

UMRA Board of Directors Meeting (Zoom)
Monday, May 22, 2023
1:00 p.m.
Approved Minutes

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

Ron Matross opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. Jan McCulloch moved and Barb seconded approval of the April board meeting minutes, with a unanimous vote in favor.

Finances: Kristy presented the written report. On the URVC side, student worker costs are higher in part due to a planned spend down of the carry forward, and a problem with work study hours. URVC's share of Silver Gopher t-shirts have been sold so there will be revenue to offset that cost item. UMRA has just under \$17,000 in savings. Sponsorships are up \$1,000 and membership dues are down about \$1,000, while events are running slightly over in expenses. Next Kristy will add a line noting the portion of the savings account reserved for the 2026 Big Ten conference. Bill asked whether we had asked central administration for funding for the conference. Ron said no, but Eric said it is high on his agenda. Bill recommended asking early and often.

Venues: Ron noted that Kristy prepared the chart comparing the costs, and he prepared the analysis. In short Campus Club will cost over \$450 more per event than Midland Hills. They confirmed with Campus Club that the quoted price is rock bottom. Ron believes a vote for the venue incorporates a judgment on price, with Campus Club requiring a \$35 fee or the subsidy would be disastrous to the budget. Jan McCulloch asked about the survey results, and Ron said the survey will be sent after Tuesday's meeting. The discussion today is to decide which question(s) will be presented to the board on June 5, related to venue and rate.

Cherie said she thought the survey should have been sent earlier, and that parking and access to the building should be considered. Bill noted the Campus Club may not exist after 2023, and suggested we hold all meetings at Midland Hills except the annual meeting in May. He favors keeping the rate as low as we can but thinks we can go a bit higher than the current fee. Cathy wanted to share the cost analysis including parking with members. Laurie agreed, and wondered whether UMRA leaving the Campus Club would affect its success? Ron said the manager reported our business is nice but not key. Kristy estimated UMRA is one percent of the club's business based on numbers presented at the recent annual meeting.

Ron asked what the question for the board should be. Julie suggested presenting two choices for each venue, with one the subsidized rate and one with the full cost rate. Jerry favors the full cost rate, as UMRA can't afford the subsidy. Ron thinks the fee ties into a full budget discussion

including dues and the 2026 conference and thinks we should not tinker with fees until then. Jan McCullough asked if attendance was up at Midland Hills. Diane said the April Midland Hills and May Campus club events both had just under 100 reservations, but March was lower. Ron noted the event fee went up last year to \$30, and noted we should discuss the luncheons as events because the fee pays for more than the food. September and October reservations were low at Campus Club. He suspected price but the survey revealed it was a smaller factor than parking and getting to know people. He's still concerned an increase will cut attendance and thinks UMRA can handle the current subsidy. Will asked if other Big 10 retirees hold meetings on or off campus, and Jan and Ron said it was a mix.

Jan Morlock stated that the vote options should only include subsidies (if any) the board thinks are acceptable. Jerry noted no one dislikes Midland Hills. Ron said the question should not be how much we subsidize but how much we need to run the event. A straw poll of the board indicated all but a few favored Midland Hills at \$30 over Campus Club at \$35. Jerry noted that it will take Campus Club perhaps a year to become a 501(c)(3) and the new mode of operations may not make it feasible for UMRA to do business there. Ron agreed and noted that the Campus Club will need to triple its' kitchen size for the new model. Ron asked about taking a formal vote now, but several people wanted to wait for the survey and to include the missing members. Ron said the question presented will be Campus Club with a \$35 fee versus Midland Hills at \$30. He noted that if UMRA moves to Midland Hills we can always go back in the future.

Election: Ron presented the election results. The amended Bylaws were approved 178 to 0. The 2022 annual meeting minutes were approved 175 to zero, and the officer slate was approved 178 to 1. Ron thinks the one person who opposed the slate is someone who believes the vote should occur in person. Julie noted that there were 50 more votes in 2023 than in 2022 (129 votes).

Venue Survey: The survey will be launched after the annual meeting and uses a star rating system. Ron added a question about willingness to pay \$5 more to stay at Campus Club. Jan wanted the reason for the additional charge to be clear, and Ron read the question, which satisfied her.

Program Updates: Eric reported there are 98 paid reservations for the annual meeting, new members will be matched with hosts, Parking Services expects no problem with spaces, and the running order is completed. Jan said the UMRA summer will include most of the interest groups continuing to meet. The Cabinets of Curiosities tour of Saint Paul campus outdoor research facilities is full. The June 28 luncheon at Como is available for reservations, and Kate and Cherie are working on a history game. The August 29 boat trip will be on Paradise Cruises and leave from Bohemian Flats. Bill asked about rates and subsidies, and Jan said the Como event would be \$30 and pay for itself. Cathy noted that there is a charge of nearly \$2 for each member payment from Square and Stripe (which are cheaper than PayPal), and it should be factored into prices.

Jerry reported that there is a new Silver Gopher opportunity with the Admissions Office on Fridays from late June through early August. Volunteers will greet students, and Silver Gopher t-shirts are the preferred attire.

Jerry also reported that the Organizational Continuity Committee is asking for annual reports and web and toolkit updates. Julie said that she, Ron and Eric are working on an updated Operational Manual which will impact the other documents.

Big 10: Ron said that the Executive Committee had discussed the annual Big 10 conference and decided that he and Eric would be this year's delegates. Bill suggested the president-elect go, too, as it valuable for anyone running the organization, but Julie said she attended last year and was not available this year. Jerry reminded Ron and Eric that UMRA covers their cost.

Ron **adjourned** the meeting at approximately 2:20 p.m.