

**Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes**  
*Pending approval at the February 2025 Board Meeting*

*Our faith in a God of love leads us, by the power of the Spirit, to follow Jesus in doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.*

**Board Members Present:** Brad Kohlman (Moderator), Bill Eash (Moderator elect), Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Past Moderator), Mary Ann Boschmann, Tim Hodge, Carolyn Penner, Doug Penner, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews, Jon Zerger, John Waltner

**Board Members not present:**

**Staff Present:** Nathan Koontz, Mike Claassen (Treasurer)

**Staff not present:** Joanna Harader (Co-pastor)

**Others attending:**

- 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Brad Kohlman shared a family story and a prayer for the meeting.
- 2. Consent Agenda** – Brad asked for questions and comments on the Pastors' reports and online minutes which were emailed to the board before the meeting. Bill Eash expressed continued gratitude for all the work that is done by pastors each month. **Tim Hodge moved to accept minutes from the previous meeting, pastors' reports, and online minutes of commissions and committees. Ada Schmidt-Tieszen seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
- 3. Financial Report: Mike Claassen** – Brad thanked Mike for all his work with the Finance Committee to prepare the proposed budget for presentation at the January congregational meeting. He also expressed thanks to the congregation for a terrific December that allowed us to end the year above budget. Brad will work with Jeanette Leary (chair of the Finance committee) to word a bulletin announcement of appreciation to the congregation. The 2024 budget year ended with around \$7000 income over expenses. This puts the General Fund balance at 1.97 months which is in the target range of 1-2 months of the 2024 budget, per the General Fund Balance Policy stated in the Finance Committee Handbook. This was the second-best December giving since 2006. **Lois Preheim moved to approve the Financial Report. Bill seconded; the motion carried.**
- 4. 2025 Budget** – Mike reported that there were tweaks in preparing the budget but that generally the amounts commissions and committees requested were placed into the proposed budget. He did have to wait on property and health insurance quotes. The 4% budget increase seems realistic. In response to a call for questions, Nathan asked the board to make a change to the solar line item for the Witness commission budget as follows: **The requested amount in the line item for the Solar Intern should be reduced from \$2700 to \$1350.** A question was raised about the \$5000 carry-over under the Witness commission budget for potential interns (see item 5 of November board meeting minutes) and whether support for Bethel student interns is what the excess funds from the 2023 budget year were really intended for. The origins of the excess money would typically have gone to benevolences. Support for Bethel student intern experience can be considered as a Witness commission endeavor because the

internship experience is an opportunity for students to experience various aspects of church work. After discussion, **Ada moved to present the 2025 budget as presented with the one change noted above at the January congregational meeting. Jon Zerger seconded. The motion carried.**

- 5. Agenda – January Congregational Meeting** – Brad asked commissions and committees for high points of the last year to present to the congregation. Brad may ask congregation for affirmation of GDC’s committee recommendation. The Witness commission will want to give a report on money spent in 2024. Brad will send out an agenda over the weekend.
- 6. Agenda – January Leadership Retreat** - The retreat is set for 3 hours on Saturday morning, January 25 at Grace Hill Menn Church. Ada, Bill and Brad recently visited with Tim Schrag about his presentation on hospitality. The moderators will open the meeting and set the stage. Tim will talk about hospitality at BCMC and including the idea of different layers of hospitality. His presentation will conclude with takeaways and action items. Logistics around coffee and pastries were discussed briefly. Board members can bring pans of this and that.
- 7. Reports and Announcements** – Brad and Nathan expressed concern for the condition of car parking for Sunday. No entrance is really clear. Can Nathan have Monica send out notice about parking? We can either go entirely online or publish lots of warnings. Brad and Nathan will consult on Friday/Saturday to decide. What about service of remembrance?
- 8. Future Agenda Items** – No future agenda items were brought.
- 9. Executive Session** - **The board moved to enter executive session at 7:59 pm.**
- 10. Adjournment** – **The board adjourned at 8:20 pm. The next meeting will be held on February 6 at 7:00 pm.**

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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