

Minutes of the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of Atheists of Florida, Inc.

February 15, 2015

1. INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1 Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 11:15 AM.
- 1.2 Thomas announced that this was the Annual Meeting of the Directors of ATHEISTS OF FLORIDA, INC., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Florida Corporation, being held at the Atheists of Florida office, 5103 S. West Shore Blvd., Tampa. The Chair noted that this was the annual meeting called by the directors of the above named corporation pursuant to the bylaws of said corporation for the purpose of discussing items specified on the agenda which had been delivered to all board members prior to the meeting.
- 1.3 Roll was called by Chair Thomas and the following Directors were present:
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| Ed Golly, <i>Secretary of the Meeting</i> | Tracy Thomas, <i>Chair</i> |
| Gloria Julius, <i>Secretary</i> | Judy Adkins, <i>President</i> |
| Galen Matson | Chris Brown, <i>Tampa Chapter Director</i> |
| James Peterson | |
- Also present (not voting):
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| Eileen Stafford, | Nan Owens, <i>Treasurer</i> |
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- The Chair noted that a quorum was present and proceeded with the meeting.
- 1.4 Announcements were made as follows:
- 1.4.1 Adkins announced she had devised a program that would reward volunteers and it would be presented later in the meeting for consideration by the Board.
- 1.4.2 Thomas announced that the Bank of America had donated \$250.00 to A OF F through her participation in a community service program in place at the bank.
- 1.4.3 Adkins announced that Golly had officially purchased appliances he had donated to the organization through \$600 of his donations to A OF F.
- 1.5 Review and revision of Agenda.
- 1.5.1 Golly requested that Item 8.8 be deleted since that issue would be addressed earlier in the meeting. The directors approved the deletion.
- 1.6 Owens distributed financial reports for the organization.

2. MEMBERSHIP ADDRESS TO THE BOARD

- 2.1 No members had requested time to address the Board.
- 2.2 MOTION by Adkins that any member who stays for the board meeting have the right to participate in any of the discussions as if he/she were a board member. Adkins withdrew the Motion.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 3.1 Upon MOTION made by Adkins, SECONDED, and APPROVED by unanimous VOTE, the minutes of the August 24, 2014 meeting were approved.

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Adkins reported that 2014 had been an interesting year. As could be see in the infographic distributed and the annual report, we had grown, we had been active, and we had made an impact in the community, from

the invocations we gave; to the voter education effort; to meeting the social needs of our community. But she concluded we could do more and we could do better. Since our membership strength was currently in Tampa Bay, she focused on that for a bit. According to Pew research, 6% of Floridians identified as atheists or agnostic. In Tampa Bay alone that would be around 260,000 people. We knew that atheism was more prevalent among youth, and 20% of Tampa Bay's population was between 18 and 34. That's about 870,000 people, or at the 6% rate, about 52,000 atheists. Adkins acknowledged that some of the directors believed we should focus only on older folks, but there were about the same number of people that were 65 and older in the Tampa Bay area. So again, about 52,000 atheists.

How could these people be reached? How could we get them involved? This was our challenge for 2015.

Adkins thought first we must decide what kind of organization we wanted to be. Not what the bylaws or the articles of incorporation stated, although they could not be ignored—but what we, the people who do the work, wanted it to be. Did the state of Florida need our organization, or one like ours? She thought the answer was “yes,” but not in the way it was originally envisioned and had influenced our operation ever since. Meet-up had really changed everything. No longer was it difficult to find like-minded people in almost any community, thus she perceived the need for us to start chapters was no longer necessary, except perhaps an online chapter for those that reside in rural, isolated communities. She envisioned our role as being a public voice for atheists, in every part of the state—an organization focused on leading a movement, an organization that evokes, or some might say provokes, the expansion of civil liberties for atheists—well actually for everyone. When civil liberties advance, everyone wins. We could object to activities in rural communities which would go unchallenged because the people who live there and would like to object would be afraid to do so. We could address issues that were common across the state, such as the religious exemption for vaccinations. We could make known policies and statutes that violate separation of state and church and work to get those repealed, such as the blue laws that exist on the books in many cities.

