

(Approved) UMRA Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, January 25, 2021 11:00 a.m.
Zoom call-in

Present: John Anderson, John Bantle, Frank Cerra, Will Craig, Bill Donohue, Vern Cardwell, 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, Jerry Rinehart, Barbara Shiels, KaiMay Terry, Cathrine Wambach, Gloria Williams

Guest: Andrew Parks, CFA, deputy chief investment officer, U of M

1. Happy New Year

Frank convened the meeting at 11:00 and announced that Richard Pfitzenreuter (Fitz) had died the day before. He noted that the West Plaza of Northrop is named for him.

2. Review/approval of November Board Minutes

The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. EC Draft Minutes

There were no questions about the draft 1/18 Executive Committee minutes.

4. Treasurer's Report

Greg reported that the financial report had been amended by removing January from the second quarter report. At the end of the year there was a \$22,126 balance, taking into account the savings, the checking, and the certificate of deposit. There has been little action in January (\$1367 expense, \$2,665 income) and he has not yet received any bills from OIT.

Greg said he asked the bank about the interest rate on the CD, which is 0.05%. He checked other options (assuming that the short-term commitment is still desired) following discussion at the Executive Committee, and learned that there are better options. Affinity offers .449%, for example, but he said he's not sure it's worth moving the funds. There just isn't a lot of money to be made. Bill recalled that originally they opted for the short-term CD because the interest rate was the

same for short- and long-term certificates. Chip reported that Affinity also has a money market account that pays 5%; Greg said he would look into it.

The Board unanimously approved Greg's report.

5. JOIE Editor

Frank provided a report because Will Craig had a conflict with today's meeting. Will has been passionate about rejuvenating JOIE and has found an editor, Kristine Bettin. The Executive Committee unanimously endorsed her selection; if the Board supports the appointment, he will ask her to serve as JOIE editor and the journal should come alive again. Ms. Bettin has an impressive resume and her former department head highly recommended her. Frank noted that the job is volunteer—there is no stipend.

Chip asked if there would continue to be an editorial committee. Frank said that is the intent.

Jean reported that Ms. Bettin had asked her about Bud Clawson, the first JOIE editor; Ms. Bettin had tried to locate him but without success. Jean asked Board members to let her know if they had any contact information. Virgil said he could find Mr. Clawson's email address and would send it to Jean.

[Agenda items taken out of order pending the arrival of Mr. Parks]

8. McNamara Space

Frank began by explaining that "there is no agreement on space." The amount of office space proposed for UMRA has been reduced from 300sf to 200sf and UMRA has been told there will be charges to UMRA. The Executive Committee instructed him to send a message declaring that UMRA has no funds for space charges and did not request such changes. (The Board was provided a copy of the message.) He emphasized the point in a conversation with Judy Cox at URVC, with whom UMRA shares the space.

Erik observed that no one works in the office during a pandemic so that UMRA could get along without the space at least until July (when University staff are expected to be able to return to their offices). Frank said the questions are about phone and mail; the Executive Committee felt that perhaps UMRA could get along without the space if it must.

9. No Honoraria

Frank said he wished to remind everyone that when they are talking with potential speakers for UMRA events, they must let speakers know that UMRA does not pay honoraria. The talks are volunteer.

7. Committee Reports

7a. Program: Jan noted that she had provided a written report. The Executive Committee had approved three new interest groups (UMRA Book Club II, Family History Interest Group, and UMRA Zoom Interest Group). She related that Ron had informed her that participation in the workshops is about 20% higher than when they were in-person, which is good news. The February AM session will address one of the most important questions of the year for us: the relationship between ourselves, the community, and the police. Greg will lead the discussion.

Jerry asked if it would be possible to simultaneously offer the workshops online and in person, once a return to the latter can happen. Cathy said that the online function was not used in recordings we did in 2020 and 2019 but could be turned on easily; Frank agreed that it would be easy to do.

