



## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Las Vegas, NV – Main Street Station Casino Hotel — Saturday, November 19, 2016

Present: Rebecca Hale, July Simpson, Susan Sackett, Ian Dodd (board-elect), Herb Silverman, Sunil Panikkath (board-elect), Jason Torpy, John Hooper, Howard Katz, Debbie Allen, Roy Speckhardt (staff), Maggie Ardiente (staff)

By phone: Rob Boston, Kristin Wintermute, Jenny Kalmanson, Kris Shellska

Absent: Tony Pinn

### 1. Call to order (by chair: Becky) *Becky called the meeting to order at 11:15am.*

- a. Board members introduced themselves to all at the meeting.
- b. Howard was appointed parliamentarian.
- c. Maggie was appointed recording secretary.
- d. No suggestions for new business were offered.

### 2. Acceptance/amendment of May meeting minutes

Jason moved to accept the May 2016 meeting minutes. Howard seconded. Approved by consensus.

### 3. Between meetings actions: Vote to approve Humanist Society board recommendations of Kathy Diedrich and Joshua Berg: 12 voting yes, 1 not voting. Sense of the board, though not unanimous, in favor of public support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protest against the Dakota Access pipeline.

Howard moved to accept the vote to approve Humanist Society board recommendations of Kathy Diedrich and Joshua Berg. Debbie seconded. Approved by consensus. While no vote was needed on verifying support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's protest against the Dakota Access pipeline, Roy explained that he sought Board input because there were no resolutions on this issue. Board members expressed support for AHA's actions.

### 4. Financial Update

#### a. Audit Approval

John moved to approve the auditors AGTA who are scheduled to complete their 2016 audit by 4/11/17. July seconded. There was a discussion on how often the same auditors have been used; Roy clarified that this will be the third year the same auditors are used, and that the AHA has an informal policy of using new auditors at least every five years. There is an increase in cost on first year audits, so it's more cost effective not to switch every year. Approved by consensus.

c. 2017 Budget Proposal

Howard moved to approve the 2017 budget. Debbie seconded. Approved by consensus.

d. The Humanist Foundation

Jenny moved to recommend Sunil Panikkath as a trustee to the Humanist Foundation. Kristin seconded. Approved by consensus.

## 5. Resolutions Committee

Jason gave a report on the status of two resolutions that were sent to the board on voting rights and climate change. He invited board members to participate in drafting language for the resolutions and looking back at older resolutions to craft newer statements. Roy clarified that the AHA legislative and communications team are more equipped to take action on issues where board resolutions are established. There was a discussion on putting all AHA resolutions on the new AHA website and how to make the process more efficient, yet pay tribute to some of our older statements.

a. Voting Rights

Discussion on the importance of voting rights for all. Sunil moved to accept the resolution on Voting Rights. Jason seconded. Approved by consensus.

b. Climate Change

The resolution on climate change is still in draft form, and board members were invited to give input.

c. Other resolutions and committee additions

Board members were invited to suggest other ideas for resolutions and send to Jason. Roy recommended that Carl Coon, former US Ambassador to Nepal and former AHA board member, join the Resolutions Committee. Carl was a key writer on the AHA's Statement on Islam and the 2007 AHA Strategic Plan. Jason welcomed the suggestion and will contact.

## 6. Conferences and Events

a. 2016 conference budget

There was a discussion about the AHA Annual Conferences in general, weighing the benefits to the organization and members vs the required time and cost. Sunil recommended that the AHA establish the conference's goals and objectives and consider alternating between two cities rather than moving to different cities each year to benefit from long-term contracts—perhaps with an anchor in DC. Jason recommended an open floor expo format, where there is a focus on vendors in addition to speakers. Other board members provided recommendations, including partnering with regional conferences in lieu of an annual conference.

Becky called to establish a task force of board members to strategically discuss how the AHA should continue to do conferences moving forward, what we want out of the conference (such as minimizing cost, public outreach, chapter support),

and how we can best accomplish our goals with the conference. Sunil, July, Howard, Debbie, Jenny, Kristin, and Jason specifically offered to participate, though it looked as if all the board members wanted to participate. Becky will likely hold a board-wide discussion on this.

b. Charleston 2017 plans

After discussion, Debbie moved that the AHA keep the Full Registration Cost at \$349 for early-bird rate (\$399 for late registration). Jason seconded. Approved by consensus.

c. 2018 Alternatives

Board members and staff provided suggestions for the location of the 2018 Conference. Howard moved to hold the 2018 Conference in Las Vegas. Susan seconded. Discussion considered holding the conference in Washington DC to coincide with the opening of the new building. Becky called for a vote. 7 board members voted yes on Las Vegas (Susan, John, Howard, Kris, Debbie, Jason), 1 no (Jenny), 2 abstained/did not vote (Kristin, Rob, Becky).

d. 2020 plans

Maggie and Roy discussed plans for the World Humanist Congress 2020 with Andrew Copson (IHEU President) and Carl Blackburn (IHEU Executive Director). When the New York City proposal became infeasible Andrew suggested that Miami is an international city and easy to get to from Europe. Board members suggested Orlando as a possible alternative location, though Maggie clarified that Miami is the location of the new Atheist Studies chair at the University of Miami, which could be featured at the Congress. Debbie emphasized the importance of the World Humanist Congress, connecting with international humanists, and having AHA be a leader in international humanism.

