

UMRA Board of Directors Meeting (Zoom)
Monday, October 24, 2022
1:00 p.m.
Approved Minutes

In attendance (virtual): Frank Cerra, Will Craig, Bill Donohue, Kristy Frost-Griep, Cathy Lee Gierke, Cherie Hamilton, Laurie Koch, Russell Luepker, Kate Maple, Ron Matross, Jan McCulloch, Jan Morlock, Kris Mortensen, Jerry Rinehart, Barb Shiels, Julie Sweitzer, KaiMay Terry, Cathrine Wambach, Diane Young

Regrets: John Bantle, Eric Hockert

Ron Matross opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. He went over the agenda and asked if anyone needed to adjust the order due to leaving early. The item on venues was moved up. Jan said she wanted to be sure the board was ok with the Nominating Committee proceeding, and Ron asked that it be covered in connection with the URVC bylaws report. Jan McCulloch said it was good to prioritize items to avoid being rushed. Julie presented the September minutes, noting Cathy Lee's clarification. Laurie moved approval of the minutes, Barb seconded, and all voted in favor.

Financial Statement: Kristy presented the September report. Annual dues are just under \$10,000, well short of the budgeted \$15,000, but still coming in. Luncheon revenue looks high, but it includes approximately \$2,900 in prepaid fees, so it is typical. The report notes include reference to possible expenses for members serving on the AROHE board, but Eric had reported AROHE was covering travel and housing costs. Cherie confirmed that AROHE would cover expenses. Kristy said UMRA is in good shape. Jan moved approval and Jerry seconded. All voted in favor.

Venue Committee: Ron first asked Frank for any updates on the Campus Club. Frank reported that as of yesterday U Dining Services is not interested in using the 4th floor, and the provost still does not want to subsidize the Campus Club. He will report back any news from Wednesday's Campus Club board meeting. Bill summarized the recommendation of the Venue Committee, which is to use the Midland Hills Country Club due to its easy access and roughly equivalent pricing. Diane said they had considered the Graduate Hotel but they will only reserve 60 days in advance if no hotel rooms are booked, and the Bell Museum, which has a \$1500 room charge as well as pricey caterers. Kate said the St. Paul Student Center is scheduled to be replaced and does not have a good room for speakers, plus very limited parking. Bill moved approval of the report and to authorize the president to reserve space for March, April and May. Jan Morlock recognized UMRA's priority is quality space for programs but was concerned about the collateral impact on the Campus Club if we pulled out too soon. Frank said the 'drop dead' decision date on closure is still the end of November, and Bill said the club was not taking reservations for March and beyond, which relieved Jan's concern. Cherie asked about Midland's capacity for the May annual meeting, and Bill said it was sufficient. Jan McCulloch hoped the easier access at Midland would bring a few people back.

Diane said she followed up with the 12 'no shows' from September and of the 8 responses, 3 cited parking and 5 forgot or had a conflict arise. She will check with any no shows at the October Forum as well. Ron asked about tech support. Kris confirmed that when they looked at Midland previously, they had a projector, podium, sound, etc. but no staff. Frank thought that if we were considering hybrid meetings, it might be hard to do. Cathy Lee thought that a hybrid meeting was doable. Ron noted they charge \$100 for a projector so it might be worth buying one instead. Bill encouraged the board to approve the motion to reserve the dates and let the committee figure out the technical needs afterwards. Jan seconded the motion with a friendly amendment asking the committee to figure out technology. Bill noted we can still cancel, and Jerry asked that we evaluate the site after each event. Cherie wanted the site evaluation before buying equipment. The motion, as seconded, was to authorize the president to reserve 3 dates, further evaluate Midland's technical capacity and evaluate whether Midland was meeting UMRA needs after each event. All voted in favor.

Attendance at Forums: Ron raised his concern about attendance at forums, noting the numbers are substantially lower than the equivalent months in 2019, and proposed a survey of members. Kate thought the drop is due to the pandemic and people avoiding groups. Laurie has heard the same. Barb asked if we did better with Zoom attendance in 2021, and whether the issue was the speaker topics? Frank thinks parking, COVID and fear of the flu are the barriers, and thinks we should evaluate hybrid meetings. Cathy Lee thought a survey was a good idea, but COVID is still a big factor. She thinks it would be easy to do a hybrid meeting with one camera. Russell said not to underestimate the parking problems. Kris offered a comparison with membership numbers. In August 2019 UMRA had 600 members, and in June 2022 there were 800 members, so she raised the question of whether that meant the drop off was more significant. Participation in Zoom forums in September 2021 was 60, and in October 50. Bill said that the September 2019 speaker was Josie Johnson and November 2019 was new president Joan Gabel, so both were very popular and probably not good comparisons. He thinks the drop is due to COVID primarily, and parking second.

