

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes

Pending approval at the March 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, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews

Board Members not present: John Kliewer, Karen Penner, Jon Zerger

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

Staff not present: Nathan Koontz (Pastor)

Others attending:

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Ada opened by reading the purpose statement and saying a prayer for the meeting.
2. **Consent Agenda** – Mary Ann Boschmann summarized the committee minutes (noting that many committees have not submitted minutes for some time) and reports in the packet. She noted lots of groups working together. **Lois Preheim moved to accept the minutes. Judy Friesen seconded the motion; approved by consensus.** Lois Preheim will summarize the minutes of commissions and committees for the March meeting.
3. **Financial Report for January** – Mike Claassen presented the Financial Report for January. There were no questions. **Brad Kohlman moved to approve the Financial Report; Judy seconded. The motion carried.**
4. **Proposal for Disbursement of Excess Funds at End of Year** – At the January meeting, the board voted to send half of the excess funds from 2023 to the Witness Commission and half to the 2024 general fund to be spent for the budget if needed after 6 months. It was brought to the board's attention that this action contradicts a policy that is in the Church Board Handbook (Section 5D "Care for Resources" page 4). After discussion the board chose to re-affirm the decision made at the January board meeting: **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.** The board believes this is a balanced and wise decision that is in keeping with the spirit although not the letter of the policy. Giving a block of funds to the Witness Commission to use is energizing and renewing for the Commission. New initiatives can be planted in this season of transition and change. We hope to give the rest of the excess for benevolences/Witness Commission decision-making in six months as well. We could propose a new, more flexible policy to be voted on by the congregation in April/May. We will craft a more flexible policy at the March meeting and get feedback from the Finance Committee, Witness Commission, and others. **Doug Penner moved to re-affirm the decision made by the board at the January meeting; Tim Hodge seconded. The motion carried.**
5. **Personnel**
 - Approval of Carol Ingenthron as Assistant Treasurer: **Tim moved to approve Carol as Assistant Treasurer; Brad seconded. The motion carried.** Mary Ann will visit with her to get the process started.
 - Suggestions of nominees for board members or moderator-elect: A change in moderator model may mean we don't have to have another board member.
6. **Reports and Announcements.**
 - APRC – Judy reported that there is a heavy workload being dealt with by APRC at this time. Discussion centered around BCMC's work to be a survivor-centered congregation and whether legal advice is needed when various responses to situations are considered by APRC. The question of whether legal advice is needed was referred to the APRC for further consideration; they will get back with us for action if they choose.

- Credence Report Task Group

- Multigenerational Initiative: 2 groups of about 10 each are in place. A games night in the works
- Structure and Policy Task Group: Roger reported that this group's focus is to respond to the Credence report in regard to structure. Changes are already being made in the structure and policy culture at BCMC. A more commission-centered approach has implications for the board, which will need to be willing to step up to a broader decision-making role.
- Welcoming statement approved at congregational meeting on January 28. We don't need to change the constitution just because we've changed the welcoming statement.

7. Executive Session. The board moved into executive session at 8:53 pm,

8. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 pm. Next meeting will be held March 7, 2024, at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk.

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