

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Charleston — June 8, 2017

1. *The meeting was called to order at 9:10pm EST.*
 - a. Roll call and introductions
Board members: Debbie Allen, Rob Boston, Ian Dodd, Rebecca Hale, John Hooper, Jennifer Kalmanson, Howard Katz, Sunil Panikkath, Susan Sackett, Jason Torpy, Kristin Wintermute were in attendance. July Simpson participated via phone. Kris Shellska was absent.
 - b. Becky appointed Howard to serve as parliamentarian, and Howard accepted.
 - c. Bonnie Cleaveland was appointed recording secretary.
 - d. Suggestions for new business to be considered
2. Howard moved to accept the February meeting minutes. Jenny seconded. **Minutes approved by consensus.**
3. Sunil moved to approve our between meetings action of voting to approve Trustees July Simpson and Scott Seidowitz. Ian seconded. **Action approved by consensus.**
4. John gave the treasurer's report and updated on 2017 progress. Among other items he pointed out that our recent direct mail campaign will show more returns later in the year. John explained that the Finance Committee had its initial meeting and reviewed the financials and draft audits. Roy pointed out that expenses are higher this year vs. last year, but income is also up slightly and there was recently a favorable ruling on a legal case that may result in \$100,000 before year-end. Sunil noted that the Humanist Foundation is included in our consolidated financials and is interested to know if it may impact the legal protection we get for the endowment fund, one of the main reasons we even maintain the foundation. July agreed that there is value in exploring this, while cases are fact specific, comingling of funds could be a problem. Other issues were raised about the Foundation charter and the process for appointing Trustees. **Staff will explore with legal counsel whether or not consolidation affects our protection from lawsuits.**
5. Becky pointed out that the Humanist Society may provide unique vulnerability to legal action. Paul (from the gallery) asked if we have insurance that protects us from actions of celebrants? No, but there is a sense that they're independent contractors.
6. Jennifer moved that we approve the 2016 annual audit. John seconded. **Audit approved by consensus.**
7. Roy introduced that a new office policy manual was needed because of the office move and to add a more detailed policy for telework. Howard moved to adopt the new office policy manual, taking the recommendations part out of the manual itself and putting it in a preface. Jennifer seconded. **Manual approved by consensus.**

8. Jennifer reported that the Humanist Foundation met in May and left the asset allocation as it is. Alliance-Bernstein is the asset manager and will soon provide a list of recommendations to apply ethical standards to the asset allocation, but not at the expense of returns. Sunil moved to accept the proposed Humanist Foundations bylaws update, which updates location specific items. Ian seconded. **Bylaws approved by consensus.**
9. Ian moved to appoint Mel Lipman to a renewed term as a Trustee of the Humanist Foundation. Sunil seconded. Motion passed. **Appointment approved by consensus.**
10. Roy reported that the capital campaign officially launches Saturday night. The AHA has moved to a bigger, better, bolder facility and it will allow us to do more on Capitol Hill. 100% of the board has made a contribution or pledge. Roy thanks the board members for their commitment.
11. Jason reported that the resolutions committee is focusing on climate change this year. The AHA should organize the website resolutions so that they're organized topically rather than chronologically—noted by staff. A voting rights resolution last year including for ex-felons who have paid their debt to society. Susan noted that the resolution punctuation should be consistent throughout and volunteered to edit it, which will happen once Jason makes sure we have the latest version in hand.
12. The Central Colorado Humanists requested that the AHA add “guided by reason” to the *Humanist* magazine definition of humanism. Howard moved that we insert the words. Jennifer seconded. Jason was out of consensus pointing out that it's not the official definition of humanism and should fall within editorial discretion. Discussion continued. Howard moved we table this to another meeting. No second. Becky called a vote to instruct the editor to add the three words. Three were in favor; the rest opposed, and the motion failed. Sunil moved that the board recommend to the editor that she consider adding the three words from the Central Colorado Humanists. John seconded. Jenny asked Sunil to amend the motion to include Jason's language that it's not an official definition. John seconded. The motion passed unanimously.
13. The discussion on conferences began with Roy pointing out that there's a Friday morning coffee hour at 8am in the Ballroom Foyer where Board members are requested to attend to meet members. The Conference Committee settled on the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas for our next conference which will take place May 16-20, 2018. The Humanist Foundation Trustees will meet there on the Sunday afternoon. The 2019 conference was discussed in the pre-meeting and requires further research. The 2020 conference will be in Miami, Florida and be jointly with the IHEU World Congress. Susan said that the Awards Committee is now asks for suggestions for awardees.
14. Roy began discussing Program and Adjunct reports with noting we have hired a new Development Director, Nicole Carr who has decades of nonprofit development experience. In response to Sunil's question about the general plan for maintaining the donor network, Roy explains that he will travel with Nicole to meet donors extensively over the first year to cement connections with our supporters, and then they'll travel more