But Adkins recognized that many of our members just sought the social aspect. That was understandable since many people, when they first find atheism, have just come out of churches and religious structures that occupied their whole lives and they need to fill that void. Could we do both? Yes. Can we do both with the way we are structured now? She thought not. She advocated support of the Meet-ups, letting those run the social aspect of the organization. Perhaps chapter directors do not need to be in charge of the Meet-ups. We could have Meet-up coordinators to plan events working closely with the chapter directors or the president where no chapters exist. Since we currently had only one chapter, Tampa Bay, it was thought that implementing this would not be difficult. So if we could find volunteers, she would start a committee of Social coordinators beginning with one for Hillsborough and one for Pinellas. This would free up the people that wanted to focus on broader issues from having to worry about the social aspect of the organization, but the organization would still address those needs of its friends and members.

Adkins then proposed a few simple goals for 2015:

1. Get Atheists and Atheist organizations recognized as being part of the greater community
 - Getting interfaith/community groups in Florida, such as Hillsborough Organization for Progress and Equality ([HOPE](#)) which claims to be a community organization, to admit A OF F as a member organization, depending on the cost.
 - T-Shirts and button contest—request designs from friends and members of T-shirts and buttons that we get produced and sell. The prize could be part of the profits, a free year membership, or something else. This would be focused on promoting atheism/freethought in a positive light. The entry could be a quote, an image, a joke, or whatever.

- ❑ Ensuring that all public libraries have freethought magazines and material available to members. This may cost more than we have, but we could do a “Go Fund Me” for this specific activity.
 - ❑ Have a series of meetings on Living without god(s). Perhaps the second meeting of the quarter for Tampa Bay could be devoted to this discussion.
2. Promoting a campaign to end religious exemptions from vaccinations. This would be done via petitions and letter writing, and supporting existing campaigns by other groups. This would really cost very little if anything.
 3. Promoting a campaign to fight religious influence in local government. Part of this are the “blue laws” left over from the days when religion had a much greater influence on our community. This would be done via petitions, flyers, and letter writing accomplished at very little cost.
 4. Protest any invasion into the public schools of religious material. While Orange County was in the process of deciding on their policy about letting bibles and other literature be distributed, we need to find out what other counties are doing and protest where needed, and praise where needed.
 5. School board elections—survey and publish the responses of what candidates for school boards around the state are saying about state church separation issues and science education.

As for the standing committees, Adkins proposed the following goals:

Presidential committees:

Newsletter—publish six newsletters this year.

Chapter Formation—determine if we even need chapters anymore.

Financial Audit—complete an audit of 2014 as soon as possible.

Budget and Finance—Adkins believed this could be done at a board meeting.

Organizational Manual—updated within one month of this meeting.

Outreach—suggesting three ideas on how to recruit new members.

Membership—send anniversary cards to each lifetime member; naming a member of the quarter and a member of the year.

Advertising—promote T-shirt and button contest.

Board committees:

Website—update the front page weekly.

Final Bequests—encourage members to include A OF F in their wills.

Financial Oversight—no suggestions necessary.

Publications—review the pamphlet and suggest one other publication; serve on T-shirt and button contest committee if adopted; produce the annual report.

Annual Conference/meeting—plan the next annual meeting and try to get more members involved.

5. TREASURER’S REPORT

Owens reviewed the Profit and Loss Statement for 2014 and the Balance Sheet dated December 31, 2014 which had been distributed to the directors, both of which are appended to these minutes.

- 5.1 Upon MOTION duly made by Adkins which was SECONDED to approve the treasurer's report, VOTE of the Board was UNANIMOUS.

6. CHAPTER DIRECTORS REPORTS

Golly reported that the Tampa Chapter had continued the quarterly structure of our meetings beginning with a general meeting with an *Atheist Forum* audience-participation video production followed by a guest speaker meeting and ending with a potluck social meeting.

