

(Approved) UMRA Board Meeting Minutes  
Monday, October 26, 2020 11:00 a.m.  
Zoom call-in

Present: John Anderson, Lynn Anderson, John Bantle, Frank Cerra, Will Craig, Bill Donohue, Gary Engstrand, Cathy Lee Gierke, Cherie Hamilton, Greg Hestness, Eric Hockert, Jean Kinsey, Kenneth Larson, Virgil Larson, Ron Matross, Jan McCulloch, Kris Mortensen, Claudia Parliament, Chip Peterson, Donna Peterson, Gerry Rinehart, Barbara Shiels, Cathrine Wambach, Gloria Williams

**1. Anecdotes**

Several were told.

**2. Review/approval of October Board Minutes**

The minutes were approved unanimously.

**3. EC Draft Minutes: Note section on UMRA Operating Manual**

There were no questions about the draft 10/19 Executive Committee minutes.

**4. Treasurer's Report**

Greg reviewed the first-quarter financial report he had provided to the Board. The ending balance (savings plus checking) is \$22,526, an increase of \$4,582 over the balance on July 1. He has established electronic access to checking and has worked with the University to establish a chart string against which invoices will be charged. The largest expense is OIT services, which will require spending all savings or surrendering the CD. He said he is not assuming Zoom charges will disappear after the pandemic ends because many like it.

In response to a question from Bill, Greg said UMRA has enough money in dues to pay expenses other than Zoom charges. It will have ~\$2,000 in surplus at the end of the fiscal year.

The Board voted unanimously to accept Greg's report.

**5. Reports of Committee Chairs**

**5a. Program:** Jan reported that there were about 57 attendees at the "Mapping Prejudice" UMRA AM, so that new event seems to be working. The October Forum will be on mental health, the November AM will be on a vaccine for COVID-19 and the University's involvement in developing one, and the November Forum will be an election analysis with Professor Kathryn Pearson from Political Science. There is nothing to announce for December. Regent Ken Powell has been invited next year.

Gary suggested that former President Eric Kaler might be worth inviting.

**5b. Workshops:** Ron said that October, traditionally reserved for open enrollment, was devoted to that topic again this year. It has been regarded as dull and irrelevant so they did it differently this year, with Medicare options and speakers putting coverage in a larger context. It was the best-attended workshop in history, with about 120 people. A quick evaluation after the event suggests that they need to do more work on meeting people's needs.

The November speaker will talk (positively!) about getting old, a gerontologist who became an artist. The January workshop will be on physical fitness.

**5c. PDGR:** John B noted that the application period is October 15 to December 11; they have received none so far. They have \$20,000 allocated for grants, with a maximum of \$4,000. They have received ~\$4,700 towards the \$20,000 in matching funds that have been donated.

Frank asked for ideas about advertising the crowd funding effort. John B said it should be announced in each newsletter but that he was ambivalent about contacting former recipients. He suggested a workshop on completed projects as a way to promote funding for future grants. Kris reported that there are three articles in the newsletter and it is on the website with a link to the crowd-funding page. Cathy LG suggested using any Facebook group that is developed. Jerry commented that the EC had talked about fund-raising and timing and concluded that the Board should take a leadership role. Typically Boards have some level of participation through donations and Board members should do so. Frank agreed and said it is important that Board members donate, which will help in fund raising because it demonstrates that the Board is behind the effort.

**5d. Communications and Outreach:** Jean had provided a report to the Board which she briefly reviewed. On the question of a Facebook group, the Committee

suggested it be created with the provisos that there is no religious recruitment, no partisan political posts, no sales, and that any University retiree be eligible to join the group. The Committee extended a big "thank you" to Kris, Cathy LG, and Julie Medberry for their work.

Claudia said Kris and others should be recognized in the masthead of the newsletter.

Chip asked if the Facebook group would be a replacement for Salon. It will be, Ron said; Salon is moribund and Facebook has a more amenable technology.

Donna thanked Jean for the changes she has made in the last several years; she has done a fabulous job.