independently. The board has offered to join in on donor calls. Roy also explained that a new communications manager will be hired and is in process, and that Jan was let go and for now we are freelancing graphic design. The board discussed pros and cons of hiring full-time employees vs. freelancers.

15. The Humanist Legal Society, Roy explained, is a group of lawyers who have agreed to participate pro-bono or for reduced fees with the Appignani Humanist Legal Center. Some have wanted to be part of a more formal system. The legal organization is a DC nonprofit corporation as an adjunct of the AHA. The board did not have the initial bylaws and will vote later. Jennifer moved we approve the proposed initial board appointments as presented. Debbie seconded. **Board approved by consensus.**
16. Introducing discussion of the Humanist Society, Debbie, explained plans to provide continuing education for celebrants and three new HS initiatives: 1) a quarterly teleconference 2) a mentor-advisor program 3) society promotion and advertising for celebrants. Three trainings were scheduled, including one that happened in March, one on Sunday at the conference, and one in September in D.C. Becky says the caliber of celebrants and the quality of the board is excellent and provides kudos to Debbie. Debbie moved we confirm the officers: Steven Bechtel Vice President, Kathy Diedrich Secretary, and Joshua Berg Treasurer. Ian seconded. **Officers approved by consensus.**
17. John moves to approve new AHA Chapters: the Chicago Ethical Humanists, the Humanist Circle in Evanston, IL, the Seabrook Humanist Society in Tinton Falls, NJ, and the Last Frontier Freethinkers of Soldotna, AK. Kristin seconded. **Chapters approved by consensus.**
18. Becky brings up that with us increasingly having multiple groups in cities, we may need to provide structure for multiple groups in cities. Debbie says if we had more money, we could bring leaders and train them. John pointed out that the president of the Humanist Community of Pittsburgh John Gritchfield died recently and we should contact John until the group is reorganized. Roy explains that we do have a section on the website for chapter resources, but we'll need to make it easier to find. Roy says that while a bubble chart is an excellent presentation of the site map and should be added, 97% of people go to subpages now so we have to find ways to link to key items like that directly from social media, emails, and other sources. Debbie would like a monthly email to chapter leaders with resources. Jason says in addition to giving them actions and resources every month we should create a feedback loop where they get back to us to make them better.
19. Humanist Press Books. Roy said Luis will be here this weekend and that we continue to move forward and sell books, albeit at a slower pace since we decided to cut back last fall.
20. Kristin reported on the Humanist Institute and the recent panel event on humanists of color that was taped and will be edited and online. The master class is set for Aug 26-28 and will be on Humanism and anti-blackness—it will be an event by invitation only for professional, established humanist leaders. Kristin is working on a humanist training for

chaplains. The website is getting bigger and there are many courses and resources. Becky asks how Kristin is letting chapters know that the resources are available. They're using ads on the AHA website and via Facebook, UU Humanists, and AEU. However, she says they could do better. There's a discussion guide for KOHE courses. Howard suggests we put notices in *Free Mind*. Kristin notes that there's a regular column on Humanist.com and also on Patheos.