Barbara said she liked the new timing of the workshops, separate from the Forum, and that could be a reason for the increased participation. Chip pointed out that holding it on a different day could reduce in-person attendance because it would require an extra trip to the campus. Kris observed that anything is possible for a price; as for Chip's comment, three membership events over three weeks works well virtually but there is a question of whether or not it will do so once in-person gatherings are again possible. Jan concluded that they would have to start planning for a return to in-person and continued virtual events.

Jan reminded the Board that the January Forum is on wearable technology. Kris reported that 93 people have registered.

6. Retiree Retirement Tier

Ken began by recalling for the Board that he serves as the UMRA representative to the Faculty Senate Retirement Subcommittee, at which Andrew Parks made a presentation about a retirement tier in the faculty retirement plan. Ken suggested to Frank and Bill that Mr. Parks be invited to make a presentation to the Board; they agreed so Mr. Parks was invited. Mr. Parks is Deputy Chief Investment Officer in University's Office of Investment and Banking, which includes oversight of the University's retirement funds. Mr. Parks joined the meeting.

Mr. Parks presented a set of slides and discussed the content. The details of the slides are not included here; as the plans evolve, more information will be provided at future meetings.

Following Mr. Parks's presentation there were a few questions. Chip asked if the retirement tier would mean losing options currently available or if it would be additive. Mr. Parks responded that it would be in addition to retirement options currently available. The challenge could be communication when solutions and participants come from both accumulating and decumulating years.

Bill said he liked this idea because people don't know how many years of retirement they will have and need to pay more attention to their investments. He asked how much of the money in the system is held by retirees. Mr. Parks said it is roughly over one-third, over \$2 billion. Bill asked how much is in Securian [Fidelity] accounts; Mr. Parks said about \$1 billion.

Bill then asked Mr. Parks about the timing of the proposed retirement tier. Mr. Parks said he would prefer to line up all the options at once, rather than making them available piecemeal. "We are in the second inning of nine." One impediment is that the industry does not offer enough products, although that is starting to change. They need to engage in a diligent look across the landscape to see what is available, so perhaps 1-2 years. What is offered also depends on the feedback they receive about the proposal.

Bill said he assumed that Mr. Parks would be willing to talk with the UMRA membership, who are very interested in the topic. Mr. Parks said he would.

Jan McCulloch asked about how the costs in-plan non-guaranteed funds compare with the costs of the General Account Limited. Mr. Parks said that there is no management fee with Securian; they guarantee 3.5%; if they make more, they get to keep it and if they make less, they have to make up the difference. Annuity costs can run 2-5%. One benefit of a retirement tier is that the University could leverage its buying power in purchasing products such as annuities. Even so, they would cost more than normal investment products. Managed accounts are more expensive; there is a spectrum of costs.

Frank thanked Mr. Parks for his presentation.

7. Committee Reports (cont.)

7c. PDGR: John reported that they have received about \$6,000 in contributions from UMRA members in addition to the two \$10,000 matching grants. They only received one application for a 2021 grant and the PDGR committee approved it. The committee also asked for additional members (including one from a non-Twin Cities campus, two younger members; at the Executive Committee meeting, Frank agreed to make the appointments). They are

also trying to increase mentorship opportunities through awards and will bring a proposal back to the Board later.

7d. Communications and Outreach: Jean said the committee has nothing to report but will at the next meeting.

7e. Social Activity and Travel: Cherie commented that there is not a lot going on because of the pandemic. The Travel Committee sponsored the virtual Road Scholar Art and History of Paris tour January 25-29; four UMRA members signed up. It will be repeated February 8-12 and March 22-26. Road Scholar is holding the Portugal trip for October 2021 and will get notices out later. 14 UMRA members signed up for the trip, originally scheduled for 2020. Cherie also reminded the Board about the live virtual lectures that can be viewed from home. They are \$25 each and include a recording of the lecture. There are 27 one-hour lectures offered by Road Scholar on a variety of topics.
[See <https://www.roadscholar.org/virtualllearning>]

7f. Membership: John reported that the Office of Human Resources continues to send out letters of invitation to retirees about UMRA. The numbers for the last four months were:

September: 77
October: 77
November: 76
December: 158

These are pools for new UMRA members, he noted, but no one knows how many will respond.

