

AHA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Washington, DC Zoom Teleconference — July 31, 2021

1. Sunil called the meeting to order at 1:07pm Eastern.
2. Board Members Present: Rob Boston, Abby Hafer, John Hooper, Jenny Kalmanson, Howard Katz, Sunil Panikkath, Juhem Navarro-Rivera, Mandisa Thomas, Jason Wiles, and non-voting board member Roy Speckhardt; Also present by invitation were Humanist Foundation Trustee Scott Seidewitz and AHA Staff members Nicole Carr and Emily Newman.
3. Appointment of parliamentarian (Howard): approved by unanimous consent.
4. Appointment of recording secretary (Nicole Carr): approved by unanimous consent.
5. Acceptance/amendment of March meeting minutes - Motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting made by Jason, seconded by Rob; approved by unanimous consent.
6. Ratification of between meetings actions: Motion to ratify actions to withdraw the Humanist of the Year Award from Richard Dawkins and to approve the Employment Handbook, Office Manual, and Guidelines for Pandemic was moved by Abby, seconded by Jason; approved by unanimous consent.
7. Sunil provided a summary of the Institutional DEI Review project which was approved by the Board in March. A consultant was identified (Carmen Phelps of 986 Consulting), approved by the Executive Committee and has been hired. The project is now in process and Carmen is scheduling and holding interviews with stakeholders. The process is scheduled to last several months and the Board will receive a report when it is ready.
8. Finance and Strategy actions
 - a. Motion to accept the audit and management letter moved by Rob, seconded by John, approved by unanimous consent.
 - b. John provided the Finance Committee report. There was a larger surplus so far this year due to received payments on legal settlements, bequests, and PPP loans. Memberships and contributions underperforming last year but that is due to some timing issues and should resolve by the end of the year. The Finance Committee proposed several changes to the 2021 budget, which will result in a small surplus at the end of the year. John moved to accept the Finance Committee recommendation on budget revision, Howard seconded; approved by unanimous consent.
 - c. Jennifer reported on the activities of the Humanist Foundation. The next meeting of the Trustees is scheduled for October 10th at AHA headquarters in Washington, DC. Scott reported that investments are doing well.
9. Sunil provided an update on the search for an Executive Director which was officially launched in February. The Search Committee consists of Sunil (Chair), Nicole (staff rep), John, Sue Reamer, Anthony Cruz, and Tony Pinn. The Committee worked with a search firm and identified a candidate, who was proposed to the Board and an offer was made after the Board approved, but was not accepted. The AHA disengaged amicably with that search firm and engaged a new firm, DRi. The process with DRi has been much more structured and the search is now open again. The best case scenario is that the board is able to make an offer in October but it may take longer. In response to questions from Board members, Sunil stressed the importance of effective recruiting on the part of the search firm as crucial to the success of the search.
10. Roy provided an update on continuing measures related to the coronavirus pandemic. AHA staff were about to start a hybrid-style return to the office on August 1st. That has been delayed to September 1st due to increasing COVID numbers and DC Mayor Bowser's reinstated indoor mask mandate.
11. As the chair of the Resolutions Committee recently resigned from the board, Sunil will be appointing a new chair and will talk to the committee members about whom to appoint. The committee is working on a resolution but has not made significant progress.
12. Sunil congratulated the staff on mounting a successful 2021 Conference. Nicole reported that the Conference attracted about 1,000 registrations, costs were as expected and income was higher than expected. Sunil suggested that virtual conferences continue in some form even when we can go back to meeting in person. Howard reported that Conference attendees suggested a regular, monthly Zoom meeting where members could hear what was going on at the AHA and ask questions. Rob suggested a regular email from the Executive Director, and it was noted that the monthly reports could be the basis for such a regular event.
13. Since the last Board meeting there is one new chapter to approve: Ethical Society of Wake Correctional Center in Raleigh, NC, and three new affiliates to approve: Atheists United of LA, Humanist Student Society of Bucknell University, Anne Arundel Secular Humanists in Annapolis, MD. Emily has also been working to bring back the Gulf Coast Humanist Chapter, and the AHA now has 242 active chapters and affiliates. Howard moved to accept the new chapters and affiliates, Rob seconded; approved by unanimous consent.
14. Sunil reported that the committee on board software, security, and communication had not made much progress because of other priorities.

15. The Next Board meeting will be Thursday, December 2nd at 7pm Eastern.
16. New business - Howard noted that the AHA bylaws state that after a Board member fails to attend three consecutive regular Board meetings, their seat is automatically considered vacant at the beginning of the third meeting. He said this was applicable in one case as of this meeting. Sunil noted that there is also another vacancy as a result of a resignation and hence there are two vacancies to fill. He stated that he will follow up with Board members by email to discuss filling the vacancies.
17. Abby made a motion to adjourn, John seconded. Sunil adjourned the meeting at 2:06pm.