

## Mass Bay District Board of Directors Meeting

June 4, 2011

Present: Pat Manley (soon to be UUA Trustee), Rev. Kate Wilkinson, John Laurenson (Board President), Laura Graham, Jacki Rohan, Rev. Frank Clarkson, Jeanette Ruyle, Paul Rickter (UUA trustee), Rev. Sue Phillips (DE), Mark Watanabe

8:44 a.m. Meeting convened with a reading by John. Check-in.

### Consent agenda : passed

- Approval of minutes of 2/5/11, 2/20/11, 4/16/11.
- Monitoring reports, excluding the Financial conditions and activities.

### Monitoring report section on policies 1.7 and 1.6 having to do with financial conditions and activities

- Should the Board be the one to convene a Financial Advisory Team to monitor finances rather than the DE do this?
- The question is whether the Board feels they have enough fiduciary knowledge and confidence.
- Plan: Jacki and Laura will lead further study on role of the Treasurer, and in terms of Financial Advisory Team or otherwise, whose responsibility this is to form.
- Other question is if these two policy sections are redundant? With discussion, the sense is that this may not be a problem, i.e. it is not redundant.

### State of the District—Rev. Sue Phillips

- It is “a new day” for emerging issues regarding governance. This year has been significant for experimentation on the part of the staff team and their portfolios and leadership development and working with two districts. Overall, the operation side has been successful.
- Program—demand has increased. Trainings have been doubled (offered twice). Sue thinks this might be the result of consistent increased marketing, plus innovation in the topics. The marketing is important because some of the topics are on big issues phrased in a way that is not the usual concrete way. Cross-district attendance is happening.
- Interventions with congregations have been high, i.e., relatively frequent. People know they can call and get help. This has been managed by Sue and Doug so far, so getting a new staff person, Karen Bellevance-Grace, Director of Faith Formation, plus having Karen Miller, will help. Seventeen congregations are “in transition,” e.g. getting new ministries.
- Things that have been learned:

There are no distinctions between MBD and CBD operationally, despite different cultures and stories. Sharing executive functions has become a true benefit for all, enabling to have more program staff. It works. The fact that the DE had the freedom to do this is thanks to policy governance.

The two boards have been engaged in “parallel play.” Sue’s perception is we could have done more together, talked more together, and engaged together. She urges us to do more together—have faith in the process.

Sue would like to see us better serve thriving congregations, although there will always be some congregations in distress to be helped by the district in some way. She urges us, the Board, to figure out how to serve the dynamic potential that is out there. Do this, and the staff will come up with the operational stuff to fit.

Having two boards will not continue to be sustainable, so we should think about this. We are needed to lead, set the vision and energy. Sue can help us connect with other Boards in the area/country.

- Question asked about where CBD Board is at. Sue: They gave up co-employment; now figuring out the covenantal questions; have accepted UUA ends.

#### Regional Trends in Governance and Co-employment—Rev. Teresa Cooley

- Many district boards have been thinking about how to do things differently—this has erupted without prompting from any “master plan.”
- Co-employment issue discovery: Co-employment was never a set of agreements on paper, it was a practice for a long time. There is nothing that says we have to do it this way. The ending of co-employment would not change other main practices of right relations, being in covenant, communications.

- Discussion:

It theoretically could change the way of policy governance, e.g. would there be monitoring reports? Answer: We would still have to articulate a covenant with each other (Board and DE). Perhaps it would be a hybrid kind of policy governance.

There is no standardized practice of reporting of Regional Leads to report to Teresa; it has to be tailored in each case.

Letting go of co-employment means that Teresa can form more flexible and responsive staff lead positions and models that are more coherent. A Regional Lead can be more in touch with negotiations and changes with district boards. (Sue is now the New England Regional Lead.)

Teresa: There seems to become a sense of spiritual liberation and freedom from borders, that we are all in this together, that we are to serve the vibrancy of our faith rather than “our district, “our congregations.”

Policy governance has been dual-edged—has brought about change and a way to look at things differently, and, it can become a way to get entrenched in just looking at policies and monitoring reports. So, the challenge is to get beyond the latter. How much governance is really required with no co-employment? We are giving up something that was never defined in order to get to something we are trying to define (paraphrase of another DE).