With the approval of the Executive Committee, there will be a new-member event on February 11 and it will be run like the October event, which was well received. In October, about 50% of participants were new members and 50% were UMRA facilitators; he alerted Board members that they will be receiving an email asking if they would serve as facilitators.

Kris asked if the UMRA letter of invitation to retirees sent by OHR is email or U.S. mail. John did not know; Chip thought it was email. Kris said it would be great if OHR would also send an invitation to the new-member event. John said he could ask but wondered if it would impinge on the agreement that Bill struck with OHR about sending the letters. Bill said he favored any action that would generate new members and urged that John talk to OHR and ask if they would be willing to send both messages. John thought it would not be possible to do for the February 11 event, and besides, the benefit of the new-member event is that it is oriented to

people who have just signed up and are interested in UMRA. If there were a much larger group, there could be a problem with the logistics.

Chip suggested asking OHR to send a follow-up letter to retirees a year later, after they have adjusted to retirement.

7g. BOR Liaison: Jerry reported that the Board of Regents dealt with the budget and the strategic plan. The financial situation has been in the news a lot, and there is a small contingent trying to obtain funding for the three sports that have been dropped, but that effort appears to be going nowhere.

The Regents held a special meeting in January to take up BioMade, an \$87-million project. This is a big-dollar issue, Jerry said, with more than \$200 million going through the project over five years. In response to questions about developments related to biowarfare, VP Cramer stated that the University, and the United States, abide by international laws which ban research in this area. Dean Forbes also emphasized there will be no animal or medical related work done as part of this arrangement. The project will support an 80,000-square-foot building on the Twin Cities campus in St. Paul, which will be a production facility that will be used for research as well. It will make basic materials for products and the project is consistent with the dean's perspective. The Regents unanimously approved the project. There will be \$28 million to start, to hire people to get the projects up and going, and they will be University employees.

John asked how much of the \$87 million will go to the University, given that BioMade is a consortium with satellite sites? Space is expensive, he added. Any clarification on that question? Not a lot, Jerry said. There will be 25-30 employees initially, a minority of whom will be faculty members. Most will be research staff. The materials on the Regents' website are good.

Barbara thanked Jerry for his outstanding summaries of Board meetings. She said she was surprised and concerned about the crime statistics. Jerry said the data include communities around the campus—Prospect Park, Marcy-Holmes, and the West Bank—anywhere the UMPD officers go. His sense is that many of the crimes are related to carjacking. Greg commented that most know that about 6,000 of 50,000 undergraduates live on campus but 70% live within two miles of the campus, so UMPD has tried to be responsive to the area. Jerry agreed and pointed out that residential numbers are much larger than they were in the past.

7h. URVC: Erik reported that the University Retirees Volunteer Center now has 500 members. Randi Lundell will take on the project director role while staying on as vice chair (and he will remain as chair). In 2019 there were 78 volunteer projects, 24% of which were University-related. In 2020 there were 80, of which 32% were University-related. Their goal is to increase the number of

projects and the percentage that are University-related. A significant accomplishment in 2020 was making URVC's resources better known, and it appreciates the \$4,000 contribution from the University. He sent the annual report to Vice President Matt Cramer, who agreed on the value of the investment and thanked URVC for its work.

Will Craig had joined the meeting at this point; Frank thanked him for all his work to get JOIE going again and getting an editor in place. Jerry added to the acclaim by noting Will's work with UMAA and Gold Mind; Will has done much work that helps with UMRA communications.

Frank adjourned the meeting at 1:25.

-- Gary Engstrand