

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes

Pending approval at the December 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: Brad Kohlman (Moderator-elect), Judy Friesen, John Kliewer, Doug Penner, Karen Penner, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews, Jon Zerger

Board Members not present: Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Moderator), Mary Ann Boschmann, Tim Hodge

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

Staff not present:

Others attending:

- 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Brad Kohlman led a short reflection and prayer. The group read the mission statement together.
- 2. Consent Agenda** – Brad asked for questions or comments. There were none. **Doug Penner moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Judy Friesen seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
- 3. Financial Report** – Mike Claassen highlighted the fact that income exceeded expenses in the October financial report. There were no other questions about the report. **Margaret Toews moved to approve the Financial Report. Lois Preheim seconded; the motion carried.**
A budget worksheet for 2024 was presented. On Sunday, November 12, the Finance Committee will offer a kindom report to kick off a week in which congregants will respond with pledges via the online form. Additionally, some congregants will receive email or snail mail including a narrative form of the budget worksheet and the opportunity to pledge. At the end of the week of November 12, Mike and the Finance Committee will assess the response and determine next steps. There was a brief discussion of increased line items. Brad thanked Mike and the Finance Committee for their work.
- 4. Indigenous Justice Task Force and Joining Repair Network** – Doug presented an explanation and proposal for the board to recommend to the congregation. The task force of 8 – 10 people has been meeting and interacting with the Repair Network for over a year. In the several congregational education opportunities (two SS hour presentations in August, September 10 Congregational meeting) about the Repair Network, the seven components of membership in the Repair Network were explained and response was positive. The straw poll taken at the September 10 congregational meeting was also positive. The financial commitment for the 2024 year is \$3000. This motion would be brought to the congregation in a short congregational meeting following worship on November 19. The broader commitment to the seven components of belonging to the repair network will be highlighted at that meeting. The motion before the board is: **In light of this history of congregational engagement, on behalf of the Task Group for Indigenous Justice it is moved that the Board recommend that BCMC join the Repair Network beginning in January 2024, with a commitment of \$3,000 to the Repair Network budget in 2024 and an expectation that in 2025 that amount would be \$4,000 and subsequently \$5,000 annually thereafter. Budget commitments for years beyond 2024 would be processed within the normal annual budget development and approval process. Doug moved; Judy seconded. The motion carried.**

5. **Welcoming Statement** – Nathan, on behalf of the Inclusion Task Force, proposed the draft of an updated, broader welcoming statement. The draft was shared with the board for comment. Brad expressed thanks to Inclusion Task Force for bringing this forward ahead of board direction. The Inclusion Task Force will likely bring this to the congregation at its January Congregational Meeting. The board expressed that this statement is entirely consistent with what we already do. **The motion before the board is to affirm the draft and process for adopting. Lois brought the motion, John Kliewer seconded; the motion passed.**
6. **Update on solar project process:** Jon, Roger and Margaret met earlier in the week to review responses Roger received to his request for advice on how to proceed with the solar project. They also discussed how to address the concerns of both the Solar Subcommittee (their concern is timely action) and the Finance Committee (their concern is financial responsibility). Jon Zerger highlighted a two-phase plan for determining interest and support from the congregation. Phase 1 is the soliciting of support from the congregation. Phase 2 will be to approve the project and an associated loan if significant support is shown in Phase 1. Timing is problematic as this request comes as the congregation is soliciting funds for the 2024 budget. Concern was expressed that congregants be given the opportunity to vote yes or no to the idea of a solar panel installation. After discussion the following motion was brought to the board:
The board recommends that the following question be brought to the congregation in a congregational meeting after worship sometime in December, 2023. “Does BCMC approve the initiation of a pledge drive for the purpose of soliciting funds and support for the solar project? The details of a pledge drive will be worked out if an initial vote indicates significant support.”
The board recommends that before this question is brought to the congregation, Jon will visit with both the Solar Subcommittee and the Finance Committee to hear questions and concerns. **Jon moved; Doug seconded. The motion passed.**
7. **Request from Nathan for Time Away** – Discussed in Executive Session and voted on outside of Executive Session. **Brad moved; Jon seconded. The motion to grant the request passed unanimously.**
8. **Elizabeth Schmidt’s Annual Review and MOU** - Discussed in Executive Session and voted on outside of Executive Session. **Brad moved; Judy seconded. The motion to approve the MOU passed unanimously.**
9. **Reports and Announcements**
 - Please refer all questions about the recent APRC letter to APRC only.
 - Roger gave an update on work of the Credence Report Task Group following leadership retreat. Brad, Roger and Judy collected feedback – not a lot of new information. The retreat was successful. Several areas to be looked at include the handbook for the church board itself, a change plan for church moderator terms. Visiting with others who work in different areas of the church provided new insights. Successful retreat – walks were great. The Credence Report Task Group on Structure wants to invite Nathan to say what structure would benefit him and a future pastor.
 - Margaret brought several comments she received from congregants at various times regarding a bus to worship on Sunday mornings and easier access to lists of Sunday School participants.
10. **Executive Session was entered at 8:50 pm through a motion from Judy and a second from Karen Penner. Executive Session was exited at 9:03.**
11. **The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 pm. Next meeting will be held December 7, 2023 at 7:00 pm.**

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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