7. PROJECT REPORTS

- 7.1 Bequest Committee—Adkins announced her intent to post bequest information on the A OF F Web site.
- 7.2 Publications—Peterson had received no submissions to the Committee. Golly continued to serve as editor of the A OF F newsletter. Adkins distributed a preliminary print of the 2014 Annual Report for review and comment by the Directors, after which it would be posted on the Web site.
- 7.3 Outreach—Matson reported he was composing an outreach group intended to target potential young members. He expressed the need to get back to conducting the weekly hangout on the Internet every Tuesday evening at 7:00; expand our effort to confront the local Blue Laws; engage in increased activism; and follow up on the issues we have agreed to pursue through Google Hangout. Additional ideas Matson wanted to explore included:
- A Free Speech rally;
 - A “Draw Mohammed Day” in Ybor City;
 - A Blasphemy Day Event in September;
 - T-shirt ideas;
 - A Christopher Hitchens Day event, possibly combined with a Thomas Jefferson Day event, with some other kind of event coordinated with those days.
- 7.4 *Atheist Forum* Webcast—Golly reported that we have generated quite a few programs and have posted several on our Web site. He suggested we might consider resorting to an audio-only production of the *Forum* that would allow for audience participation through either a chat room or live telephone contact which had been successful prior to moving into our present facility. He expressed concern that we may need to relocate our meeting and production facility within the year.
- 7.5 Website/Internet—Adkins reported we had had over 7,000 visitors to our present site. She was employing free Google ads that directed visitors to our site. A new Web address extension was coming available exclusively for non-profit organizations and she would investigate a potential new Web address when it became available. She announced we had received 380 requests for our newsletter.
- 7.6 Volunteer/Activities Coordination
- 7.6.1 Tampa Bay Harvest—Adkins announced that nobody was bringing food any more for the project.
- 7.6.2 Pet food donations—Member Melanie Yoshida, who had spearheaded the effort, was no longer attending meetings, which had brought this program to an end.

- 7.7 Board Member Committees:
- 7.7.1 Annual Report—Golly submitted a MOTION to produce a 10-copy color run of the Annual Report, none of which would be distributed. Motion was SECONDED and APPROVED by unanimous VOTE of the board.
 - 7.7.2 Fund Raising—Julius focused on collecting funds on behalf of stem cell research and reiterated from the previous board meeting her plan for doing so which was immediately rejected by the directors.
 - 7.7.3 Newsletter—Golly reported that the production schedule for 2015 would be six issues produced every other month. A site for submissions had been established at Newsletter@atheistsoffloriadinc.org, and a deadline for submissions would be established and published for each newsletter.
 - 7.7.4 Membership—Adkins reported that we had 71 total active members in 2014; 42 Annual Members; 261 Meet-up members; 363 subscribers to our online newsletter; one new Life Member in January 2015, and 28 other Life Members. We had 9 complimentary members receiving our newsletter.
 - 7.7.5 Legal Affairs
 - 7.7.5.1 Golly reported that in our general lawsuit most discovery had been completed, Wachs remained to be deposed by our counsel, and the Defendants had indicated they would demand a jury trial. The State Attorney had decided not to prosecute the three felonies disclosed in Detective Mills' report submitted at the conclusion of his year-long investigation, but we had obtained a copy of his report and would likely request further documents he had obtained through his investigation that could be utilized in the deposition of Wachs.
 - 7.7.5.2 Golly reported that Wachs had dropped her suit against A OF F attempting to compel us to pay the outstanding court fees assessed by the City of Lakeland, and that A OF F would continue to refrain from paying the \$6,700 fee.
 - 7.7.6 Bylaws Revision Committee—Adkins suggested that the Committee resume its project of revising the organization's bylaws by developing new bylaws modeled after other similar organizations. The directors agreed that it was wise to delay this until the conclusion of the lawsuits that plagued the organization.
 - 7.7.7 Financial Oversight Committee—Thomas reported that no requests had been made to the FOC.

8. OLD BUSINESS

- 8.1 Meeting Space Status—Golly reported that Puppy Manor had extended our arrangement for use of the meeting space for another six months. But after that, they would attempt to discontinue the arrangement pending increased business that would allow them to do so. The developer who announced plans to get New Port Tampa Bay back under construction had expressed interest in the appraised value of the property in event any third parties might be interested in purchasing the property. Golly presumed that by the end of the Puppy Manor lease serious interest in purchase of the property would develop and he could flip into a new property with space available for A OF F.
- 8.2 Financial Audit—Member Sandra Smith claimed she and Rick O'Keefe needed records for 2013, and that she and O'Keefe could accomplish an audit for 2014 as soon as records were available from the treasurer. They would perform an internal audit of the checking and Money Market accounts only.

