

UMRA Board of Directors Meeting (Zoom)
Monday, November 23, 2021
1:00 p.m. to 2:54 p.m.
Approved Minutes

In attendance (virtual): John Anderson, John Bantle, Vernon Caldwell, Will Craig, Frank Cerra, Bill Donohue, Gary Engstrand, Cathy Lee Gierke, Cherie Hamilton, Greg Hestness, Eric Hockert, Laurie Koch, Virgil Larson, Ron Matross, Jan McCulloch, Jan Morlock, Kristine Mortensen, Jerry Rinehart, Julie Sweitzer, KaiMay Terry, Cathrine Wambach, Diane Young

Jan Morlock opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. and asked for any comments on the agenda. There were none. Julie noted the October minutes had been distributed the day before incorporating Jan's edits. Bill moved approval, Laurie and KaiMay seconded, and all voted in favor.

Transition Report: Frank Cerra reported that the Transition Task Force had made ten recommendations. Nine were approved by the Executive Committee and the tenth left for consideration by a new task force on membership dues. In essence they recommend holding a Forum and Workshop each month (other than December and summers), formation of a host committee to handle logistics of events, note the need for tech support for in person and hybrid events, recognize the importance of the social component of in person events, promote following MN Department of Health guidelines, require attendees to be vaccinated before attending events and have proof with them (although no formal checks will be made), and want the March event to have a great speaker with lunch served at the tables. Frank added that they explored many venues but were unanimous in preferring Campus Club.

Bill said he liked the recommendations but is concerned March may be too early for an in-person event. Kris suggested changing the work "until" in the first recommendation to "before", so that it did not imply a requirement that there be an in-person meeting. Cherie noted the need for making reservations far in advance, with the option of cancelling. Jerry thought the policy used to be a 30-day notice to cancel. Cathy Lee Gierke looked up the policy and found the current policy states that cancellations less than 60 days in advance forfeit half of the room fee, and less than 30 days forfeits the entire room fee.

Jan raised the question of higher costs. Frank said the room was \$600, technology use has a \$200 base charge (more for hybrid events), and there could be an increase for food and service charges. Cathrine thought recommendation #6 on the social component was vague, and more of a value statement. Frank said it was intentionally so, meaning that the in-person events add the social component. Jerry added that the context was a desire to have the first in-person event be a homecoming of sorts. Gary moved approval of the recommendations and Vern seconded, all voted in favor.

Frank will tell the Campus Club board that UMRA is returning. He will complete the task force report and get it approved by the task force in time for the January board meeting. Kris

suggested a short item in the December newsletter, which would be due December 10, and Frank agreed to draft it.

Treasurer's Report: Greg presented the October report. The end balance is \$25,590. There was income of \$1340 from renewals, but expenses for memorials, newsletter and reimbursement of membership expenses were in excess of that.

- a. Greg proposed a time limit on reimbursement of expenses and made a motion to do so. He suggested 6 months. Members acknowledged there had been discussion of a reimbursement policy as none exists. Cherie thought 6 months seemed too long and proposed 3 months. Greg accepted the friendly amendment to his motion. Jerry noted the policy on policies provides a format and seconded the motion. Bill moved an amendment to the original motion stating that reimbursement requests submitted more than 90 days after the expenses is incurred are ineligible for reimbursement unless authorized by the board. Vernon seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.
- b. Greg said he was in process of changing UMRA's tax year to match the new fiscal year. Working with Bill and Kelly Farmer, recently retired UMN tax professional, he will submit the required form after January 1.
- c. Greg is working with Horizon Insurance Agency on general liability coverage. UMRA has had board officers and directors' coverage at the cost of \$750 per year. General liability is expected to cost roughly the same. Ron asked if we needed both, and Greg and Bill said yes. For example, if someone falls at an event, UMRA could be sued and the policy would cover costs of defense. The policy would cover formal meetings, interest groups, and driving cars as part of UMRA activities. KaiMay asked if hiking special interest group members should sign a waiver. Bill said he could draft a simple waiver, but they aren't often held up in courts. Greg moved to authorize a contract for general liability insurance not to exceed an \$800 premium. Vern seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

Laurie moved to accept the treasurer's monthly report, Jerry seconded, and all voted in favor.

