

**MBD Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes  
June 9, 2007**

Meeting was called to order at the MBD office in Belmont at 8:45am.

**Present**

Directors: Barbara Bates, John Laursen (Secretary), Pat Manley, Lynne Merl, Lilli Nye, Jim Sherblom (President), Melissa Quirk (Vice-President and Chief Governing Officer).

Also Attending: Terasa Cooley (District Executive), Liz Strong (Program Consultant).

Minutes of 3/24/07 meeting were amended and approved.

The Agenda was discussed and expanded.

**ADMINISTRATIVE**

**District Executive Report**

**Succession**

Regarding Section 1.2 of the Board Executive Limitations Policy, Terasa offered details concerning the possible loss of the D.E.'s services. Terasa explained that she was in the process of integrating all electronic communications devices and systems that she uses to upload contained information to Hilary to maintain an on-time and on-line schedule.

Specifically, Hilary, as the District Administrator, would notify the Board President and District Services of the loss of the D.E.'s services and act as communications conduit and serve to place the best person available into any needed role. This situation would be maintained until the services of a new D.E. were acquired.

**Treatment of MBD Congregations**

All services are directed toward the promotion of healthy communications by creating common communication ground, rather than to promote a system that encourages unnecessary complaints. Concern was raised over how the Board should be contacted about a grievance with the D.E., services, or District staff and whether Board policies need reviewing to accommodate such complaints. Additional concerns were raised over streamlining a system that would inadvertently encourage complaint rather than open communication. It was felt that the grievance policy is satisfactory as is.

Liz is developing a District Safety Policy for all district events that will be ready over the Summer.

**D.E. Priorities**

As required by the reporting schedule, Terasa offered to the Board a list of priorities for the 2007–2008 Program Year. Highlights included significant planning underway to prepare for Liz's transition. Other planning to coordinate more mutual events between Ballou Channing District and MBD as well as creating more regional connections. Next year's Learning Congregations program will offer two modules Bill Zelazny, D.E. of Ballou Channing will be leading the *Congregational Arts and Crafts* program.

Two interns will be contributing their talents to the work of the District:

- Andrew Taylor is the social justice intern funded through the UUA's Fund for Social Responsibility. Andrew will work with congregations and youth groups helping to create connections between congregations. Liz will supervise this internship.
- Andrew Tripp interests concern how the UUA Districts operate and do "marketing" such as MBD's Mystery Worshiper Program and various UUA/District initiatives such as the upcoming October 14 Association Sunday. Terasa will supervise this internship.

Terasa emphasized her work in creating greater association with Ballou Channing which will eventually lead to a meeting of the two District Boards. The advantages of such an association include co-

employed staff that would be funded by the Districts and the UUA. Of especial note would be funding for a Volunteer Developer and associated staff.

### **Congregations Come First Initiative**

A program promoted by UUA Moderator, Gini Courter, intended to address and help equalize services and resources amongst congregations nationally. The D.E.'s work outlined above supports this initiative and the District's mission to nurture Unitarian-Universalism in the world.

### **2007–08 Board Meeting Dates Tentatively Set**

September 15, December 8, March 1, and June 7.

Other important dates are: The Annual Meeting to take place in April 2008 and the UU Revival on May 3, 2008.

Terasa's concept to separate the Annual/Business Meeting and the workshop/classes was approved by the Board and Terasa and Melissa will coordinate the planning of these events.

### **Ends Monitoring/Review of Ends**

The Board is looking to create ends for the District but also to create vision goals that may or may not become an end. Discussion was concerned that the least restrictive and clearest ends were optimal. An MBD end is that Unitarian-Universalism grows. The Board agrees upon the importance to grow membership rather than congregations, per se. Terasa has interpreted our ends as focusing on *healthy* congregations and by teaching active means of communication and promoting growth and a presenting a positive image of what Unitarian-Universalism can be. Terasa asked the Board to become more educated about growth.

## **CONTEXTUAL AND BACKGROUND FOR ENDS SETTING**

### **Board Education**

The Board reviewed the Board's ends. Barbara expressed concern over whether the Board knows enough to even alter the ends. —How can the Board know enough and how does it know that? Jim wondered whether the current ends remain suitable for the next year. Melissa will begin developing the agenda for the next program year of work and will consult with Terasa.

