

*Guidelines
for
District Committee Chairs
July 2004*

*Ohio-Meadville District
of the
Unitarian Universalist Association*



*Guidelines
for
District Committee Chairs*

Ohio-Meadville District Office

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This revision of *Guidelines for District Committee Chairs* for the Ohio-Meadville District is subject to changes and additions at any time. Changes and additions to this document must be approved by the Ohio-Meadville District Board of Trustees. Recommendations for changes and additions may be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees.

Table of Contents

1. District Policy.....	1
2. Purpose of Committee Guidelines	1
3. Charge to Committees	1
4. Committee Membership	1
5. Chair Responsibilities	2
6. Recording Secretary.....	2
7. Conducting a Meeting.....	2
8. Meeting Sites and Times	3
9. Committee Finances	3
9.1 District Committee’s Budget.....	3
9.2 Record Keeping	3
9.3 Reimbursement Policy.....	3
9.4 Donating Expenses.....	4
10. Event Finances	4
11. Event Registration	4
12. District Office Support and Resources.....	5

1. District Policy

The District Board of Trustees creates policy and defines structure to enable vision of its membership—a vision of a growing vital organization dedicated to the religious principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association. The Board establishes, and charges, committees so that this vision might be fulfilled.

The various committees develop specific programs in response to the membership's expressed needs. Committees can nurture specific aspects of our religious community.

2. Purpose of Committee Guidelines

The purpose of this Guide is to provide direction and assistance; not to propose a definitive way to conduct a committee's business. It is recognized that there are differences in leadership styles.

It is also recognized that areas of responsibility are set by Ohio-Meadville District policy in the Bylaws, *Policies and Procedures* document, and by Board actions.

3. Charge to Committees

The charge to each committee is created by the Ohio-Meadville District Board of Trustees. It defines the reason for and purpose of the committee. The charge and the work of each committee is reviewed annually by the Ohio-Meadville District Board.

See the Appendix of the *Policies and Procedures* document for specific committee charges.

4. Committee Membership

Each committee shall consist of:

- Chair or Convener —appointed/approved by the Ohio-Meadville District Board.
- Chair-elect —advisable
- Members-at-large —In choosing members-at-large consideration should be given to geography, skills, involvement and interests. Rotation is advisable.
- Board Liaison —ex-officio member appointed by the Board
- District Consultant —ex-officio member
- Additional professional or lay leaders determined by committee charge.

5. Chair Responsibilities

- Schedule meetings—see *Meeting Sites and Times* (see Section 8)
- Inform members of meetings—via phone, e-mail, postcard.
- Prepare agenda
- Conduct meetings—see *Some Notes on Conducting a Meeting* pages 3 and 4
- Appoint a Recording Secretary from membership
- Prepare a report of committee activities and plans for the Board Liaison prior to each Board Meeting. Board Liaison will contact Committee Chair.
- Check District Calendar when planning meetings and events
- Notify District Office of committee plans—events, workshops, conferences, training, meetings.
- Notify District Office of changes occurring in membership—names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.
- Submit articles to District Office for *District Doings* newsletter as appropriate—published 4 times per year. See *District Doings* for deadline and publication schedule.
- Provide items to District Office for Congregational Packets— check with District Office for mailing schedule.
- Submit budget request for the following Fiscal Year—see *Committee Finances*, Section 9.
- Submit Annual Report to District Office—As stated in the Bylaws, Annual Reports are to be forwarded to the Administrative Secretary at the District Office forty-five (45) days prior to the Annual Meeting. Chairs will be notified of the date reports are due.

6. Recording Secretary

- The recording secretary takes minutes of meetings. Copies of the minutes should be sent to committee members prior to the next meeting.
- A copy of the minutes of each meeting should be sent to the District Office for the district files, and to the assigned OMDA Board Liaison.

7. Conducting a Meeting

- Start the meeting on time
- End the meeting on time—determine length of time for the meeting and stick to it.
- Remind people of the time about half way through the meeting.
- Keep the meeting moving by:
 1. taking items in order according to agenda
 2. letting discussion flow on pertinent subjects, then
 3. summarize and call for the vote
 4. repeat the decision
- Remind wanders and talkers of the task at hand
- State clearly that issues emerging from discussion can be added to the end of the agenda, if there is time, or to a future agenda. —e.g. “Seems like this issue is important and needs space either later in this meeting or on our agenda for next meeting.”
- Delegate tasks to committee members—e.g. “Would you be willing to _____ before the next meeting and come prepared to fill the rest of us in on the details?”
- Thank people for constructive comments—e.g. “ I appreciate your creative approach to something we’ve struggled with.” Or “I’m glad you reminded us to get back on target,”
- Close the meeting with:
 1. Appreciation and constructive comments for the work of the committee.

2. State the date, place and time for the next meeting.
3. Adjourn the meeting

IMPORTANT NOTE: The chair of a committee does not take on major tasks because the chair will be making calls, handling details and preparing reports. The chair must allow time for emergencies and/or other surprises.

Additional information on conducting meetings can be found in *Robert's Rules of Order*, the Famous Manual of Parliamentary Procedure or *Mister/Madam Chairman...Parliamentary Procedure Explained* by Edmund Haugen. Both books can be borrowed from the Ohio-Meadville District Library.