Membership Report: John Anderson discussed the membership reports he had forwarded to board members. There are 741 paid members and 120 who have not renewed, with a 70% renewal rate for new members. UMRA bylaws says members remain on the membership rolls for one year before being dropped. John said reminder messages are sent but he is not certain of the content. Jerry suggested the reminders sell the value of UMRA. Eric said he and Kris will look at the reminders with that in mind and recommend any changes. Jan McCulloch asked if the 70% rate was affected by COVID and virtual meetings. Diane, who is on the membership committee, said she thought it was typical. John reported that the most recent welcome event in November had 10 participants, from 81 invites. 8 completed the interest survey and he encouraged committee chairs to follow up on indicated interests. John will share with special interest groups.

The Membership Committee has discussed changing fees, and a subcommittee has worked on it but their report is not complete, nor has it been reviewed by the full committee. John said

they will likely recommend eliminating the special couple rate, as some members questioned why couples are subsidized. Historically there were some benefits including one less newsletter to print and mail. They will likely recommend a lifetime membership option, perhaps 15 times the annual rate. They did look at the average number of years deceased members had participated in UMRA, and the average was 17 years. They might recommend a 5-year option, and/or an option for automatic lifetime membership after a certain number of annual membership renewals. Finally, they are exploring adjusting the current annual rate, which was set in 2018, as costs are increasing.

Laurie asked if they had explored life range of members, and the lifetime membership practices of other organizations. John said no, other than the UMN Alumni Association which has a lifetime option. Cathy Lee Gierke confirmed UMRA does not have member ages or birth dates, so we can't do any actuarial calculations. John Bantle recommended a small amount of any dues increase fund professional development grants. Kris said that a 3-to-5-year membership option was a no brainer for her and could be a first step to adding a lifetime option a year or so later. Jerry approved of eliminating the couple rate but wondered about bringing spouses to luncheons. John said guests have always been invited. KaiMay suggested an option for honorary life members who contribute. Greg and John will work on options.

Travel and Social Committees: Cherie reported that the Portugal trip is still on for May, and the committee will meet in January to consider further activities. Cherie asked if she should share information about short travel lectures Road Scholars presents, and Laurie and Jerry suggested a single information message providing individuals with the option of contacting Road Scholars. Cathy suggested online social activities and offered to provide the tech support. Jan and John Anderson were interested, noting a new member offered Bell Museum tours. Cherie and Cathy will discuss options.

Program Committee: Ron reported that all Forums were scheduled through 2022, and only the March and November workshops were open. Fidelity might provide a financial program to fill March. Governor Walz' office is considering our invitation for February or March, but Bill thinks it is unlikely. The new Host Committee has a 4th member, Char Greenwald. The Dock and Paddle at Como Park has been reserved for an August date, but no financial commitment yet. The committee is exploring a June cruise on the Jonathan Paddleford.

Ron moved formal approval of the hiking special interest group. Jan said policy has the Executive Committee responsible for approval of new groups, and it approved the hiking group, but it is good for the board to endorse it. Laurie and Vern seconded the motion, and all voted in favor. Cathy asked about formal communication of the approval. Jan said Bev had already placed a public invitation in the newsletter, but she would include a note on the formal approval.

URVC: Jerry reported that the working group reviewed a Wilder Foundation article on merging nonprofits, and believe they are following the right steps. He met with Matt Kramer and Deanne Magnuson last Friday, after providing a list of volunteer opportunities and UMRA

activities to show the overlap. All support the 3-legged stool of intellectual engagement, social activities, and service. Matt Kramer thought the merger was a great idea, connecting it to the land-grant mission and President Gabel's current PEAK initiative. Marr is taking it to the provost and president and will report back to Jerry during the first week in December. Jerry brought up the MOU, and he reminded Deb Cran about it during a recent retirement event. Bill asked about funding, and Jerry said while he did not bring it up, he has no sense that it would be taken away. Jan asked if there is a 4th leg for the stool, perhaps deepening the commitment to and engagement with UMN? Jerry thought that was a valuable idea but thinks the service leg includes it (and the MOU specifically mentions it.)

Membership Dues Working Group: Jan asked for any comments on the proposed charge to the working group, and there were none. Bill moved approval, and Laurie and Jerry seconded. All voted in favor. John Anderson and Greg are the current group, and they are free to recruit others. A report is anticipated in the first quarter of 2022.

Cathy Lee Gierke encouraged everyone to get any web updates to her.

Jan noted this was the last meeting for 2021, and adjourned the meeting at approximately 2:54 p.m.