**5e. Social Activity and Travel:** Cherie reported that there are still plans for a Portugal tour in October 2021 because the hope is the pandemic will be over . Road Scholar is sponsoring a five-day virtual tour, the Art of Paris, December 14-18, that might be too expensive for many people. We would need 30 participants to receive a 5% rebate and there are not 30 spaces left. Road Scholar will offer a new list of tours in January and some could be less expensive.

The Portugal Douro river boat wine tour is scheduled for October 28 - Nov 7th. for 7 days. It will go through the wine country stopping at historic sites, visiting wineries, sampling the cuisine and the wine and then a day in Salamanca, Spain to spend a day at the university. An optional four days in Lisbon at the end of the tour is offered. The sign-up will be available in early 2021 if travel opens.

In terms of social activities, Cherie had plans for a Zoom happy hour/coffee hour, but it would involve an expense, so we decided against it. There are numbers of U of M virtual tours and lectures available that UMRA members can sign up for. Kris confirmed that any U of M retiree has access to a University Zoom account. It was noted that neither Cherie nor Barbara Shiels' husband Frank Preese, is a retiree; is there a way for them to have access to the University account? Kris expressed reluctance to allowing others to use the UMRA Zoom account and suggested there should be a way to provide access to a personal U of M Zoom account to people UMRA members like Cherie and Frank. If they can obtain a umn.edu email account, they would have access. It was also noted that committee members who have a umn.edu account have access to a University Zoom account, so that provides an avenue to use.

Cherie asked the Board what they wanted to do about the Paris virtual tour. Frank suggested she send the information to the member listserv. Cherie will contact Road Scholar to see the current availability and have people contact her about joining the tour.

**5f. Membership:** John reported again on the plans for the new member reception, replacing (for this year) the usual gathering held in the Campus Club bar. This year it will be a Zoom event; invitations were sent to ~85 new members, 14 of whom have said they will participate. About 12 of the Board members have agreed to be hosts. He described the plans for the event, including a welcome from Frank and small-group discussions and information about UMRA activities and how members can become involved. Claudia observed that there seem to be as many facilitators as new members and said the size of the groups needs thought. Jerry suggested a couple of facilitators per group.

John noted that three of the six very recent new members have indicated they will participate in the Zoom reception, which suggests that the new member event should happen more than once per year. UMRA should perhaps reach out sooner to new retirees.

**5g. Organizational Continuity:** Jerry explained that their interest today is a general response to the report, any suggestions, and then endorsement so that there is a date when the report goes into effect. The final bullet point in the report raises the question of structure to maintain continuity and organizational history. Chip commended Cathy LG for the tremendous job she did of designing the system of electronic document storage, and both her and Gloria for the work they have done in collecting documents and posting them (Cathy) or submitting paper copies to the University Archives (Gloria). Frank again thanked Jerry and Chip for the effort they put into what is a major advancement for UMRA.

The Board unanimously endorsed the report.

With respect to structure, Frank asked Jerry and Chip to formulate a proposal about what a committee should be in order to ensure everything is updated each year.

**5h. Age-Friendly University:** Lynn reported that the University has been accepted into the Global Network of Age-Friendly Universities, started in 2012 at Dublin City University, and committed to lifelong learning and older adults. She provided a report to the Board. She is UMRA's representative to the AFU Council and, along

with Frank, to the School of Public Health's Center for Healthy Aging and Innovation (CHAI), through which the University belongs to GNAFU. She said that if there are initiatives that UMRA would like the AFU Council to pursue, please let her know and she will bring them up with the Council. Board members expressed support for this work and how it can help retirees and UMRA members. Jan Mc said she would be interested in helping with the work.

Jan M asked what the effort looks like on the ground, if this is an opportunity to leverage support within and outside the institution to benefit UMRA members. Lynn said she has suggested the AFU website have a handout with organizations and information: where to look for activities of interest. She invited ideas about grants and funding for the initiative; they may be able to seek funds through their affiliation with GNAFU. Cathy LG said she would be glad to continue to work with Lynn on putting information on the website (one link has already been posted).

