

American Humanist Association

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Washington D.C. —November 17, 2018

1. Call to order (by chair: Becky)
 - a. Roll call and introductions: In attendance: Rob Boston, Rebecca Hale, John Hooper, Jennifer Kalmanson, Howard Katz, Juhem Navarro-Rivera (member-elect), Sunil Panikkath, Susan Sackett, Kris Shellska, and Ellen Sutliff (member-elect) were in attendance. July Simpson attended via phone. Jason Torpy and Ian Dodd were absent. Staff Brody Armstrong, Jennifer Bardi, and Roy Speckhardt were in attendance.
 - b. Appointment of parliamentarian (Howard)
 - c. Appointment of recording secretary (Brody Armstrong)
2. Howard moved to accept May meeting minutes, John seconded. Approved by consensus.
3. John Hooper moved to approve between meetings actions. Rob seconded. Approved by consensus are: Vote to approve Donna Forsythe for Humanist Society Board: unanimous. Vote to approve slate for Center for Freethought Equality board candidates: unanimous (with 2 abstentions). Vote to approve Rob Boston as Secretary for the remainder of 2018: unanimous. Vote to approve opening account to receive the Fetty estate bequest: unanimous. Vote to remove Lawrence Krauss's HOY Award with announcement: Howard moved, Ian seconded. 7 yes, 2 abstain, 2 non-voting.
4. Finances: John provided a report from the Finance Committee. Roy discussed 2018 progress, the final results of the capital campaign where the Humanist Foundation waived the remaining balance other than unfulfilled pledges, and the newly acquired property tax exemption where we aim to recoup about \$50,000 in taxes previously paid on the building. There was discussion regarding the 2019 draft budget. In response to Jenny K's question about why promotion and advertising budget dropped, Roy explained this is in part to delayed plans on social media advertising that occurred due to staff transitions. After a discussion of the impact of the SCOTUS case on the budget it was clarified that a revised budget is expected to be presented to the board at the next meeting. Howard moved to approve budget and Sunil seconded. Approved by consensus.
5. Jenny K reported that the Humanist Foundation is doing well, investments are on track, up 17.5% at the end of the summer. Risk mitigation steps were taken last year, so if there are losses, they won't be as large. Roger Clark, Director of Planned Giving has settled into his office.
6. Becky announced results of Board elections. Elected to four year terms are: John Hooper, Jenny Kalmanson, Howard Katz, Monica Miller, Juhem Navarro-Rivera, and Christine Shellska. Elected to two-year terms are: Sharon Welch and Ellen Sutliff.
7. Kris moved to accept the award review process committee's recommendation to modify our award review process. Sunil seconded. Approved by consensus.
8. Discussion occurred on the potential awards for 2019. Becky asked that Rachel Maddow be added, who Rob has a connection with her blogger. Kris asked to have a one-line description of potential awardees in future proposed lists. Next steps include background checks for proposed candidates and then await award committee approval. Jennifer B asked if background check can be done in-house. Roy explained that due to past failings it would seem that bolstering internal searches with an external background check would be a benefit.

9. The June 7-9 2019 annual conference will be a distributive conference, held consecutively at five universities and webcasted online. Opening Friday in Pittsburgh at Carnegie Mellon, then completing the day in Houston at Rice, it will continue Saturday in Brooklyn at Medgar Evers College, and then outside LA at Pitzer, and it will conclude in Miami at U of Miami. In response to Rob's question, Roy suggested at least one board member at each location. In response to Sunil's question, Roy explained we are using a small tech firm experienced in webcasting conferences and will plan to do a test-run. Sunil also recommended we establish back-up plans for broadcast in case of technology failure. Board members are now free to promote the conference. Jenny K suggested having pre-recorded videos for the State of Humanism session. Becky suggested webcasting speaker series in order to increase member's familiarity with the process. Ellen suggested broadcasting fundraiser with running thermometer tally—like a telethon—that might also be used to fill dead-air time between sessions. In response to Sunil's question about how we will attract new attendees, it's suggested that we do online advertising and work with the SSA.
10. The August 8-11, 2020 annual conference will be in Miami and be jointly with the IHEU as a tri-annual World Humanist Congress. Kris suggested that being in August it's likely we could offer folks an option to stay in dorms on the University of Miami campus. Sunil pointed out that this will be the peak of the presidential election campaigns and we should have a contingency plan to address possible travel ban issues with out-of-country attendees.
11. Roy described the brand refresh underway where the AHA is updating logo and branding consistency. Entire happy humanist must be used in logos and branding, or top half in a consistent matter. In response to Howard's question about a copyright/trademark for the humanist logo, Roy explained that there are no viable copyright options due to history of lack of enforcement. In response to Sunil's question, about developing a logo that we can enforce copyright on, Roy explained the past board's consideration of this question and determination that it's better for us to keep the history and acceptance of the logo than be able to enforce copyright. The AHA can send letters to organizations that are "infringing" to ask them to stop or to officially join us.
12. Jennifer B presented work on mission statements for The *Humanist* and theHumanist.com. Howard recommended inserting "without theism or supernatural beliefs." Others suggested we drop disclaimer from actual mission statements, but use them elsewhere. It was also suggested to remove "target audience" piece. Jenny K motioned to approve missions as modified. Sunil seconded. Approved by consensus.
13. The board discussed commentary between Stephen Pinker and Jennifer Bardi on whether or not the AHA is potentially alienating "conservative" secularists by swinging too far to the left in messaging. Sunil pointed out that context is important, and that the piece Pinker cited was about the March for Black Women. Becky pointed out that the way we discuss these matters is the main issue. Rob pointed out that we are a progressive organization, and that others in the movement might be the better home for people who have problems with our social justice work. Sunil suggested that if we maintain a clear distinction between opinion and news that will lessen concerns. Jenny K added that we could have said much of the same thing quoting others rather than identifying the source as staff, raising the conclusion that what's said is AHA policy. Roy pointed out that instead of suggesting staff not write opinion, staff should still be able to express opinions that are aligned with AHA policies. Juhem suggested using members (and others) to write alternate opinions whenever possible.
14. The AHLC Legal Center's cross case was discussed, but no action items emerged.

15. Kris moved to approve Ben Iten as a new board member of the Humanist Society. Sunil seconded. Approved by consensus. Jenny K moved to approve increasing management fees from \$24,000 to \$30,000. Rob seconded. Approved by consensus.
16. Howard moved to approve new chapters and affiliates. John seconded. Approved by consensus. New chapters include: Cleveland Humanist Alliance – Cleveland, Ohio, Secular Humanist Study Group – Springfield, SD (inmate group), Secular Humanists of Western Lake Erie – Toledo, Ohio, and BE Orlando Humanist Fellowship – Orlando, Florida.
17. Roy discussed good results from just completed AHA and Center for Freethought Equality: Poll, with the highlights to be sent to press and others after Thanksgiving.
18. Next board meeting will be a conference call on Wednesday February 27, at 8pm EST.
19. Howard moved to adjourn, Juhem seconded. Approved by consensus. Adjourned 4:32 pm.
20. Becky re-opens meeting for one missed agenda item. Kris motioned to approve Wegner CPAs as the next auditor. Rob seconded. Approved by consensus.
21. Open Center for Freethought Equality meeting begins with all present at 4:34pm.
22. After brief discussion pointing out topics already addressed, Howard motioned to adjourn CFE meeting. Sunil seconded. Approved by consensus. Adjourned 4:36 pm.