



## Board of Directors Meeting

Chicago – Hyatt Regency McCormick Place — May 26, 2016

### BOARD MEETING MINUTES

In attendance: (voting) Rob Boston, Rebecca Hale, John Hooper, Jennifer Kalmanson, Howard Katz, Susan Sackett, Christine Shellska, Herb Silverman, July Simpson, Jason Torpy, Kristin Wintermute, and (non-voting) Roy Speckhardt, Maggie Ardiente, and 15 AHA members and conference attendees.

Absent: Anthony Pinn

**1. Call to order** - *Becky called the meeting to order at 8:33am.* All AHA board members introduced themselves to those in attendance for the meeting. Howard Katz was appointed parliamentarian. Maggie Ardiente was appointed recording secretary. No new business was added to the agenda.

**2. Acceptance/amendment of February meeting minutes** - John moved to approve the minutes. Howard seconded. Approved by consensus.

**3. Between meetings actions** - It was confirmed by the board that the Embassy Suites Charleston will be the location of the 2017 AHA 76<sup>th</sup> Conference, and that the building fund will be transferred to the Foundation in preparation for imminent building purpose. Jason moved to ratify the votes on removing and adding Humanist Society board members and accept resignations; and the unanimous vote on the strategic plan. Jenny seconded. Approved by consensus.

#### 4. Financial update

**a. 2015 Audit and 2016 Budget** John gave a brief report on the audit and 2016 budget for the AHA. Overall, AHA's complete assets totals \$7.9 million, and that AHA is in a healthy position and on track to meet its goals. Board members were invited to ask questions about the financials.

**b. The Humanist Foundation** - Jenny reports that the Trustees of the Foundation will be meeting in July in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

**c. Capital Campaign – Feasibility Study** - The board members asked questions and discussed the capital campaign; Maggie and Roy answered the questions and recommended moving forward with our plans to conduct the campaign upon Nan McConnell's recommendation. Jenny moved that the AHA move forward with plans to launch a capital campaign for a new building. July seconded. Becky called for a vote, and it was unanimous.

**5. Strategic planning** - Jenny gave some background information on conducting the AHA's strategic plan and reported five strong initiatives for the AHA to pursue in the next five years. The strategic plan has been accepted and adopted by the AHA board and staff. The State of Humanism Membership meeting during the conference will provide copies of the plan to all AHA attendees.

**6. Approve office policy manual** - Roy explained that the office policy manual needed to be updated to include provisions for security at the headquarters in Washington DC. With AHA's profile more raised, the headquarters could be a target, so it's important for the organization to take reasonable precautions by putting in policies that keep the building secure. The manual also suggests some clarification in the AHA's telecommuting policies. Howard moved to approve the AHA's office policy manual. John seconded. Approved by consensus.

**7. Resolutions Committee** - Jason reported that the Resolutions Committee is not currently active due to the fact that the strategic plan has been the main focus of the board. A board resolution on the environment is at the top of the list for consideration.

## **8. Conferences and Events**

**a. Charleston 2017 plans** - Maggie reported that the 76<sup>th</sup> Annual American Humanist Association Conference will be held June 8-11, 2017, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Charleston Airport in Charleston, South Carolina.

**b. 2020 plans** - Maggie reported that the AHA still intends to host the 2020 World Humanist Congress with the International Humanist and Ethical Union, though it will no longer be in New York City as initially proposed. Maggie is working with Carl Blackburn and Andrew Copson at IHEU to determine a more suitable location. Board members suggested cities such as Miami, Orlando, DC, and San Francisco.

**c. Awards Committee** - Susan gave a report on people we may reach out to for 2017, including Bernie Sanders, Neil Gaiman, Carrie Fisher, Adam Savage, and Sidney Poitier for humanist awards. It's still early, and the committee is open to suggestions.

**d. Reason Rally** - Debbie gave an update on the Reason Rally taking place next weekend (June 4). AHA was a major sponsor in 2012 and is a major sponsor in 2016. She mentioned many of the events outside the main Reason Rally day, including Advocacy Days and some of the post-event parties. Debbie expressed pride in AHA's involvement in Reason Rally as a way to support the entire secular movement.

**9. Programs, adjuncts and coalitions action items** - Maggie and Roy gave brief updates on Development, Communications, and Advocacy, The Humanist Magazine and theHumanist.com, Web Development, and the Appignani Humanist Legal Center, and board members and attendees of the meeting were welcomed to ask questions.

**10. Humanist Society** - Kristin reported that the celebrant trainings for weddings and funerals through the Humanist Institute have been very successful, and that small meetings make the trainings more meaningful. Christine suggested that perhaps a once-a-year-retreat event for celebrants could take place and help the program grow.

**11. Chapters and Affiliates** - Christine moved to accept the Washington Area Secular Humanists and Morgantown Humanist Alliance as chapters, and the Ethical Society of St. Louis and Atlanta Freethought Society as affiliates. Debbie seconded. Approved by consensus. Roy reported that the AHA now has 190 chapters and affiliates and will continue to give micro-grants to groups.