**5i. URVC:** Eric began by recognizing John, the past chair from 2012-2020 for building a foundation for URVC and he welcomed Jan Morlock to the URVC Board of Directors. 2019 was a good year for volunteering but 2020 has been significantly affected by the pandemic and there has been a sharp decline in the number of volunteers and hours. They started to see an uptick in August. They saw a doubling of University volunteer projects from 2019 to 2020, but there is double the number of non-University projects, so they are trying to increase the number of the former. Their goals are to increase those University projects and connections to UMRA members, and they have established a communications and marketing committee to share URVC activities. He invited Board members to let him know of any volunteer projects either inside or outside the University.

Jan noted that a recent UMRA newsletter included an article about a URVC member that brought the work alive. Kris said that starting in September the newsletter has been featuring a volunteer spotlight in each monthly issue in order to showcase volunteers.

**5j. Retirement Subcommittee:** Ken noted that he represents retirees on the Faculty Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs Retirement Subcommittee. The first meeting of the year was October 5, at which the Subcommittee talked about what it wanted to talk about. One topic is decumulation (people accumulate retirement funds as employees and spend funds as retirees), which will be discussed in November with Andrew Parks from (University) Investments and Banking. He is giving UMRA a heads up on the discussion because it is a topic in which all

retirees have a personal interest. They will also discuss the University's interest in decumulation. He will report back on the discussion and then UMRA can discuss *its* interest and perhaps engage with the Subcommittee.

Someone said that budgets are important as examples in talking about decumulation. The *individual* question of interest is whether one will have enough money for the rest of their life and budget is important, Ken agreed. The *institutional* interest is as people take money out, how the University's interest in us changes. Presumably the University wants the largest balance possible in retirement funds in order to increase its leverage.

Bill said he would like questions about withdrawing funds, including with respect to tax consequences, and would like Andrew Parks to join a Board meeting. Ken said he would ask and that Fidelity could probably also be engaged.

Cathy W asked if the Subcommittee has discussed satisfaction with the transition to Fidelity. Ken said there has been discussion and the University believes the transition was very successful. Adverse comments have completely dropped off and the University thinks it did a good job.

**5k. Newsletter Editor:** Kris provided updates for the Board.

-- The November newsletter has been posted and the print version will come out this week.

-- It is back to eight pages.

-- She hopes people read the Maroon and Gold, and Black articles because they are very good; she welcomed suggestions for future interviews.

-- Because of the change in programming (three events per month), the deadline for the newsletter is now the 7th of the month, not the 20th.

-- Frank, John Anderson, and Virgil Larson are reviewing who is on the VIP list to receive the newsletter by campus mail.

Cathy LG said the Maroon and Gold and Black articles are important; do they have anyone who can be an advisor about them to be sure they are doing the right thing? Kris said she appreciated the suggestion. Everyone interviewed thus far has been identified by one or more UMRA members or her, and she checks additional sources before approaching someone to request an interview. Because there are few Black leaders on campus, they face fatigue, so she needs to be careful about taking their time.

**6. Update on Bylaws Changes:** Bill reported that the bylaws changes have been sent to UMRA members, on October 16, with a memo. He has received four or five emails, mostly complimentary. One person did not like the fact that the changes were not taken up at an in-person meeting. Ron reported that as of the date of this meeting, the vote was 137 in favor, 1 opposed. Bill said the vote reflects past experience. The Executive Committee can discuss bringing the changes to the next in-person UMRA meeting for ratification, but they should be considered adopted now, effective November 1.

**7. Changes to the Operating Manual:** The changes had been distributed to Board members in advance of the meeting; Frank invited feedback. The changes put current practice into effect and the manual will be reviewed annually by the president.

**8. Report of the ad hoc Zoom Finance Group:** Frank reported the Executive Committee endorsed the report. He asked Virgil for an update.

Virgil said he had heard from 43 people interested in using Zoom; they have varying levels of experience and are learning from experience with the New Member Reception and they could use it with Cherie's coffee hour. Kris reported that Virgil had shadowed a Zoom forum production “behind the scenes” to see what Zoom panelists do; Frank Preese has likewise shadowed a Zoom workshop; he has decades of experience with WebEx and has expressed potential interest in assisting with UMRA’s Zoom productions.

