

# Minutes of the Thomas Jefferson District

February 5, 2010

The meeting was called to order at 8:40 with Jim Key, Denise Rimes, Steve Pearsall, Pam Whistler, Fred Anderson, Jennifer Ryu, Gracia Basham, Andy Reese, Annette Marquis, Sue Sinnamon, and Glenn Johnson in attendance. Peter Kandis and Jake Morrill attended via conference call for the first hour.

Check – in

**Agenda** approved with flexibility

**Minutes** of the October meeting approved as distributed. (For the minutes and all reports, please see <http://www.tjdistrict.org/tjdgovernance/minutesandreports.html>)

**President's report** – Distributed. The UUA Board of Trustees met via conference call on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2010. They passed a motion, *Transforming Governance for the Second Half-Century*, to look at governance at the district, region, and UUA levels. (cf. [http://uua.org/documents/boardtrustees/100204\\_agenda.pdf](http://uua.org/documents/boardtrustees/100204_agenda.pdf)) Jake Morrill, our Trustee, described the background of the motion and the intent of the motion. It is generally agreed by outside experts, those on the Board, and UUA Staff that the Board of Trustees is too large to be effective and that, in general, the UUA has far more volunteer boards, committees, commissions, etc. than is needed for an organization our size. The motion directs an examination of governance at the levels of the UUA Board of Trustees, General Assembly, regions, and districts. They expressed a desire to move quickly on this initiative while assuring input from all stakeholders.

Jim Key reported that some districts are already meeting together as regions, others are moving in that direction. The other districts, particularly the larger ones; e.g., Prairie Star, are in various stages. Jim has been working/talking with Florida and Mid-South already about what we can do together. Regionalization will make more effective use of staff by consolidating the district staffs which would allow more specialization. As we move toward regionalization, clusters will become more important to the work of congregations. Focus is on how to best serve the congregations rather than on governance. May move forward initially by attrition; i.e., by not replacing retiring staff members and relying on staff from adjacent districts to cover the things supplied by the retiring staff person.

Following questions and discussion by the Board, its consensus is in favor of the motion.

**Vice-President's report** (on line) – Activities have centered on three areas: 1) development of Board Policies that align with our policy governance model (see below). 2) Co-chaired the planning committee for the anti-racism conference. 3) Heading the effort to adjust the TJD annual awards process to conform to the new policies the Board passed last fall (see below).

**Finance committee** (on line) – Recommended approval of budget as distributed. They plan to formally monitor finances monthly. They recommend contracting with a professional bookkeeper to handle our books. The budget was approved as distributed. We need to update financial policies.

**APF report** (on line) – All district congregations were certified by the deadline.

**District Executive's report.** (on line) – The district is planning a meeting of leaders from *leadership congregations* for next year to discuss ways in which they can support each other and ways and to transfer

what they have learned to less successful congregations. Staff is in early stages of planning a workshop for congregations that are in or moving toward policy governance.

Will reschedule Anti-Racism conference for October 8-10 in Richmond.

Announced the hiring of a new staff person for Social Justice, Donna Sequeira.

Membership for the TJD is up 0.5% (45 new members district wide) Chalice Lighters – Regina Largent has agreed to chair the committee again. Although we issued only one call last year, the program is strong.

Knoxville relief fund has been closed (208,000 + \$48,000 private) and the remaining \$75K distributed to the two congregations apportioned based on membership.

**Fred Anderson** – Policy for interaction between the Board and member congregations was distributed (needs to be posted and a link put in here) and discussed. Pam commented that we need to keep in mind that we need to be accessible to congregations. Fred sees it as pathways rather than barriers. We are an organization of congregations not individuals so individuals would not be allowed to speak. Moved by Pam Whistler and seconded to accept. Approved unanimously.

Outline for rules for debate on name change was presented (needs to be posted and a link put in here). Discussion was positive. Needs to be distributed to the congregations before the meeting. Discussion about how the decision will go, about choosing delegates, what happens if first passes and last doesn't, etc. Denise moved and Andy seconded approval of the amendments. Passed unanimously. Policy acceptance moved by Pam and seconded, approved.

