

# AHA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

*Denver, CO/Zoom Teleconference — May 4, 2023*

1. Call to order (by chair: Sunil) at 6:32 PM MT
  - a. Roll call and introductions: Members in person: Rob Boston, Vanessa Gomez Brake, Candace Gorham, Abby Hafer, John Hooper, Sunil Panikkath, Jason Wiles; Members online: Jill Martinez, Darin Stewart; Staff in person: Nicole Carr, Lily Bolourian.
  - b. Appointment of recording secretary (Lily) - Motion by Jill, seconded by Jason; approved unanimously.
  - c. Suggestions for new business to be considered - none
2. Acceptance/amendment of November meeting minutes
  - a. Motion by Vanessa, seconded by Candace, approved unanimously.
3. Actions since last meeting, to be ratified:
  - a. Approval of elections procedure for AHA Officers for the 2023-2024 term, by unanimous consent.
  - b. Resolution on amendment of Staff 403b Plan, moved by Jill, seconded by Rob, with nine in favor, none against and two members not recording a vote.
  - c. Approval of Board Committee Chairs, by unanimous consent.
  - d. Acceptance of new affiliate: Humanist Association of Wisconsin (Altoona, WI), moved by Jill, seconded by Candace, with nine votes in favor and one not recording a vote.
  - e. Resolution on adding additional banking facilities, moved by Candace, seconded by Rob, with eight members in favor, none against, and one not recording a vote.
  - f. Approval of additions to Humanist Society Board: Keith Becher, Randa Black, Anthony Cruz, Jessica Dapson, Elisa Rothoff, and Lynn Rothemich; moved by Jason, seconded by Jill, eight members voting in favor and one not recording a vote.
  - g. Approval of potential awardees for 2023 Annual Conference, by unanimous consent.  
---- Ratification motion moved by Rob, seconded by Abby; approved unanimously.
4. Finance and Strategy update
  - a. Finance Committee Report (John)
    - i. The AHA operational reserve is at a healthy level.
    - ii. The annual distribution from the endowment fund was less than budgeted due to stock market performance, and both membership dues and contributions were down in 2022 more than they have been in many years.
    - iii. Expenses were over budget due to various contingencies.
    - iv. John noted that the majority of our donations and contributions tend to come at the end of the year.
    - v. Given low memberships and contributions in 2022, staff and the Advancement Committee will do data analysis and plan 2023 fundraising efforts accordingly.

- b. Humanist Foundation update (John)
  - i. The next Foundation Board meeting is on Sunday, May 7.
  - ii. AHA leadership has ultimate goal to see that funds from bequests not passed on to the HF are used for reserve and not operations.
  - iii. In response to Candace asking about the history of the Board participating in fundraising activities, Sunil said that more efforts in this area should be part of efforts to address the latest financial results.
  - iv. HF Board request to AHA Board to approve reelection of Scott Seidewitz to the HF Board – moved by John, seconded by Candace, approved unanimously.
- 5. Update on Staff (Nicole)
  - a. Lily Bolourian joined the staff as Legal and Policy Director
  - b. Staff is still operating in a hybrid work model; expect this to continue indefinitely because the model is working well for staff.
- 6. Programs, adjuncts and coalitions to act on or discuss:
  - a. Chapter and Affiliates: approve new and defunct groups
    - i. New Affiliate - Michigan Humanists (Grand Rapids, MI): moved by Abby, seconded by Vanessa, approved unanimously.
    - ii. Defunct Chapter - Freethought Arizona: moved by Rob, seconded by John, approved unanimously.
    - iii. Defunct Affiliates: moved by Jason, seconded by Abby, approved unanimously
      - 1. Humanists of Broward County
      - 2. Mississippi Humanist Association
- 7. Resolutions Committee update (Rob)
  - a. Rob reported that in order to move forward AHA efforts on judicial reform, the staff would benefit from more detailed direction from the Board. Since this is a very specific and time-sensitive issue, and does not rise to the kind of broad topic usually the subject of a resolution, the staff will draft a position statement for Board approval.
- 8. Chapters and Affiliate Committee update (Candace)
  - a. Candace reported that the Chapter Grants Application has been rolled out on the website and promoted to chapters. Submissions are due in June.
- 9. Awards Committee update (John/Nicole)
  - a. John reported that the Committee selected three award winners which have already been approved by the Board. There are already some ideas for next year's awards, which should be decided earlier than this year.
- 10. Next board meeting
  - a. September 6, 2023 at 7 PM Eastern
- 11. New business - None
- 12. Adjournment of Session
  - a. Jason moved, seconded by John, approved unanimously at 7:17 PM MT.

### 13. Q&A for attending AHA members

- Evan Clark (Atheists United): Asked about Board plans for a new ED.
  - Sunil responded that the ED search is expected to begin later this year.
- Stephanie Zvan (Secular Women): Asked about concerns on communication around the former ED separating from the AHA as well as concerns that the departure will make harder the work to bring more diversity into the humanist movement. Also asked whether outreach from AHA to such communities would continue.
  - Sunil responded that communication around executive departures at any organization are usually constrained by legal and related considerations. Furthermore, the former ED was executing a three-year strategy that was crafted with wide input and approved by the Board before her arrival. That strategy continues in effect and includes serious efforts on social justice and related areas which will remain centered in AHA values and programming.
- George: Asked about AHA efforts on branding and lack of awareness about humanism.
  - Board members responded with descriptions of various communications efforts undertaken by the AHA and also of areas for improvement.
- Evan Clark (Atheists United): asked about concerns that the AHA community was not given more support or clarity after the departure of the ED. Also asked about what he viewed as poor communication with his organization as an affiliate.
  - Sunil reiterated points made earlier about the ED departure and the constraints on communication around such events. Emily Newman, the Staff member dealing with chapters and affiliates addressed how communications between the AHA and chapters and affiliates are handled.
- Kevin Bolling (Secular Students of America): Stated that the former ED had helped to improve cooperation between the AHA and SSA and he was disappointed in how the Board had handled the departure of the ED.
  - Sunil stated that since there was no specific question asked, he had nothing further to add on the matter.