- 8.3 Office Day—Matson reported that the Office Day effort had been unsuccessful since relocating to our present space due to the cumbersome circumstances of the arrangement. He recommended suspending Office Day pending relocation to a more practical location or having a significant reason to conduct it and replacing it with a Google Hangout.
- 8.4 Meet-up sponsorships—Adkins reported that there were no Meet-ups currently being sponsored.
- 8.5 Lakeland Lawsuit Lien—Golly reiterated the organization’s position regarding satisfaction of the outstanding lien.
- 8.5.1 Julius submitted a MOTION for A OF F to satisfy the assessment, SECONDED. Following discussion, VOTE on the Motion was:
 AYE: 1 (Julius) NAY: 5 ABSTAINED: 1 (Matson)
 The Motion was DEFEATED.
- 8.6 Endowment Fund—Owens reported the Money Market account had been closed in order to save the organization the fees required to operate it and the funds relocated to the Schwab Account. The General Fund was being held in the Endowment Fund and that Fund was holding all income from membership so it would remain separated from the legal fees and not be spent defending the lawsuit.
- 8.7 Insurance Coverage for Building Contents—Golly reported that insurance coverage was in place for the contents in the building belonging to A OF F.

9. NEW BUSINESS

- 9.1 MOTION was submitted by Julius that prospective directors be required to respond to an adequate questionnaire to be crafted by a committee and approved by the Board. The Motion DIED for lack of a second.
- 9.2 MOTION was submitted by Julius that Directors be required to serve a minimum of two (2) years on the Board to be eligible for any officer’s or chairman position. The Motion was SECONDED. Following discussion, VOTE on the Motion was:
 AYE: 1 (Julius) NAY: 6
 The Motion was DEFEATED.
- 9.3.1 MOTION submitted by Adkins to change the membership fee structure to “Pay What You Want (PWYW)” allowing members to earn points toward Life Membership or be applied to discounts on merchandise. The Motion was SECONDED. Following discussion, VOTE on the Motion was:
 AYE: 1 (Adkins) NAY: 5 ABSTAINED: 1 (Peterson)
 The Motion was DEFEATED.
- 9.3.2 Adkins submitted a MOTION that A OF F establish a PWYW membership fee with a \$5 minimum and include a breakdown of organization operating costs to prospective members, SECONDED.
- 9.3.2.1 Golly submitted an AMENDMENT to remove the second part of the Motion. The Amendment was SECONDED, and following discussion, VOTE on the Amendment was:
 AYE: 6 NAY: 1 (Julius)
 The Chair directed the Board to the main Motion and called for a VOTE:
 AYE: 6 ABSTAINED: 1 (Julius)

The Motion, as amended, was APPROVED.

9.3.3 Adkins submitted a MOTION that A OF F offer a point system to be decided by the Membership Committee to be used to earn points toward Life Membership or be applied to discounts on merchandise. The Motion DIED for lack of a SECOND.

9.4 MOTION was submitted by Adkins to charge a membership fee for the Meet-up group providing the first three months free, then a PWYW fee with a \$5 minimum. Following discussion, VOTE on the Motion was:

AYE: 1 (Golly) NAY: 4 (Thomas, Brown, Adkins, Peterson)

The Motion was DEFEATED.

9.5 As approved by the Board, the 2015 Budget was composed as follows:

ITEM	AMOUNT
Credit Card Services	\$ 150
Office Supplies	50
Postage & Delivery	200
Printing—Newsletters and miscellaneous	300
Special Events	750
State Solicitation of Contributions Registration	10
State of Florida Annual Report	61.25
Web site	100
Meet-up operation	175
TOTAL	<u>\$ 1,796.25</u>

9.6 MOTION was submitted by Julius that the Pledge of Allegiance be recited at all A OF F meetings. The Motion DIED for lack of a Second.