Diane said the Women's Club had 156 reservations in October (25 were students) out of 312 members. Cherie liked the idea of a survey and thinks we should ask members about ideas for speakers. Jerry said he thought about 1/3 of the attendees in September came in angry about parking. He was able to get in by pushing the help button and saying he was with UMRA. Diane said we can make parking reservations at \$1 per name. KaiMay thinks accessibility, choice of speaker, and COVID are the main reasons. Jan Morlock wants to contact other Big 10 retiree associations and compare their experience pre-Covid and now. Kris said we should take the parking discussion offline and she will explore options with Diane. Ron asked Cherie how the Women's Club knows which speakers will be popular? Cherie said that they do surveys (although she is not sure if speaker topics are on the surveys) and invite mostly women to speak. She thinks science and medicine are not of interest to most people. Ron noted that when we did a hybrid meeting there was a small number of people online, in the low teens. Barb offered a defense of program selections, noting that we tend to pick academic speakers because this is an academic institution, and there is an attempt to avoid repeating speakers or

topics. KaiMay suggested thinking of broad topics rather than individual speakers, such as inflation and globalization. Kris noted that the October speaker is on climate change, which is a broad topic, and the November topic is midterm elections with a popular speaker. Bill said UMRA had done a survey 3 to 4 years ago, and the fame of the speaker does matter. Moving locations frequently would probably be negative, and he thinks there are probably more like 200 active members. Ron said other Big10 associations also note 150-200 active members. Diane noted there are already 42 reservations for November. Kristy suggested adding a soundbite to promotions. Jerry thought it would be worth defining 'active member' as a measure of success.

Ron then took a different angle, and asked if we should consider alternative formats, like morning coffee and pastries. Cathy Lee said that was a great idea for the survey, as well as outdoor options. Julie noted that cost hadn't been raised, although it has been a concern in the past. She likes the idea of a morning format. Kate has heard that cost is concern, along with the price break on membership fees for couples. Ron said the membership committee was addressing the fee issue and agreed cost may be a concern, so he'd like to roll back the price when at Midland if possible. Jan McCulloch said her entrée to UMRA was an interest group, and that's a great way to socialize new people to the group as a whole. Ron said alternative formats could be cheaper and more comfortable for those with COVID concerns (e.g., easier to maintain masks without a meal.) Will and Cathrine will help on the survey.

Ron asked how and when we should communicate the change in location decision? Kris said we could write something in January. Kate suggested we lead with reduced (or at least not raised) cost and better parking and access. Ron thought we should not announce now, and Bill and Frank agreed, suggesting January to allow the Campus Club decision to shake out. Kris also agreed, suggesting the board might meet at Midland once so we can say "we were there." Bill wasn't sure the food costs were reasonable for a small group such as the board. All agreed we can hold off any announcement until January.

URVC/UMRA Reaffiliation: Jerry reported that the bylaws revision committee had met several times. The primary decisions so far (details are in his written report) include agreement that the chair of the URVC Management Committee should be an UMRA member. The position of URVC treasurer will be eliminated since URVC funds are managed by U Relations, who will send reports to the chair and the UMRA Treasurer. URVC will have 4 officers: Chair, vice chair/program director, secretary and the UMRA president-elect. They want to allow members of the URVC Management Committee to join UMRA. The URVC nomination committee chair should serve on the UMRA nomination committees to align their processes and selections.

Bill said he supports all the changes, and we should wait to approve them until there is an actual draft. Jerry agreed he is not asking for a vote, just updating on progress and asking for feedback. Jan wants board approval for the nomination process timing, which UMRA bylaws say should occur no later than February (Article X.) Bill said he thinks that should change to January because February has always felt too late. Jerry noted the approval of the bylaws has to go to the full board in May at the annual meeting but thinks it would be valuable to start including

the URVC now (he attends UMRA board meetings as the URVC chair.) Jan can include the URVC nomination chair in her Nomination Committee meetings. Bill thought it was fine to do those things informally and hold the final approval vote on all bylaw changes in May.

Social Activities: Ron started a discussion of all-member social activities, such as the summer gathering held at Como Park and the fall welcome back event, this year held on the Jonathan Paddleford in September. In past there had been a holiday event in December. Jan Morlock said that a debrief by planners concluded the summer/fall events were too close together. Jan McCulloch recommended that we not do a Christmas seasonal event given the diversity of the membership. Kate thought a spring, summer and fall seasonal schedule allows the possibility of outdoor events.

Cherie asked if there are under the Social Activities Committee or Program committee? Ron said he was agnostic, but they are big events that may warrant the Program and Host Committee support. Cherie said she would appreciate a decision, and she has organized events for 800 to 1000 people for OLLI. Ron asked if she wanted to take the all-member social events on, and Cherie replied not necessarily. It was agreed that the Social Activities and Program committees should discuss this together. Jerry suggested having the Host Committee involved could help. Diane said that as chair of the Host Committee, she wanted collaboration on dates. If the Host Committee has to do registrations, names tags, etc. every month (for all member events as well as program events) they will burn out. Cathy Lee said this was ringing process management bells, and it was important to clarify in advance who is responsible.

Will reminded members of the November 20 women's basketball game social event, which has sold 16 tickets so far. Cathy Lee hopes to have the new website live by mid-December.

Ron **adjourned** the meeting at approximately 2:53 p.m.