A fear expressed: how can we (district/board) trust the UUA as the district/regional employer? Answer: The old system of “protecting our borders” breeds distrust. The new way, with open and clear covenants, would engender trust.

The core aspects of covenants between district boards and UUA need to be the same, and there can be variations and nuances as needed. The District Presidents Association can help with this maybe.

What authority does the district Board have? We watch over some restricted funds, legally. We have the authority to oversee district dues. What else? What are we? We are still leaders, even though we would not have the power to hire/fire staff and DE. The term “board” may need to evolve to something else.

The covenant is central to all of this—it will signify the relationship.

If we ended co-employment today, we would still operate under policy governance; business would proceed as before. We would need to get a covenant together, and we can utilize covenant samples from the DPA at General Assembly this month. Should we put through a motion to end co-employment? We can keep this separate from the issue of accepting UUA end.

***Motion made by Rev. Frank Clarkson:*** We affirm that our UUA is the sole employer for the MBD program staff and we are committed to develop a covenant to outline the relationships and responsibilities among the District board, the District Executive, and our UUA Administration . Seconded by Pat Manley. Motion passed unanimously.

#### UUA Trustee Report—Paul Rickter

- Our UUA is considering purchasing Hebrew College in Newton. The UUA Board has made a token offer. Other entities are also interested in the purchase. The downtown properties could/might be sold.
- At General Assembly, there will be many by-law changes—a smaller board; fix the process for amending the Purposed & Principles; process of Immediate Witness; and more.
- Paul will write up his reflections on his 16 years of service on our UUA Board.
- Thank you Paul for all your service; you are always welcome at our meetings.

End of the Year Financial Report, and, the Operating Budget – needs to be voted upon by the board. We will have an electronic meeting for this in August.

September Board (MBD and CBD) Retreat—Still in the works. Original venue is not available. An alternative would be a one-day event. Dates are Sept. 23 and 24. This would be our first meeting of the year. Location will be determined.

ReLaTe = Regional Leadership Team—is a way for district leaders can develop relationships. Sue is involved as Regional Lead for New England. The first meeting will be at GA.

#### Other business

- APF Team – Pending.
- Inviting the Nominations Committee to one of our meetings. Pending.
- Board compliance report – how do we know how we are doing? Pending.

More from Sue:

- A gift has been made to the MBD of \$20,000 from someone.
- Karen Bellevance-Grace is the new staff person; will be working from Northhampton.
- Tornado news: UUA has helped get resources for Monson UU congregation and families who have lost their homes. Sue has advanced funds.
- Positive reporting on the New England region UU membership growth rate helps the thriving congregations and others be motivated—See Sue’s most recent post in the District Newsletter.

Linkage

- Need to deeply think about how to get on with linkage process.
- Linkage information gathered at MBD Annual Meeting.
- Discussion about how Annual Meeting is done: Sue will look into how this can be done together with CBD and have it be a “District Assembly.” How to get more people to attend? This year’s MBD Annual Meeting was good.
- Discussion about what a “district” can be—e.g., geographic clusters. This gets at the linkage issue in terms of relationships—congregations relating with each other.
- Analysis and/or distillation of the gathered linkage data from Annual Meeting—Laura and Mark offer to do this. (Point of information: a linkage toolkit is forthcoming from the DPA – District Presidents’ Association.) Look for recurring themes; what next questions might we have; does this point to future linkage situations of some other kind?
- Brainstorming ideas: “Liaison” method of meeting congregations (dividing up board members to visit all congregations) and do it in a way different from 3-4 years ago; meet with ministers’ meeting; getting together with congregational presidents; meeting with several congregational leaders together. Frank can contact Rev. Marta Valentine about meeting with ministers.

UUA Ends—to be discussed further. These ends are in sync with our MBD ends already.

***Motion made by Pat Manley:*** The DE is empowered to use the proposed FY12 budget as thought it was the actual FY12 budget until Sept. 1, 2011. Seconded by Jacki. Passed.

Meeting adjourned 1:05 p.m.

NOTE: Highlighted lines are action and/or further discussion items. ***Motions made are in bold italics.***

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanette Ruyle, secretary