

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes

Pending approval at the September 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, Tim Hodge, John Kliewer, Doug Penner, Karen Penner, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews

Board Members not present: Judy Friesen, Jon Zerger

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

Staff not present: Mike Claassen

Others attending:

- 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Ada Schmidt-Tieszen offered a prayer for the meeting.
- 2. Consent Agenda** – Tim Hodge moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Brad Kohlman seconded the motion; approved by consensus.
- 3. Financial Report** – Brad moved to approve the Financial Report. Karen Penner seconded; the motion carried. Another Assistant Treasurer is needed. Mary Ann Boschmann reported on the various responsibilities of the assistant treasurer. **She and Ada will follow up with Mike as to progress getting an assistant treasurer.** A question was raised about the PPP reserve fund (from Covid times) appearing as a line item in the Liabilities section of the Balance Sheet. **Ada will follow up with Mike and the Finance Committee about following the procedure to have the loan forgiven before the legal deadline.**
- 4. Committees Appointed by the Church Board: Progress Reports**
 - Gifts Discernment Committee: Dick Koontz has agreed to serve on GDC. **Doug Penner moved to approve Dick's appointment to the Gifts Discernment Committee. John Kliewer seconded; the motion carried.**
 - Staff Congregation Relations Committee (1 member): Brad reports that the idea of arranging for a volunteer retainer with HR expertise is being explored. Many churches are in the same position of needing Human Resources expertise. Could an effort be made with other churches to have an HR expert available on an as-needed basis?
- 5. Planning for September 10 Congregational Meeting** – The next congregational meeting will be held on Sunday, September 10, at 12:45 pm in Fellowship Hall. The Senior High youth will serve a noon meal with the meeting to follow after a quick cleanup from lunch. **Ada will prepare the agenda** including a round-table discussion led by the Indigenous Justice Task Group, and reports from the Credence Report Task Group on intergenerational activities, Creation Care Solar Panel group, ESSC. If time, the agenda may also include gathering feedback from questions such as “What is working well in the congregation?”

6. **Planning for September/October Board and Committee Retreat** – A Board and Committee Retreat will be held the morning of October 7. **Ada will investigate the possibility of using a new facility at Kidron Bethel.** Roger Neufeld Smith shared a document “Thoughts for a BCMC Leaders’ Retreat” which contains ideas and a process for bringing focus to retreat attendees around the issue of simplifying organizational structure at BCMC. This idea for the focus of the upcoming retreat met with agreement by the board. Discussion followed which included:

- encouraging a practice of appreciative inquiry
- asking “if this committee/commission/group did not exist, would you start it?”
- who are the stakeholders – who decides which groups should exist?
- encouragement to emphasize the positive—inspiring possibilities and visions
- marketing the event as addressing “cultural change” rather than “structure”

7. Reports and Announcements

- Update on work of the Credence Report Task Group – see item 6

- Update on Creation Care Committee’s solar project – Dwight Krehbiel and Hugo Boschmann reported on the progress made. After many weeks of waiting, proposals from two other providers have been received. Dwight is compiling a table comparing features of each of the three proposals. This group plans to give a report at the congregational meeting on Sept. 10. Questions were raised about how to bring the congregation into this decision-making process. Questions about financing, landscaping and insurance issues were also raised.

- Update on Living Stones: Mike is in the process of contacting members who have been giving to the fund. **Ada will place an announcement in the bulletin explaining the closing of the Living Stones fund when those calls are completed.**

- Elizabeth Schmidt has been licensed for special ministry by Western District Conference. A celebration will be held during worship on September 3.

- ESSC – Margaret Toews presented a two-part motion from ESSC. The first part asks to change Guideline #3 of the Scholarship Program Guidelines to include Anabaptist or historic peace churches as follows:

“Students must be accepted by and enrolled in an accredited college or university of an Anabaptist denomination or historic peace church *or those* related to Mennonite Central Committee as listed in an appendix.” The purpose of this change is to include churches and denominations not listed by MCC as affiliated churches.

The second part of the motion from ESSC is for a change to Guideline #9 which reads as follows:

“Applications for BCMC scholarships must be submitted annually. Application forms are available on the church website or at the church office, and must be completed, signed, and returned by the deadline announced via the church bulletin.” ESSC would like to delete this Guideline altogether. The pdf application is never rejected. Not all students fill it out in a timely manner. Eliminating this guideline brings the guidelines on paper in alignment with what actually happens. This scholarship is a gift to our high school seniors attending anabaptist schools; they do not need to apply.

Brad moved to approve the first part of the motion (change to Guideline #3). John Kliewer seconded; the motion was approved. There was discussion about the second part of the motion. Some more formal acknowledgement of the scholarship should be made to students, parents and the school. Margaret will take this feedback to ESSC.

8. Executive Session was entered at 8:55 pm.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm. Next meeting will be held September 7, 2023 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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