

**Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes**

*Pending approval at the April 2023 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:** Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Moderator), Brad Kohlman (Moderator-elect), Mary Ann Boschmann, Judy Friesen, Tim Hodge, John Kliewer, Karen Penner, Adam Robb, Bill Swartley, Margaret Toews, Jon Zerger

**Board Members not present:** Lois Preheim

**Staff Present:** Mike Claassen (Finance Manager), Nathan Koontz (Pastor), Roger Neufeld Smith (Interim Pastor)

**Staff not present:**

**Others attending:**

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer** - The board read our purpose statement together followed by a prayer offered by Ada Schmidt-Tieszen.
2. **Consent Agenda** – Online minutes of commissions and committees, pastors’ reports, and February board meeting minutes were presented. There were no questions. **Judy Friesen moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Brad Kohlman seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
3. **Financial Report** – The Treasurer’s Report was emailed prior to the meeting. Mike Claassen reported that the income vs expenses is consistent with last few years, a bit better this year. Ada thanked Mike for his work. Since many donors give only once at the end of the year, do we need a mid-year check? Since some money is held in reserve throughout the year, there will be money available as needed. **John Kliewer moved to approve the Financial Report. Karen Penner seconded; the motion carried.**
4. **Revision of Housing Allowance for Nathan Koontz** – Nathan has requested his 2023 housing allowance be changed from \$23000 to \$25000 for tax purposes. The revision would not change the church’s budget. **Jon Zerger made a motion to grant the request. Mary Ann Boschmann seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**
5. **Work of the Credence Report Task Group for the Search Committee**
  - a. Potential timeline for tasks in response to Credence Report – The Credence Report group and the Search Committee need to be working in parallel. Ada distributed a proposed timeline ahead of the meeting to help us focus on the four recommendations of the Credence Report which are, broadly 1) intergenerational culture, 2) structure, policy and supervision, 3) work of APRC and 4) vision.

Discussion of ways to talk about intergenerational culture followed including these points:

- A small group visits commissions and committees to ask each of them what they are doing that is intergenerational – how to adapt to more intergenerational ways.
- Focus on all age ranges – not only youth.

- Younger families are busy and already very active – we maybe don't need a young person in this small group but need to keep young families in mind.
- b. Draft of pastoral job description - Ada asked the board to comment and offer feedback on a rough draft of a job description put together by Ada and Margaret. The following points were raised:
- Looking only for one pastor – is search fatigue going to be a problem? Board affirms that we are only looking for one pastor at this time.
  - What if there is a qualified candidate who wants  $\frac{3}{4}$  time? Should we specify a range of FTE? Maybe there is a couple who want to share 1.5, for example?
  - How important is the job description? Will results of the survey influence job description – yes. General is good – for now.
  - Are we going to adapt to the pastor candidate (areas of interest, passion, talent) – or are they going to adapt to us? We should have a good conversation with current youth staff to see how they are feeling.
  - We need to share, either orally or written, that we are in a state of change. The Search Committee will likely do this.
  - Reword the item about funerals and weddings or delete entirely.
  - Structure – should we leave the decision as to how flat or how hierarchical to the pastoral team? Board meets infrequently – if one pastor reports to the board, that person is the “lead”. What is the mechanism for conflict resolution? Should have one person who is in charge. Can churches function if there is no one person in charge – the board might have to meet more often. Assembly Mennonite Church in Goshen has had a flat, team structure for several decades with a position entitled Administrative Minister (credentialed pastor).
  - Need to have a conversation about the number of times “lead pastor” is mentioned in our constitution and bylaws. How should we have congregational conversation about this? **Judy will look at the spreadsheet showing the number of mentions to see ways of adapting without going through the process of rewriting all church documentation.**
  - The liaison role in commissions and committees has become much more key since church structure reorganization of 2011. Need to ask how to reduce this role. Should we return to a representative board that includes members of commissions?
- c. Suggestions for Credence Report Task Group members – we would like two more people. Board members should be thinking of possibilities. Adam Robb may consider being on the Task Group and leaving the board a few months early.

**6. Pastoral Liaison Structure** – Roger Neufeld Smith. Roger distributed the document Report on Pastoral Liaison Relationships.docx prior to the meeting. This is a report from Roger summarizing staff discussion as to which staff members will relate to various committees and commissions during this transition time.

**7. Attendance at MennoCon** – Is it important to have one of the pastors attend MennoCon? There are some in the congregation for whom it would be important to have a pastor from BCMC attend the MennoCon. We'll leave it to the pastors to work out if and when a pastor attends.

## **8. Reports and Announcements**

- a. Creation Care Committee rejuvenation – April 23 is Creation Care Sunday which the newly active Creation Care group will lead.
- b. Confirmation of dates/time for April board meeting, next congregational meeting – The April 6 board meeting will be held at 7:30 pm instead of 7 pm because of the Maundy Thursday service. For various reasons the usual April congregational meeting will be held May 7 during the Sunday School hour.

- c. BCMC Church Retreat at Camp Mennoscah will be held in conjunction with Halstead Mennonite Church the last weekend in April, April 29-30.

**9. Executive Session – Brad moved; Judy seconded to close the regular meeting and move to Executive Session. Closed at 9:22**

**10. Meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm. Next meeting will be held April 6, 2023 at 7:30 pm (note change of time).**

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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