21. Roy discusses progress with Social Justice Alliances including that Sincere is now on the conference organizing committee for Creating Change, the largest LGBTQ event annually, we'll be tabling there and speak there.
22. MAAF, Jason explains, is limping along a bit and making some progress. We restarted at Navy basic training. Air Force basic training services are going well. Chaplain training is happening. And we got a big win with the Department of Defense now recognizing humanism specifically. Jason is in discussion with the chaplain hierarchy and will update the materials as Kristin does more with chaplains around the country.
23. For the Center for Freethought Equality, Jennifer moved we appoint two board members: Jennifer Goulet and Gail Jordan. Howard seconded. **Appointments approved by consensus.**
24. Howard moved we adopt new Center for Freethought Equality bylaw amendments. Sunil seconded. **Bylaws approved by consensus.**
25. Jennifer says the Institute for Humanist Studies has three main functions 1) Publications, including Tony Pinn's new book series that begins with *When Colorblindness isn't the Answer* 2) Annual fall symposium, this time November 3-5, to focus on education, and 3) Essays in the Philosophy of Humanism, that peer review journal. The Institute is also trying to increase scope of public presence. Roy hopes the IHS board would begin to have a public policy impact to help with outreach and fundraising. Sunil notes that the journal's profile can be raised by increasing its popularity as a place to publish. We need answers on circulation numbers and have the publisher suggest ways to increase its profile.
26. The Secular Coalition for America is preparing for its lobby day June 15 and accompanying Secular Values Summit.
27. Susan discusses the International Humanist Ethical Union and says the latest board is more international and has a new Chief Executive, Gary McLelland from Scotland. The Sao Paulo Congress was cancelled, but a General Assembly will meet in London in the first week of August. The AHA is one of the larger member organizations in the IHEU, which may change its name. Humanist International is the proposed new name. Susan completes her term in August. Becky Hale is running for the IHEU board. The AHA board gave its votes to Becky to represent the AHA in London.

28. The board tentatively decided on the next board meeting date and place as November 17-18th in Seattle. July is tasked with finding a place in Seattle to meet.
29. In discussing the AHA's primary publications, Sunil thinks we could benefit from short mission statements. Kristin was suggesting a common statement for publications and a description of purpose, but it appears individual ones will be needed. John suggests perhaps we think about the objective of each publication and that the staff of each publication suggest it to the board via Roy. Jason says we expect differing views from the AHA occasionally in the *Humanist* magazine, not in *Free Mind*, and that's in open question about the Humanist.com. Rob is concerned about opening a can of worms based on one article. July agrees with Rob – the article sparked discussion but was framed as an editorial. Jason thought we weren't talking about the article any longer. Roy says the AHA is challenged to project the breadth and depth of the organization's reach, that our publications are one of the ways for that to be accomplished, and that mission statements for each publication are a good idea, but whether the board should approve them or not, he doesn't know. Becky suggests that some duplication might be helpful, but too much as redundancy leads to obsolescence. Ian notes that the paper version may eventually outlive its usefulness and may lose money—it's helpful, though, if it'll be in bookstores or other places paper is necessary. Sunil notes that efforts shouldn't be duplicated but that duplicating publication is OK. Roy says much of the \$60,000 spent on the magazine goes to print and mail. Rob says not to do anything until you survey your members and find what they want and need—Americans United has many members who aren't online at all. Roy says we could print less over time, though the cost is higher per issue the fewer we publish and there may be a minimum to print in the way we do now. Sunil asks about what the value is – not just what the costs are. We have a hundreds of library-institutional subscribers and individual subscribers. Most people get the magazine through membership. Becky points out that paper magazines stay around a long time and there is some value to that.
30. Howard moved we adjourn. Rob seconded. **Adjournment approved by consensus at 1:00pm.**