

AHA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Washington, D.C., Zoom Teleconference - September 6, 2023 at 7:30pm Eastern

1. Call to order (by chair: Sunil) at 7:32 PM Eastern
 - 1.1. Roll call and introductions
 - 1.1.1. Board members present: Rob Boston, Vanessa Gomez Brake, Candace Gorham, Abby Hafer, John Hooper, Krystal Jackson, Jill Martinez, Jim Palmquist, Sunil Panikkath, Darin Stewart, Valerie White, Jason Wiles; Staff Members Present: Lily Bolourian, Nicole Carr, Kristin Wintermute
 - 1.2. Appointment of recording secretary (Lily) – approved by unanimous consent.
 - 1.3. Suggestions for new business to be considered - none
2. Acceptance/amendment of May meeting minutes
 - 2.1. Motion by Candace, seconded by Rob, approved unanimously (Valerie noted that she was abstaining, since she was not at the May meeting).
3. Actions since last meeting, to be ratified:
 - 3.1. Appointments to fill vacant Board seats until next Board election in 2024: Krystal Jackson, Jim Palmquist, Valerie White – Motion by Candace, seconded by Rob, approved unanimously. Ratification motion moved by John, seconded by Abby, approved unanimously, with members being confirmed recused.
4. Finance update
 - 4.1. Finance Committee Report (John)
 - 4.1.1. John reported that we are overall in a solid financial position, with an operating reserve, but we need to address shortfalls in annual memberships and contributions, so that other income sources such as bequests can be directed to the reserve or to the Humanist Foundation.
 - 4.1.2. A new Advancement Committee has been formed to look at ways to increase contributions.
 - 4.1.3. Nicole reported on actions that staff is taking to address shortfalls, including surveying lapsed members to figure out why they left and launching a major digital acquisitions campaign to move us away from reliance on direct mail and toward new audiences.
 - 4.1.4. Jim asked why the conference fell short of income projections; Nicole reported that our in-person conferences have never made money, that this year was particularly challenging because of the leadership transition, and that we also underestimated the appetite for moving back to in-person conferences; Sunil said that we are likely to move back to the plan to alternate between a virtual conference and in-person conference every other year, with a virtual conference in 2024.
 - 4.2. Humanist Foundation update (John)
 - 4.2.1. Foundation investments have recovered somewhat from the market downturn of last year, gaining \$350,000 over the first seven months.
 - 4.2.2. Foundation has formed a committee to review their bylaws.
 - 4.2.3. Foundation has requested that the AHA board nominate a slate of candidates to fill a position on the Foundation board.

5. Update on Staff (Nicole)
 - 5.1. David Reinbold has accepted the position of the AHA Communications Manager and started last week.
 - 5.2. The staff is somewhat smaller than it has been in the recent past since we have been optimizing the staff resources and not replacing every departing staff member immediately, with a view on expenses.
6. Programs, adjuncts and coalitions to act on or discuss:
 - 6.1. Chapter and Affiliates:
 - 6.1.1. New Chapters/Affiliates – no new chapters/affiliates
 - 6.1.2. Defunct Chapters/Affiliates – no defunct chapters/affiliates
7. Resolutions Committee Update (Rob)
 - 7.1. Rob reported that he reached out to staff to identify any new concerns that require action by the Resolutions Committee and the policy team is reviewing current issues; Rob recommended reviewing the existing resolutions on two issues, to update and strengthen our positions: 1) on supporting the LGBTQ+ community, specifically with regard to supporting the transgender community, and 2) condemning censorship brought about by Christian nationalists, especially with regard to expressing support for libraries and public education.
8. Chapters and Affiliates Committee Update (Candace)
 - 8.1. Candace reported that five grants were given to chapters for various programs; the grant program will be reviewed before the next round of grants in order to drive more submissions so we can provide support to more chapters.
9. Strategic Planning Committee update (Sunil)
 - 9.1. Sunil noted that the AHA has a three-year cycle for the strategic planning process; 2020 was the last time we went through that process, so the Strategic Plan needs to be renewed before the end of the year; Sunil is forming a Strategic Planning Committee; the Committee will build an outline for the Strategic Plan that will then be made available to the staff for detailed comments, based on which the Committee will produce a draft which will be brought before the full Board for input and approval by the end of the year.
10. Next board meeting
 - 10.1. Sunil suggested that the next board meeting should again be virtual; he will send around a Doodle poll to come up with dates towards the end of the year.
11. New business – no new business
12. Adjournment of Session
 - 12.1. Sunil asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:30 PM Eastern – motion by Jason, seconded by Jim, approved unanimously.
13. Q&A - There was a brief Q&A for attending AHA members.