

**UMRA Board of Directors Special Meeting (Zoom)**  
**Monday, December 12, 2022**  
**1:00 p.m.**  
**Approved Minutes**

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

Ron Matross opened the meeting just after 1:00 p.m., noting that the sole item on the agenda was the location of the March, April and May meetings. He reminded members that in October the board had decided on Midland Hills for the spring meetings, but that was before the Campus Club received a reprieve on funding. Ron then summarized the significant findings among the responses to the Program Survey. There was a good response of 346 members. The majority of respondents said that Covid, schedule conflicts and parking were major or minor obstacles to attending. A majority of non-attendees responded that not knowing people was an obstacle, with 16% saying it was a major obstacle, something UMRA needs to continue to work on. As to format, the two lunch formats (hot and a lighter option) were the favorite of 46% with only 19% preferring one of the coffee options, but when offered a mix of luncheons and coffees 35% said that was their top choice. Ron felt the responses indicated an openness to new options but a preference for lunch. Holding events on campus was very or somewhat important to 54% of respondents. Regular attendees were strongly in favor of a campus location while non-attendees registered as slightly favoring campus or no preference.

Ron then asked for other observations. Laurie was impressed by the large number who were willing to complete the survey. Eric noted what didn't rise to the top, which is cost. It allayed some of his fears of cost as a barrier. Jan agreed with Laurie, noting the respondents were roughly half the membership, and agreed price is not a serious issue. Ron noted his concern that small obstacles can add up to become barriers, and price may not be a major barrier on its own, but possibly a small obstacle we should be mindful of. Will agreed the price itself is not a problem but perhaps a sense of little value for the price. A salad or cookie could help. Russ said we need to facilitate the needs of those who are attending, and location is a testable question. Julie agreed, saying it is why she like the proposal to hold two events at Midland Hills with the promise of the return to Campus Club in May. She also noted that people who liked the Zoom option apparently didn't know that the January and February meetings would be on Zoom, so we need to communicate that clearly. Cathrine and Cathy Lee agreed it was worth a try.

Ron then reported on the meeting he and Diane had with the Campus Club. The club is fully staffed with occasional morning shortages of student employees but does not have enough staff for plated lunches. The price for the West Wing will increase from \$600 to \$800 in fall, plus the charge for technology. Diane noted that the charge for non-U renters is \$2,000, so the increases reflect what things cost today. Food (buffet lunch) will remain at \$25 until UMN increases the amount departments are permitted to spend on food. Morning coffees would

cost \$18.50, so if we charge \$20 it isn't much cheaper than lunches. The Campus Club wishes us to know that they provide good pay and benefits to employees, and hope that is a factor we consider. UMRA is an important customer among many. The club has a more philanthropic vision of the future focusing on feeding the U community. Currently they provide some free student meals but a possible switch to 501(c)(3) tax status could allow them to accept donations and provide more support to food shelves in the area. Russ asked if that model is feasible. Frank said they are receiving good legal advice but there is no market study. Frank noted that the provost has told the Campus Club that she will continue their funding for this fiscal year and provide half that amount for fiscal 2023-24, but nothing is in writing. The club is to negotiate with the real estate office regarding rent in 2024-25.

Ron then asked for consideration of the proposal (made by Ron and Bill) to hold the March and April luncheons at Midland Hills Country Club and return to the Campus Club for the May annual meeting. Frank said it was tenuous to put all our eggs in the Campus Club basket and we need to try other venues even though our allegiance might be to the U. Jerry agreed, noting the financial strain was not a new situation for the Campus Club. He values the club but feels reality caught up with the club during the pandemic. Kristy also favored the proposal. She does not want to give up on the idea of coffees and suggested using free or inexpensive campus space such as Hasselmo Hall's foyer or Mayo Auditorium, with cookies and coffee from the current university dining services provider. Ron noted the added benefit of not being 'required' to eat and thus remove a mask at such events. He wants to vary one variable at a time in spring, however, specifically location. Jan asked if we were ready for a motion? Ron said the proposal is to hold the march and April luncheons at Midland Hills Country Club, and the May annual meeting at the Campus Club. Eric moved approval of the proposal, and Will seconded it. Ron asked for discussion, to which Barb said she favored approval but it was important to communicate clearly and emphasize the May return. Frank said 'ditto that' and we need to provide a clear decision to the Campus Club. Ron said Kris was holding the January newsletter for an article on this decision, which he was drafting. Diane said we also need to reconfirm with Midland Hills. Ron asked who was responsible for that. Diane said the president should confirm with the schedule with both locations on behalf of the organization. Jean Kinsey is the member contact for the Midland reservation. The Host Committee will take it from there to work out the event details. There was general agreement, and Ron said he would handle it. He called for a vote which was unanimous in approval.

As a final note, Eric wanted to recognize the quality of the work done by Ron, Will and Cathrine in drafting and analyzing the survey. Cherie recommended a bulleted list for communicating the schedule and locations, including Zoom, for January through May. Kris asked about a previous idea to hold a board meeting at Midland to develop familiarity. Ron suggested that instead a few members could go look at the location informally.

Ron **adjourned** the meeting at approximately 2:00 p.m.