

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes
January 4, 2024

Pending approval at the February 2024 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, Doug Penner, Karen Penner, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews, Jon Zerger

Board Members not present: John Kliwer

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

Staff not present: Roger Neufeld Smith (Interim Pastor)

Others attending:

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Ada opened with a short prayer for the meeting and for our church.
2. **Consent Agenda** – Brad Kohlman reported that the Gifts Discernment Committee is trying new ways of identifying people for church volunteer positions. There were no other questions. Brad **moved to accept the minutes. Lois Preheim seconded the motion; approved by consensus. Mary Ann Boschman will summarize the minutes of commissions and committees for the February meeting.**
3. **Financial Report and 2024 Budget**
 - December and End-of-Year financial report – The Finance committee recommended that the balance in the General Fund at the close of 2023 be carried forward to the 2024 General Fund balance, instead of being dispersed to the Witness Commission Benevolence fund (as is stated in the Handbook for the Finance Committee’s Policies and Guidelines section, item iii). There were 135 intents totaling \$383,748 made for the proposed 2024 budget compared to 148 intents totaling \$401,268 for 2023. After considerable discussion of the reduced number and amount of intents for the 2024 budget, the following motion was made: **That 50% of the excess income from 2023 be distributed to benevolences based on Witness Commission discretion and 50% of excess from 2023 be carried forward to the 2024 general fund. The 50% carried forward to the 2024 general fund will be dispersed in 6 months’ time, as determined by the Board and depending on BCMC’s financial situation at that time. The purpose of this motion is to acknowledge the gap between intents and the 2024 budget. Jon Zerger moved; Judy Friesen seconded. The motion carried.**
 - Update and approval of 2024 budget to take to congregation – The Finance Committee recommended that the 2024 budget be reduced by 5%. Discussion included the observation that many congregations do not use the process of asking for intents. Is it possible the use of intents as a budgeting tool is changing for us and does not indicate a lack of support for the congregation? The board believes the money will come in. **Brad moved to approve the 2024 budget as presented; Mary Ann seconded. The motion passed.**

- 4. Solar Panels Project** - Jon Zerger gave a slide presentation of the results of the Phase 1 questionnaire. Around \$99,000 has been pledged to be available by the end of June when the project would be completed. A total of around \$169,000 for the project has been pledged. The board expressed gratitude for this terrific to Phase 1. Phase 2 will be to present a proposal to the congregation at the January 28 congregational meeting. The proposal reads as follows:

The BCMC Church Board recommends that the Bethel College Mennonite Church move forward with the solar panel project by

- signing a contract with King Solar to install solar panels on the roof of the church, with completion planned for the end of June 2024,
- accepting donations for the project in fulfillment of pledges from congregants and others,
- using up to \$96,000 of the church's bequest funds for the project.

All pledges will be used for the solar panel project. Pledges paid after installation is completed will be used to repay any internal borrowing from bequest funds. The BCMC board, through Creation Care or other committees, will be encouraged to establish initiatives that expand the work of BCMC in the areas of creation care and climate justice locally and in the broader community.

Tim Hodge moved we accept the proposal; Brad seconded. The motion carried.

5. Planning for Congregational Meeting on January 28

- Agenda: Agenda items will include the budget for 2024, proposal to change moderator model, solar project, Welcoming Statement, Report from Search Committee, and a possible report from Youth.
- Location and logistics: Meeting in Sanctuary at 12:45. Make sure we have ballots and pencils, etc.

- 6. Reports and Announcements** – An assistant treasurer is needed. Mary Ann will put an announcement in the bulletin and work to find some possible volunteers.

- 7. Executive Session. Judy Friesen moved, Margaret Toews seconded, to adjourn into Executive Session.**

- 8. The meeting was adjourned at 9 pm. Next meeting will be held February 1, 2024, at 7:00 pm.**

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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