Discussion on the additional costs for the event, including a requested \$50,000 grant toward travel expenses for attendees. It was the sense of the board that the AHA cannot guarantee this grant because it was cost prohibitive and was brought up after the AHA submitted their initial proposal and the IHEU approved.

Jason moved to propose to IHEU that the AHA will host the 2020 World Humanist Congress in Miami, as long as the AHA has control of the agenda and the \$50,000 grant toward travel expenses is removed from the agreement. July seconded. Approved by consensus, with Susan abstaining.

e. Awards Committee

Susan said she had not been informed by Jessica Xiao (AHA staff person) regarding the 2017 Humanist Awardees, so she did not have much to add beyond the written report.

## **7. Programs, adjuncts and coalitions action items**

Maggie gave a brief report on the recent activities in the development and communications department and reported that the AHA's new website was launched just Wednesday of this week.

Roy gave a brief report on the recent activities in the legislative advocacy department, as well as the magazine, TheHumanist.com, and the recent activities of the AHLC.

Board members and staff provided brief updates for additional programs.

g. Humanist Society

Debbie reported on the activities of the Humanist Society and says that the program may soon be big enough to purchase advertisements in bridal magazines. There was a discussion about advertising through Google Adwords, measuring how many humanist weddings take place, and how newlywed couples should become free members of AHA.

h. Chapters and Affiliates (pp. 33-34)

After discussion on the new groups listed that want to become chapters Debbie moved to approve the new chapters. Jason seconded. Approved by consensus.

Howard said that he did not receive a physical copy of the "Better Together" document when he recently tabled at Skepticon. He said he'd like this available at future tabling events.

## **8. Consideration of nominees for officer positions**

Becky explained the rules of nominating board members for officer positions, stating that new board members Sunil and Ian can vote in this instance. Board members are welcome to put forth nominations for officer positions, though a formal vote will not take place until later.

Howard moved to nominate Becky Hale for president. Jenny seconded. Howard moved to nominate Jenny for vice president. Rob seconded.

Debbie expressed interest in running for a position, and that she was particularly interested in the role of secretary or vice president, though expressed that she wanted to play a role in the executive committee and future leadership, not simply run against someone. Jenny welcomed Debbie's participation in a contested election. July moved to nominate Debbie for secretary. July moved to nominate Debbie for vice president.

Susan moved to nominate herself for secretary.

Kris initially expressed interest in nominating herself for secretary, but withdrew that nomination on seeing how contested that position would become.

It was the sense of the board that John stand for treasurer, which he agreed to do.

In further discussion, Jenny suggested considering a first vice president and second vice president as successors to the president, but Becky explained that would require a change in bylaws. Jenny expressed her interest in running for president after Becky is no longer running for the position.

Maggie repeated the officer positions and nominations: President (Becky Hale, unopposed), Vice President (Jenny Kalmanson, Debbie Allen), Secretary (Susan Sackett, Debbie Allen), Treasurer (John Hooper). Becky will appoint Mel Lipman as the moderator of the email vote that will take place to formally appoint officer positions.

### **9. Schedule Spring board meeting**

After discussion, the board determined that the next AHA Board Meeting will take place **Thursday, February 23 at 7:30pm EST** via conference call. The next in-person AHA Board Meeting will take place on June 8, 2017 at 9:30am (breakfast at 8:30am). There will be a board dinner outside the hotel, and June 7, 2017 at 6:30pm followed by a pre-meeting session.

Kristin suggested that someone at the next Secular Leaders Summit (formerly Heads Meeting) create a master calendar so that there are no conflicts with board meetings and conference dates.

### **10. New business**

Herb recommended that the AHA board consider changing the investments of the Humanist Foundation endowment fund from an active investment manager with AB (formerly Alliance Bernstein) to no-load mutual funds with Vanguard, which this year earned over \$300,000 more than AB. Herb referred to an article where Bernstein claimed that “buying index funds is worse for society than Marxism.” Herb also pointed out that the endowment fund would also save on the 1 percent management fee that AB takes out. Discussion ensued, but no action taken.

Becky recognized Herb Silverman’s 16 years of service to the AHA board and Tony Pinn’s 4 years of service to the AHA board. Howard moved to formally thank Herb and Tony for their service. Sunil seconded. Approved by consensus, with Herb abstaining.

### **11. Adjourn**

Howard moved to adjourn the meeting. Susan seconded. Approved by consensus, with Herb out of consensus. *Becky adjourned the meeting at 4:55pm.*