

November 1, 2023  
**UCM Board Meeting Agenda**

People present: Rev. Joan Javier-Duval; Board Officers: Claudia Clark, President and Facilitator of this meeting; Ansel Ploog, Vice-President; Fran Dodd, Financial Officer; Brenda Bean, Secretary; Board Members at-Large: Hugo Liepmann and Jen Mathews; Guest Rev. [Erica Baron](#), UUA Congregational Consultant.

4:00 Check-In: (Secretary missed this part of the meeting.)

4:10 Chalice Lighting and Reading: Claudia lit the chalice while Joan read from Bill Schulz' book.

4:15 Discussion led by Erica Baron on **Policy Governance**, "What's working and What isn't?": Erica consulted with UCM in the past so knows some of the challenges and frustrations of the UCM Governance Model. She said, "The point of any model is to make things easier. If it's making things harder, change it and make it work for UCM!" When she asked, "What is harder than it needs to be?" some Board members questioned the value of spending time to monitor all the Governing Policies on an ongoing year-round schedule.

Brenda said monitoring is intended to help the church know if we're doing/being what we have said we want to do/be and to encourage Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI).

Joan described how different policies are monitored in different ways. There are only a few policies for which the Board must gather data.

For monitoring most of the policies, the ET determines what data to collect. Because UCM has been operating under Policy Governance for nearly a decade, the ET's monitoring reports are well-established and relatively easy to update year-to-year with activities done to indicate compliance. (Joan assured us that monitoring is a small fraction of what she does with the ET.) The Board and ET have occasionally decided - after conversation - that different data should be measured. Thus, Joan has found monitoring contributes to a helpful feedback loop between the Board and the ET.

Erica agreed that monitoring is an opportunity to reflect upon and improve the church's performance. While having a regular check-in on the policies is helpful, having an up/down vote related to compliance is not.

UCM needs to know what it is doing well and how we know it. \$ and attendance are the easiest to measure. It is hard to measure more subjective matters, a challenge to know when we're being successful, so it's worth looking into indicators of success.

If success, stop and acknowledge it! If we could do better, what and how? Take the time to identify strategic and do-able actions and choose the 'next elegant step' (the idea of Adrienne Marie Brown, who wrote "Emergent Strategies") and who will take it; assign responsibilities.

Erica suggested that Joan "flag" for the Board any policies that she or the ET thinks should be changed. Perhaps take one of those policies a month and reflect upon how the Board will know if UCM is being successful.

**The Board agreed all of this could be further explored outside of the Board's regular business meeting(s) through the Board's task group for governance, under Ansel's leadership, to review the policy monitoring process (Ansel, Hugo, Jen).**

5:00 Staffing Needs: *We had hoped to also consult with Erica during this meeting about staffing levels for UCM but ran out of time to do so; we may in the future seek her knowledge of relevant examples and resources.*

*Joan explained that to prepare the annual budget, it is necessary to forecast staffing costs, which requires an understanding of the staff skills and time needed to carry out priority tasks. This is best done in accordance with an established vision and long-range plan. While UCM does have a Working Vision Statement (adapted from the 2020 Vision Statement and adopted by the Board in May, 2021, linked here: [Visioning TF-Annual Report - Google Docs](#)), it has not had a long-range plan since 2020. Without such a plan, Joan would find it helpful if the Board could clarify what to emphasize about the use of staff.*

*[Subsequently, Brenda suggests that in lieu of a long-range plan, the Board could use as guidance about staffing its own FY2024 Goals and Working/Priority Tasks ([https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_7OFd2Gk98bbDIFzUSSnHXI60awVEb6S/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_7OFd2Gk98bbDIFzUSSnHXI60awVEb6S/edit)) and the Addendum adopted for the Working Vision Statement. The Addendum (linked above in the Annual Report as the "Working Priorities for 2021 and Beyond") "was crafted to reflect the thinking of the Board ... about three key aspects of the particularly troublesome environment in which UCM now exists. All three are of utmost importance to our community and are intricately and intimately inter-related: (1) an increasingly divided and turbulent nation facing the challenge of white supremacy and systemic racism; (2) the escalating climate crisis, and (3) the COVID-19 pandemic."]*

*To do this, Joan suggested the Board might want to assess:*

- Does our current staffing allow us to be nimble and flexible as well as financially feasible and sustainable?*
- How satisfied are the staff with their jobs? What do they want to - never have time to - do?*
- How satisfied is the congregation with the work being done by the staff?*
- Whether we want some of the "out-of-the-box" things that are happening in other churches to happen here, like shared staffing across congregations and multi-minister teams....*

*Hugo agreed we should assess how well the staffing sets us up for the future. He also suggested assessing whether the staffing is helpful to the minister.*

*Joan wondered if the Board would want to respond to the results of such an assessment by setting goals to improve staff satisfaction, performance, retention, save money, etc.*

*Ansel wondered who is most appropriate to interview the staff (Joan, the ET, Board members, others?). Fran wondered about the timing of interviews. Claudia said we should plan how to do all of this. **We decided that Joan, Steve, and Jen will talk about this before Dec. 8 and bring ideas back to the Board.***

**Reminder:**

Committee of Chairs: Tuesday Nov. 7 - Hugo, confirmed.

New Members Introduction: Nov. 4 @ time? Claudia.

Coffee Hour Committee Fair: Nov. 5 @ 11:30 a.m. Jen, Fran, and maybe Hugo will be there.

**FYI:**

- **Elevator:** Claudia is meeting with Barbara C. Nov. 2 @ 10:30 to see space needed for elevator shaft. (Barbara will put tape on the first and second floors.) Anyone is welcome to attend. Both bids estimate the half-cab lift to be about \$40,000 (including \$1,500 to remove the elevette), not counting the cost of enlarging the shaft.

*Brenda asked if the Board wants to talk about the elevator at its table on Sunday. We said, "Only if Barbara Conrey could join." Instead, Joan suggested **the Board host a "fireside chat" (including on Zoom) in the next month or so about choosing a half-cab or a full-cab lift. Again, we said we would need Barbara to participate.***

- **Fundraising:** **Ansel met with Johanna Nichols about the Gifts of Love event, which in the past has been a raffle to share items or services with each other, also a fundraiser. Johanna has ideas about making it more relationship-based (to add 'value'), perhaps in February or March. What, if any, relationship do we want it to have with the Annual Budget Drive? Ansel asked that discussion of this event be put on the next Board agenda.**
- **Communications:**
  - Feedback about the Board's most recent letter? *In a Seasoned Souls group, the letter was highly commended and recommended. **Ansel will reply to Steve Finner, whose response to the letter was to offer to volunteer.***
  - *Joan and Claudia are working on a letter to be inserted into thank-you cards for the flood recovery volunteers and donors. **We agreed we could stuff the cards into envelopes during the next meeting, which will be Nov. 15 in person as well as on Zoom.***

5:45 Adjourned!