9.7 MOTION was submitted by Julius that cohabitating couples who serve on the Board may not second each other's motions. The Motion DIED for lack of a Second.

9.8 MOTION was submitted by Julius to revise the Articles of Incorporation to state only that for which we are incorporated. The Motion was SECONDED.

9.8.1 Following discussion, Peterson submitted a MOTION to TABLE the Motion, SECONDED. VOTE on the Motion was UNANIMOUS.

Julius submitted her RESIGNATION as secretary and departed the meeting.

9.9 Adkins submitted a MOTION to award a Life Membership to Thomas, SECONDED. VOTE on the Motion was:

AYE: 5 ABSTAIN: 1 (Thomas)

The Motion was APPROVED.

9.10 Adkins submitted a MOTION to award a Life Membership to Ed MacDougall, SECONDED. VOTE to APPROVE the Motion was UNANIMOUS.

9.11 Thomas NOMINATED Eileen Stafford to the position of Director. Stafford ACCEPTED the nomination. VOTE on the nomination was UNANIMOUS.

10. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

10.1 Adkins NOMINATED a slate for the officers and chairman of A OF F as follows:

- President Adkins
- Vice President Brown
- Secretary Stafford
- Treasurer Owens
- Chair Thomas

All nominees ACCEPTED their respective nominations. VOTE of the Directors to APPROVE the slate was UNANIMOUS.

10.2 Election of Financial Oversight Committee:

The treasurer and secretary were de-facto members of the Committee.

Brown nominated himself.

Peterson nominated himself.

Golly nominated himself.

With no further nominations, VOTE by the board for the three candidates was UNANIMOUS.

11. CONCLUDING BUSINESS

11.1 MOTION was submitted by Thomas to ADJOURN. By UNANIMOUS VOTE of the Board, the Meeting was adjourned.

By: Ed Golly
Secretary of the Meeting

Atheists of Florida 2015 Annual Board Meeting Recap

- 7.1 Bequest information will be posted on the Web site.
- 7.2 Annual Report will be posted on Web site.
- 7.3 Weekly Internet Hangout every Tuesday at 7:00 PM.
- 7.6 Food (people and pet) donations project no longer active.
- 7.7.1 Ten color copies of the 2014 Annual Report will be produced—none to be distributed.
- 7.7.3 Newsletter production schedule established at six per year.
- 7.7.6 Bylaws revision Committee remains suspended pending conclusion of legal issues.
- 8.2 Audit Committee can complete audits for 2013 and 2014 upon receipt of records from treasurer.
- 8.3 Office day no longer active but will be replaced with a Google Hangout.
- 8.6 Money Market account had been closed. Endowment Fund is holding all income from membership.
- 9.3.2 Membership fee changes to “Pay What You Want” (PWYW) setting a \$5 minimum.
- 9.5 Budget for 2015 established at \$1,796.25.
- 9.9 Tracy Thomas voted Life Membership.
- 9.10 Ed MacDougall voted Life membership.
- 9.11 Eileen Stafford elected director.
- 10.1 Officers:
 - President Adkins
 - Vice President Brown
 - Secretary Stafford
 - Treasurer Owens
 - Chair Thomas
- 10.2 Financial Oversight Committee:
 - Owens
 - Stafford
 - Brown
 - Peterson
 - Golly

Atheists of Florida, Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Directors' terms are three years. This roster will serve until November 2017

Board Members as of February 2015

ADKINS, Judy <i>President, Webmaster</i>	6814 Charlotte Harbor Way / Tampa, FL 33625 jmadkins@gmail.com	727 / 271-3548
BROWN, Chris <i>Vice President, FOC</i>	2937 Bayshore Pointe Dr / Tampa FL 33611 christbrown@yahoo.com	813 / 405-5985
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MATSON, Galen	3403 W Paxton Av / Tampa, FL 33611 galen@galenmatson.com	813 / 699-9089
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THOMAS, Tracy <i>Chair</i>	6411 93 rd Terrace #4901 / Pinellas Park, FL 33782 tthomas6667@gmail.com	727 / 235-3220

