

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, Karen Penner, Lois Preheim, Adam Robb, Margaret Toews, Jon Zerger

Board Members not present: John Kliewer, Bill Swartley

Staff Present: Nathan Koontz (Pastor), Roger Neufeld Smith (Interim Pastor)

Staff not present: Mike Claassen

Others attending:

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer** - Ada offered a prayer for members of the board and for the meeting.
2. **Consent Agenda** – Online minutes of commissions and committees, pastors’ reports, and March board meeting minutes were presented. There were no questions. **Adam Robb 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 was unable to attend. Ada asked for comments or questions from the board and reported that Mike did not have additional comments on the report. **Mary Ann Boschmann moved to approve the Financial Report. Jon Zerger seconded; the motion carried.**
4. **Committees Appointed by the Board**
 - a. The board needs to approve new members of the Gifts Discernment Committee: Jerry Buller, Jeanette Stucky, Francis Toews. **Jon moved; Adam Robb seconded. The motion was approved.**
 - b. The board needs to approve new members of APRC: Dwight Krehbiel, Lil Peters. **Brad Kohlman moved; Adam seconded. The motion was approved.**
 - c. Board members to find new volunteers for the following committees:
 - Bethel College Relations Team (2-3 members) **Jon and Tim Hodge will work on this.**
 - Education and Service Scholarship Committee (1-2 members) **Margaret Toews will work on this.**
 - Facilities Committee (1-2 members) **Mary Ann Boschmann will work on this.**
 - Finance Committee (1 member) **Judy Friesen will work on this.**
 - Peace Garden Committee – Judy reported that no new members are needed.
 - Staff Congregation Relations Committee (1 member) **Brad will work on this.**
 - d. **Adam** will reach out to GDC to get a list of people who are on their proposed list and share it out with board members.
 - e. Roger Neufeld Smith reported that Sub-committees of Worship Commission are appointing their own members since the Worship Commission has not been meeting. Adam reports that some other committees such as the Library Committee are also getting their own members.
 - f. GDC will need two additional members. **Brad will work on this.**

5. Approval of Congregational Information Form from Search Committee – The board expressed thanks and gratitude to Heather Zerger and the search committee for its excellent work on the CIF. Lois Preheim notes the following wording changes should be made:

- Part I, Section C, #4 and Part III, Section D, #2: Remove reference to lead pastor.
- Part III, Section A, #1-2: Remove reference to elders.
- Part III, Section F, #4, last group of points: Storm windows have been replaced.

Jon moved; Tim seconded. The board unanimously approved the CIF with changes including the notes listed above.

Ada will check with the search committee to see if a link to the CIF can be put on the web site. People might be interested in these findings.

6. Approval of the Pastoral Job Description – The job title has changed to co-pastor after consultation with WDC and others. The search committee and other pastors have reviewed the description. The congregation has had input through the congregational survey. **Tim moved to approve the Pastoral Job Description; Judy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

7. Review Work of the Credence Report Task Group

- a. New members for the Task Group – Adam Robb has joined; Roger will act as liaison. Ada and Margaret have met briefly. Ada invited all to think of a new name for the group that reflects renewal and vision for our church.
- b. Review timeline for tasks: Multigenerational initiatives – According to the timeline shared at the last board meeting, the next task (after working on the Pastoral Job Description) is to focus on multigenerational initiatives. Adam suggested pulling Brad, who had previously expressed interest in working on multigenerational ideas, into the group as it creates a plan to act on this focus. Ideas mentioned include an “audit” of opportunities in each of the commissions. We want to leverage existing groups and energy. The evening get-togethers that have happened in the past year were mentioned. Judy has already planned a supper event for June 4.

Discussion followed around another task for the task group - a look at church structure. We want to avoid the situation where the constitution and bylaws mention a lead pastor, but we are looking for a co-pastor. SCRC is working on a report addressing structure in our congregation. We need to share the story of the board’s journey toward a co-pastor model. Our congregation has been moving in the direction of a co-pastor model for some time. Responsibilities can be defined without one person having to take the whole burden of leading the church. Specific questions of reporting structure need to be and will be defined – this was identified as a weakness by the Credence report. This is one thing the SCRC report will address.

To share this information the board will host a meeting in the sanctuary during Sunday School on April 23 to answer questions. **Brad** will lead this meeting. **Ada** will draft a bulletin announcement and give a kin-dom report on April 16.

8. Congregational Meeting on May 7

- a. Format – This meeting will be held in the sanctuary during SS hour. It will be available live over YouTube but will not be recorded. For votes of approval on the people GDC has identified, remote viewers can text Adam’s cell with their responses.
- b. Begin work on agenda - The meeting will include a few slimmed-down reports from the Indigenous Justice Committee, information on multi-generational initiative and inviting people to think about

ways to connect over the summer. It may also include a report from Elizabeth Schmidt. **Margaret** will talk to Mary Ellen or Deb Gering about child care.

9. Reports and Announcements

- APRC brief report – Judy Friesen gave an update from the committee. The main emphasis has been working on the handbook including structure and term limits. What is the best way to bring new people onto the committee given the sensitive nature of ongoing issues? What is a good way to store documents? An APRC-specific email address has been created and a password-protected shared Google drive has been established. What should our reaction be when identified boundary violators come to memorial services at BCMC, for example. The concern is more for survivors rather than because APRC thinks a new offense will happen. APRC is still looking at training for those accompanying survivors and accused. APRC sees as one of its primary responsibilities to take the load off the pastors.
- Lead pastor specifications in spreadsheet - Judy briefly reported that in this spreadsheet, often the lead pastor was listed as “consulting with” various commissions or others in the church. This wording puts the pastors in a difficult position, because if those consulted with don’t take the lead, the pastor ends up doing so.

10. Jon moved; Brad seconded to close the regular meeting at 9:16 pm and move to Executive Session.

11. Meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm. Next meeting will be held May 4, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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