A Board Education Summary was created by Barbara, Paul, and John to aid the Board in determining what it needs to know to be effective. Terasa also requested feedback on directions that the District should be taking. Jim proposed that each of the 4 annual Board meetings include an educational module and supported Terasa's wish that Directors regularly attend District events; that attending such events is an excellent way to make connections with owners and shareholders. Upcoming events include the following:

- 8/25/07: Learning Congregations (LC), *Nurturing Volunteers*, Rev. Drs. Terasa Cooley and Liz Strong, 8:30am–2pm, Bentley College.
- 9/29/07: President's Convocation, a gathering of congregational leadership.
- 10/27/07: Regional New England Gathering, *Ministry Matters*, Lay and Ordained delegations, facilitated by UUA Moderator, Ginny Courter, and Rob Eller-Isaacs, 8:30am–5pm.
- 11/10/07: Convocation on Ministry with Youth. UUA consultation, 10am–4pm, Malden UU, information currently on-line.
- 2/9/08: LC, *How to Make Your Heart Sing*, Rev. Drs. Terasa Cooley and Liz Strong, a workshop about bringing more spiritual life into your life, 8:30am–2pm, Bentley College.
- 5/3/08: UU Revival and Festival, full day of "Revival" worship, events and children's programming, 9am–3pm.

Other workshops and events will be posted as they are identified. Terasa asked the Board to offer additional topics, through Melissa, that may be of interest to District owners. She will offer information in advance to the Board on all such District events.

**Action:** The Board agreed to attend all 4 Board meetings as well as 4 of the main District events being offered next program year. It was agreed that Directors use their time at these events to make more explicit connections with owners and shareholders.

### **GA MBD Ingathering**

This year's Ingathering will be more of an extended "open-house." Scheduling complexities and overlaps with other events such as the Berry Street event make this the only option. Bill Sinkford and Gini Courter will be circulating amongst the numerous District Ingatherings being offered. The MBD will be highlighting its Gulf relief efforts, in light of being the District that had the highest level of contributions from member congregations. The Board will be represented by those Directors attending GA with some brief words offered by Jim.

### **Board of Directors Meeting Process**

- Chief Governance Officer (Melissa) sets the general agenda for the year with Terasa, then set more specific agenda two weeks in advance.
- Tentative meeting agenda will be sent out at least two weeks in advance for review and feedback.
- Hard-copy packets will be sent out at least 2 weeks in advance of upcoming meetings.
- Board member feedback on materials for each meeting (questions on reports, comments on materials, etc.) will be submitted to Melissa by one week prior to the meeting so that any questions can be addressed by staff prior to the meeting and any relevant issues can be included in the agenda if necessary.
- All feedback to reports will be restricted by a deadline, otherwise such items will be moved to the next meeting.
- Terasa and Melissa will work on creating a revised monitoring schedule.
- Secretary (John) will send draft minutes out within a week following meetings for feedback.
- Board and Staff will review draft minutes and send changes and corrections to the Secretary within two weeks of receiving the draft minutes.

### **Board Governance Policy Regarding Absences**

The following sections were drafted to address Director absences from Board meetings:

1.7.1.3.5: Provide to the President sufficient advance warning of planned absences to enable the President to reschedule meetings if needed to achieve a quorum.

1.7.1.3.6: Provide notice to the President as soon as practical of unplanned absences to allay concerns for missing director's well being.

1.7.1.3.7: The Board agrees to discuss 2 absences, with the intent to help the individual Director and the Board.

**Action:** The Board approved the addition of these lines to the Board Governance Policies section 1.7.1.3.

### **Other Items**

The discussion turned to considering adding explicit language about anti-racism into District ends. It was agreed that this was a matter that needed extensive attention and may become a key agenda item for next program year.

Jim asked the 3 new Directors what they felt that they needed to become better oriented in their new role.

Regarding the proposed revision to the By-Laws, John asked for an additional Director to work with him on this initiative to make the By-Laws compliant with Policy Governance. It was pointed out that the State House offers a variety of help regarding such matters.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:39pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Laursen, Secretary