Frank said the plan is for the volunteers to shadow events and gradually phase them in in the use of Zoom, and thus use OIT less. To help defray the cost of UMRA’s programming via Zoom, they are also considering a voluntary contribution from the membership of \$20. A suggested dues increase was suggested but delayed for consideration until 2021. Bill will draft a letter asking people to contribute. The Executive Committee believes Cathy LG should put the Zoom Donations button on the UMRA website. Cathy asked for clarification if it is to be on [umra.umn.edu](http://umra.umn.edu) or [retirees.umn.edu](http://retirees.umn.edu) (membership database) site. He asked her and Virgil to work out the details, in consultation with John A.

Kris pointed out that if Bill’s letter/appeal is to be in the January newsletter (UMRA does not publish a newsletter in December), she will need to know by early December. Frank clarified that for this year the plan is to request voluntary contributions; in January they will talk about an increase in dues. Bill agreed and said the contribution request should be on the website with an explanation, and in

the meantime they can see how the Zoom volunteers work out; he said he believes that dues will need to be raised. The cost is about \$6000 for the six months beginning in January and all believe that Zoom events will continue. If UMRA cannot rely on volunteers, it will need to find a way to cover future Zoom costs. Bill said he would draft a letter for Frank for concerning the voluntary contribution for distribution to the membership. Kris said that if Cathy LG can provide a link for making contributions, she (Kris) will include the link, along with a notice about the voluntary contribution, in program announcements and invitations.

**10. Report on New Interest Groups:** Jan noted that the Board had received her report and proposal, "Proposed Policy: Approval process for member-initiated programs or activities," and she would like to have the Board act on it. She briefly reviewed the contents of the report; the proposed process is as follows:

A member submits a brief proposal to the chair of the Program Committee, who promptly shares it for any comment with the members of the Program Committee including the leader of the workshop planning group; the chairs of the Social Activities and Communications Committees; and the UMRA News Editor.

The chair of the Program Committee presents the proposal with recommendation to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may review and authorize proposals that do not trigger financial commitment or potential liability concerns for the organization. The Executive Committee will report to the board on any new activities or programs.

Proposals that trigger financial commitment or potential liability concerns for the organization will be forwarded to the UMRA Board of Directors for consideration.

Jan reported that Bill had suggested amending the language to "significant" potential liability. Bill added that the concern should not be about any liability—anyone can sue anyone else about anything—but about significant liability. If the Executive Committee thinks there could be significant concern, the proposal will be forwarded to the Board. The policy allows people to move quickly; he moved its approval. Jan also pointed out that the policy clarifies what is *not* covered. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Cathy LG asked about when a new group would rise to the level of having a web page. Or will there be a "100 Flowers" website? Where will she find out that an activity has been approved? Jan said that when an activity is approved, the



approval will be communicated to UMRA and in the minutes. Bill said Cathy LG can also ask Jan or Frank if something has been approved. Following discussion about how it would be known if a new group has been approved, Frank concluded that the answer will come out in the Executive Committee discussion and the question will be answered. The question about appearance on the web page should be answered. Ron suggested that as a general rule, if a group proposes to exist or operate for more than a year, it should be considered an interest group.

Chip suggested that after the policy is approved, Jan integrate it with the existing policy. Jan commented that "interest group" needs to be defined.

**9. JOIE:** Will reviewed the history of JOIE (started out gangbusters about ten years ago and then died out). He asked PDGR recipients if they would be interested in publishing in JOIE; there is interest. The journal needs an editor (not a copy editor), some one who can recruit authors. He, Jerry, and Kris are trying to develop a job description, but if anyone on the Board wants the job, they can have it. Chip recalled that there was an editorial board; Will said that it still exists. Gloria suggested Joanne Eicher as a possible editor; she has edited many journals, as has Jan Mc. (The latter declined the position.)

**11. UMF Presentation at November Board Meeting:** Frank said this is an item for information. [My notes are not clear what this will be.]

Frank thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting at 12:55.

-- Gary Engstrand