear that we are non-endorsing. In general, as much as possible, stay away from this kind of stuff during an election season. Things are much more closely watched during those times.