**Action items from previous meeting:** Four of the five action items were completed. Glenn and Linda were to analyze the APF payment histories of the congregations in the district to assess their current financial status and ability to pay their District and APF dues.

**Nominating Committee:** Jim expressed disappointment that the Nominating Committee did not have a report. Verbal report is that they have more applicants than positions and better diversity.

**Discussion of potential new district names to replace Thomas Jefferson.** Towne – Jordon, Toward Justice, Southeast, Atlantic Southeast, and Atlantic Blue Ridge were discussed. Question was raised as to whether we send out or publish alternative names to congregations. Tabled to later in meeting.

**GA coordinator:** Annette reported that she recommended Mary Alm from Asheville as the local GA coordinator for 2011. This person works with national planning committee on the local arrangements for GA. The GA coordinator is responsible for recruiting volunteers, local lists of attractions, convention aesthetics, etc. Andy moved that Mary Alm be appointed as GA coordinator. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

**New Business** – Denise presented the complete draft of the Policy manual followed by discussion and suggestions. A few wording changes and additions were suggested and accepted. Question was raised as to whether the APF rep need to sit on the Finance committee?

**Annual meeting.** Friday night, ethnomusicologist , Leon Dunkley. Good workshops. Denny Davidoff will do workshop on community activity. Chris Bice as keynote. (Saturday night – Penn Center Gala,

\$100/plate. Nice silent auction) Sunday, Worship service (Chris Bice) and Laura Towne birthday lunch. Cost should be reasonable price. Lots of activities for children.

Denise – get on radar to discuss financial management policy and personnel manual. Annette and staff will do first draft. Jim will consult.

Glen Allen has written a really good financial management policy for congregations that will be posted.

**New Business** – trying to organize a VA legislative ministry to promote laws consistent with UU values and to oppose those that do not. Jim will contact point person to talk with Donna.

Go project being used by the Southwest District in which they get names along with demographics from voting lists for direct mail campaigns for local churches. They have gotten lists of Democrats with targeted age range. Targeted mailings are the most effective form of advertising. Our discussion agreed that we should not just mail to Democrats. Get 2-3% people who show up. Best response for any organization is direct mail.

Andy moved and Fred seconded a change be made to Annette's letter of agreement to remove the requirement to live within a one hour drive of the District Headquarters. Approved unanimously.

**Name change** – Do we want to change our recommendation? Jim will send out announcement saying we have gotten three – four names. Following discussion, it was agreed that we would recommend three names: *Toward Justice*, *Towne Jordon*, and *Atlantic Southeast*. These represent three categories respectively: future ideal, direction of growth based on our roots, and location.

Jim will lead least two teleconferences on the name change.

**Generative thinking** – Have done some: names, regionalization, bylaw changes to reflect policy governance change.

**Thoughts on current status regarding shift to policy governance** –

1. Steve commented that this is a safe place to “stir the pot”.
2. Jennifer said her perception of where we are now is that we are facing forward but haven't started to actually move.
3. Glenn said he sometimes felt like he is standing on shifting sands as the shift to policy governance takes place.
4. Jim noted that leaders of change live in two worlds, the one we have and the one we are moving toward.
5. Denise suggested that policy governance, done well, doesn't have to feel like a sea change.
6. Must distinguish between enabling action and taking action; board is mostly an enabler.
7. Annette – new structure has strengthened her feeling of connection and accountability to the board.

**Process observations** – Good, respectful discussions, lots of good work done.

**AO-AR-MC observations** – Met most of the criteria listed. May need to worry about those who are not part of a congregation. We need to pay more attention to marginalized people. Need to include in policy. Keep in mind that children and youth are marginalized group.

**Action items:**

1. Glenn to get updated policy statement up on-line.
2. Jim will write a letter thanking the VA ministers for their input and suggestions about the name change.
3. Jim will send the VA ministers letter to other cluster ministers.
4. Jim to investigate if the APF rep needs to sit on the Finance committee?
5. Jim will lead least two teleconferences on the name change.

Closing – Andy