

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes

Pending approval at the June 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, John Kliwer, Doug Penner, Karen Penner, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews, Jon Zerger

Board Members not present: 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** – Ada Schmidt-Tieszen opened the meeting with a prayer and blessing for the work of the board, focused on Patty Shelly’s hymn, “There are many gifts, but the same spirit”. She thanked members who are leaving the board on June 1.
2. **Consent Agenda** – Mary Ann Boschmann gave a summary of several committee/commission minutes including:
 - Faith Formation
 - youth made list of 19 questions for candidating co-pastor, Joanna Harader
 - planned trip to First Americans museum in Oklahoma City
 - VBS plans well on the way
 - Hospitality
 - Wednesday night suppers are valued by youth
 - additional members would be helpful
 - Witness
 - planning for David Gushee visit in fall
 - some members attended Iftar at the Islamic Society in Wichita
 - Facilities
 - keypad at north door – still forming plans for how to use
 - planning a 10-year improvement list
 - Gifts Discernment Committee
 - successfully filling positions

Margaret Toews noted an addition to the April minutes which was not included in the board packet for the May board meeting. The addition is an inserted **Item #3 - Housing allowance revision for Elizabeth Schmidt – The board voted overwhelming by email on March 16, 2024, to approve revision of the housing allowance for Elizabeth Schmidt from \$8,000 to \$12,000.**

Judy Friesen moved to accept reports and minutes as amended. Brad Kohlman seconded the motion; approved by consensus.

3. **Financial Report for January** – Mike Claassen emailed the report before the meeting. He noted the increased giving in April. A sizable bequest to the church was made by Nancy Hilty. Brad will write a thank you letter on behalf of the board. **Lois Preheim moved to approve the Financial Report; John Kliever seconded. The motion carried.**
4. **Request for a Defibrillator for Fellowship Hall** – There is already a defibrillator in the sanctuary. **Doug Penner moved to approve the request from the Deacons for a defibrillator for Fellowship Hall and the required funding from memorial funds. Mary Ann seconded; the motion carried.** The Deacons will continue to look for people who can be trained to use the equipment.
5. **Plan/Process for Staff and Pastor Transitions** - If called and accepted, Joanna Harader's first day would be August 11. The board discussed and agreed it is most preferable to continue all current staff/pastor MOUs through the end of 2024 (except for Roger). The board needs to formulate a long-term staffing plan after new and continuing staff/co-pastors have had a chance to work together for some time.

There are budgetary implications to extend all MOUs but the Finance Committee feels there is money available in memorial, bequest or PPP funds. At the end of 2023, some money was held in reserve instead of paid to benevolences in response to a shortfall in pledges toward the budget. Brad stated that October would be the latest time to decide on what to do with those dollars.

Elizabeth's MOU runs through the end of calendar year as a half-time position.

Nathan would like to be half-time as soon as it makes sense but is willing to continue at three-quarter time for up to a year.

Before the recent transitions, the staffing level was 2 ½ FTE. With Nathan and Elizabeth each at half-time, Jill and George together at half-time, and a settled co-pastor, our staffing level would be back to a 2½ FTE level. Fewer pastors are available now - having Jill, George, and Elizabeth is a wonderful part of our congregational life.

The board needs to structure conversations around "protecting" a full-time co-pastor so that person does not become the go-to person in the office.

What does our congregation look like compared to 5 or so years ago? It's harder to figure out with remote viewing on Sunday morning. Also, counting participation only on Sunday morning excludes many other meaningful interactions during the week.

The staffing situation needs to be communicated at the congregational meeting.

Because Jill and George's contracts end in June and July respectively, Brad moved to extend Jill and George's contracts as they are currently written for another 12 months. Judy seconded; the motion carried. MOUs will be updated by SCRC.

6. **Application for Federal Rebate for Solar Project:** Margaret Toews gave an update on the solar panel installation. **Jon Zerger made a motion, subject to approval from the finance committee, to approve a**

request from the solar sub-committee to hire the firm of Swindoll, Janzen, Hawk and Loyd of McPherson to initiate and complete the Direct Pay (IRS) rebate for expenses of the solar panel project. Adam Grilliot gave a rough estimate cost of \$1500-\$2000. The money could come from the solar fund. Lois Preheim seconded; the motion carried.

7. Board Appointments to Committees:

- Facilities – Lois Preheim will call Harald Boschmann, Tom Jackson
- Finance Committee – Judy Friesen will call a possible replacement for Lavern Stucky
- SCRC: Brad will call.
- APRC – more discussion is needed.

Judy moved that the board approve members for the following committees:

- ESSC – Beaty Robb, Karen Ediger, Margaret Toews (chair) (second terms)
- GDC – Jerry Buller, Jeanette Stucky (chair) (second terms)
- Archive – David Haury, Rachel Pannabecker (second terms)
- Auditing Committee – Judy Friesen

Margaret seconded; the motion carried.

8. Plans for Congregational Meeting May 19 – The board set the next congregational meeting for May 19, 2024, at 10:45am in the sanctuary. The agenda will start with a vote to call the co-pastoral candidate, Joanna Harader, so counting can be completed during the meeting. Brad's cell phone will be used to receive votes from viewers. Reports from Witness Commission, ESSC, the College Relations Committee, solar panel installation progress, and an update on changes that have been made in our congregation following the Credence Report will follow. A vote affirming people who've agreed to serve on the board and as officers will also be held.

9. Reports and Announcements

- Other reports. Brad gave an update regarding the amicus brief for Apache Stronghold. He emailed Leigh Brown and Carol Rose to indicate BCMC is ready to sign on when the brief is written. They responded that BCMC support is great encouragement for the cause.

10. Executive Session. The board moved into executive session at 8:42 pm.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 pm. The next meeting will be held June 6, 2024, at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk.

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