8. Meeting Sites and Times

- Schedule is established by the committee.
- Meeting sites are determined by convenience to members and/or in order to aid fulfillment of charge.
- When scheduling a meeting in the building of a local congregation it is necessary to request permission to meet, arrange for space and entrance keys, etc.

9. Committee Finances

9.1 District Committee's Budget

The amounts budgeted for each committee must not be exceeded and may only be used for actual committee expenses and reimbursement to members for necessary expenses (i.e. travel, meals, telephone, postage and copying). Committee-sponsored events are to be budgeted separately (see Section 10).

The committee chair shall submit a proposed budget for the following fiscal year by October 1 of the current fiscal year. It is imperative that budget requests meet the deadline or they may not be included in the District budget.

If help is needed in preparing a budget request, the committee chair may contact the District Treasurer or District Consultant.

9.2 Record Keeping

Records of expenditures are to be kept and filed with the District Office. The District financial statement is available to committees for review.

9.3 Reimbursement Policy

Per the *Policies and Procedures* document:

- All reimbursement requests must be on Expense Report Forms and include receipts (except for mileage).
- Expense Report Forms must be signed by committee chair.
- Expenses will be reimbursed no later than 30 days after receipt of vouchers by the District Bookkeeper.
- Requests for reimbursement will not be honored if submitted more than 90 days after incurring the expense.
- Expenses incurred in the service of the OMDA will be reimbursed according Section 7 of the *Policies and Procedures* document.

Expense Report Forms are available from the District Office.

9.4 Donating Expenses

Please submit an Expense Report even if you are not asking for reimbursement. There is a line on the Expense Report Form to indicate the amount of your donation.

10. Event Finances

The function of the District Office is to help committees make the event run smoothly as well as maintain good accounting practices. The following notes are offered to help in achieving good event finances.

- Create a budget for event (committee planning expenses for events are included in the committee's operating budget and are not part of the event budget).
- Determine amount to be charged for registration.
- Correlate, with the event budget, dates when payments are needed, e.g., deposits to reserve a location may be needed months before the event.
- Requests for payment need to be submitted as soon as possible to the District Office. Requests for advanced payment should be made in writing. Do not assume that checks will be available the day of the event.
- The use of a petty cash fund requires the prior approval of the OMDA Treasurer.

Event finance requirements are set forth in the OMDA *Policies and Procedures* document, Section 5. OMDA *Policies and Procedures* take precedent over all guidelines and committee practices.

11. Event Registration

The more information you can gather the better prepared you can be for your event.

The more information you record the easier it will be to track your finances.

Remember that the people who attend this year's event will become part of your mailing list for next year's event.

Following are some ideas for your event data base:

Name

Address

Phone

e-mail

Date received registration

Child care

Accessibility

Vegetarian meals or other dietary requests

Home Hospitality—Smoking/non smoking room

Registration fee owed—include additional fees e.g. child care.

Amount paid

Date received

Cash or Check

Comments—if "amount paid" shows "0", your comment may be "scholarship", etc.

12. District Office Support and Resources

District Calendar

The District Office keeps a calendar of all district and related events, meetings, etc. An updated version can be mailed or e-mailed to any committee chair or member upon request. Specific information can be e-mailed or given by phone.

To keep the calendar current, committees are asked to inform the District Office promptly of their plans.

District Directory

The District Office publishes a directory of district and congregational leadership yearly. One directory is mailed to each committee chair. Cost of production and shipping for additional copies will be charged to the committee's budget.

Prior to publication of the directory, committee chairs are asked to inform the District Office of any changes or additions to their committee.

NOTE: The District Office maintains a database of information which is updated regularly throughout the year. Committee chairs are asked to inform the office at once of any changes or additions.

Mailing Labels

The District Office can provide mailing labels for congregations, ministers, officers and other leaders. Labels can also be provided for District organizations such as OMDUUPRL. When making a request for labels please allow 3–4 days plus mailing time. Labels for return self-addressed envelopes can also be furnished. Cost of supplies and shipping will be charged to the committee's budget.

Stationery

Ohio-Meadville District letterhead and envelopes can be supplied for business correspondence, e.g. writing to meeting places or speakers.

District Doings Newsletter

Issued four times per year, the newsletter will publish items about up-coming events and follow-up reports. Deadlines are published in *District Doings*. Reminders are sent in Congregational Packets. Committee Chairs should submit articles to the District Office unless otherwise instructed.

Congregational Packets

Each month a packet of information is sent to congregations, ministers, committee chairs, and others. The packet includes the most current district calendar along with other items of interest. Committee Chairs may submit flyers by e-mail or regular mail. The packet is for single items only, not large quantities of brochures or flyers. The packet is mailed at the end of each month. e.g. the November packet will be mailed the last week in October.

Flyers and Brochures

Flyers, brochures, instructions, etc. for district events and projects can be printed in the District Office.

- If you are able to create your own material, you can e-mail the item to the District Office—a pdf format is acceptable.
- Please schedule your printing with the district office at least two weeks in advance.
- If you want the district staff to create your material you may send the text via e-mail or regular mail allowing some additional time.
- This District Office does not deliver so please arrange to pick up your material when it is finished.

Call the District Office for specific print capabilities.