**12. Humanist Press Books** - Roy reported on some of the new books coming out, including "Personal Paths to Humanism" (the first volume in a series of autobiographies of how humanists came to be); "The Cartoon History of Humanism" (a graphic novel), and Herb Silverman's second book, "An Atheist Stranger in a Strange Religious Land." Other books include a Humanist Celebrant guide, "Darwin's Apostles" by David Orenstein, and a new book on Kurt Vonnegut.

**13. The Humanist Institute** - John talked about changes in the Humanist Institute graduate program to accommodate flexibility for students. Kristin reported that the celebrant training in March at Rutgers University was successful and translated to practical applications, which makes THI's program unique. Kristin gave some background on James Croft. John moved to accept James Croft as a new board member of The Humanist Institute. Jenny seconded. Approved by consensus. Kristin talked about starting a series of TED Talk-style lectures to provide educational resources beyond the onsite training and intensive graduate courses where communities can begin to learn about humanism. It was noted that David

Breeden, the new dean of THI, is also running for the board of directors of the AHA. Becky asked about THI offering professional credits, and Kristin says credits can be earned depending on the state and the professional body approving the credits. Further research will be conducted to maximize this.

**14. Kochhar Humanist Education Center** - Roy said that the University Award for Philosophical Humanism (which has been given to Stanford, Carnegie Mellon, and Pitzer) has been successful and helped to bring other major universities involved in humanism (such as Yale, which is likely to be the next recipient).

**15. Social Justice Alliances** - Roy spoke about the new Feminist, LGBTQ, and Black Humanist Alliances and Sincere Kirabo's work so far.

**16. Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers** - MAAF is now an affiliate group of the AHA and described what it does to the attendees.

**17. Center for Freethought Equality** - Roy reported that CFE now has a more active board and recently met. A discussion took place about Jamie Raskin, the first openly humanist candidate for office who is likely to win a seat in the House of Representatives. More discussion took place on CFE's role in supporting humanist candidates.

**18. Institute for Humanist Studies** - Jenny gave a brief report on the new books IHS will be publishing, including "Humanism and Technology" coming out this year.

**19. Secular Coalition for America** - Herb Silverman gave a brief report on SCA's latest activities, including the hiring of new executive director Larry Decker, and the Advocacy Days (lobbying) taking place just before the Reason Rally.

**20. International Humanist Ethical Union** - Susan reported on her participating in the General Assembly meeting in Malta last week. IHEU is in the process of possibly changing its name and making its board more global to include leaders from different continents. The 2017 World Humanist Congress will take place in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Roy read a special letter from IHEU president Andrew Copson congratulating the AHA on its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Howard moved to make the letter part of the minutes. Jenny seconded. Approved by consensus—see end of minutes. Board suggested sharing the letter further.

**21. Schedule fall board meeting** - There was a sense of the board that the meeting would be Saturday November 19 at a location to be determined online after today's meeting.

**22. New business** - Though no new business was formally added, Howard suggested that the AHA add voting rights to its list of issues and priorities. Currently state laws are being passed to prevent people who have served time in jail to, once their released, vote in elections. Jason said he will put this on the resolutions committee agenda. Further discussion on how AHA's legislative team can get move involved. The board suggested that AHA can move forward with developing statements, joining coalitions, and writing articles on voter suppression and voting rights.

Becky invited the attendees of the board meeting to speak. Joshua Berg suggested providing educational materials for humanists in prison so that they are aware of their voting rights, and also suggested that AHA increase its youth outreach. Michael Cluff thanked the AHA for its support of social justice and wants more help at the national level to encourage local groups to also make it a priority. Other general comments were made by attendees.

**23. Adjourn** – Jason moved to adjourn, July seconded. *Becky adjourned the meeting at 11:35am.*



IHEU  
39 Moreland Street  
London, EC1V 8BB  
United Kingdom

09 June 2016

Roy Speckhardt  
Executive Director  
American Humanist Association

**Good without God; Better with the American Humanist Association  
Congratulations on AHA's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Dear Roy,

I would like to pass on my congratulations and warmest wishes on this, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Humanist Association.

The AHA was one of the founding members of IHEU in 1952, and has played a leading role in our work throughout our own 64 year history. It was the AHA's ground-breaking work that led to the Freedom of Thought Report, which is admired and respected at high level international bodies.

The AHA has been consistently active and progressive in promoting humanism and challenging discrimination faced by humanists. You have been prepared to take on school boards and politicians to defend the USA's secular constitution, and have also been hugely successful in promoting humanism as a positive life stance. I have always greatly enjoyed participating in AHA events, which have been informative, interesting and hugely rewarding.

Your work has motivated and inspired people throughout the world. On behalf of everyone at IHEU, I would like to thank you for the last 75 years, and look forward to the next 75. These are exciting times with many challenges, but also positive developments that should give all humanists real hope. The American Humanist Association will remain at the forefront of our international movement.

With very best wishes,

**Andrew Copson**  
President  
International Humanist and Ethical Union

**International Humanist and Ethical Union**

39 Moreland Street, London, EC1V 8BB, United Kingdom

Tel. +44 20 7490 8468 Email: [office@iheu.org](mailto:office@iheu.org) Web: [www.iheu.org](http://www.iheu.org)

IHEU is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization incorporated in New York, USA. Registered in England number FC020642