

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes

Pending approval at the November 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: Brad Kohlman (Moderator), Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Past Moderator), Mary Ann Boschmann, Tim Hodge, Carolyn Penner, Doug Penner, Margaret Toews

Board Members not present: Bill Eash (Moderator elect), Lois Preheim, John Waltner, Jon Zerger

Staff Present: Joanna Harader (Co-pastor), Mike Claassen (Treasurer)

Staff not present: Nathan Koontz (Co-pastor), Elizabeth Schmidt (Pastor of Congregational Care)

Others attending:

- 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Brad Kohlman opened with a prayer
- 2. Consent Agenda** – Brad asked for questions on the reports and minutes included in the board packet. There were no questions. **Ada Schmidt-Tieszen moved to accept minutes from the previous meeting, pastors' reports, and online minutes of commissions and committees. Mary Ann Boschmann seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
- 3. Financial Report: Mike Claassen** – Reports were sent out ahead of the meeting. Income was better in September. Mike didn't have comments to add. Margaret Toews asked where \$1500/semester to pay a Bethel student through Bethel's work program could come from. The Solar subcommittee would like to set up a student worker for second semester and possibly longer to analyze data from the rooftop solar panels and Evergy. Brad and Mike recommended talking to the Witness Commission. There were no other questions. **Tim Hodge moved to approve the Financial Report. Carolyn Penner seconded; the motion carried.**
- 4. FY23 Excess Funds** – Brad reported on a Finance Committee (Jeanette Leary, chair) discussion about the remaining FY23 excess funds and what to do with them. **The Finance Committee unanimously recommends the remaining half of the FY 23 budget overage be held until the end of the year to cover any FY24 shortfall. If there is no shortfall or if there is still a remaining balance, the money would go to the Witness commission to be dispersed to the benevolences on a prorated basis as stated in existing policy. Ada moved to accept the recommendation from Finance Committee. Tim seconded; the motion passed.**
- 5. Personnel Files** – Brad distributed a BCMC Policy for Collection, Use, Sharing, Storage and Access of Personal Data put together by SCRC (Staff Congregation Relations Committee). It is largely based on Western District Conference policies and is quite lengthy and involved. Discussion followed about the larger question of a data retention policy specifying where data should go, what should be kept and how long to keep it. Such a policy should originate with the board. Five years was mentioned as an appropriate time frame for keeping data. The treasurer needs to be consulted for information about what data needs to be kept. A secure location for the data was also discussed. Ada reminded the board that the HR person from Bethel would be glad to consult with us. **Tim moved to table this recommendation pending a deeper discussion. Doug seconded; the motion passed**
- 6. Welcoming Group** – Brad asked Ada to share a review of the report submitted by an ad hoc group of Bill Swartley, Naomi Krause and Hank Prouty. The group was formed to brainstorm ways our church can be

more welcoming. The group submitted a report at the last board meeting to share ideas but are not interested in continuing to meet. One idea was to set up a visitor center somewhere accessible. Visitor cards in the pews are a lot of work and don't get used very much. Joanna added a QR code to the bulletin that people can use to find out more. Is it possible people are being asked to get involved too soon? The leadership retreat might be a good time for a session. Ada mentioned Tim Schrag who has given talks to churches on this topic. Ada will follow up with Tim about a possible session soon.

7. Congregational Meeting Recap - Brad received no comments, and no one on the board reported receiving feedback. The vote on revising the Article IV Membership statement passed with 108 Yes votes and 2 No votes. See minutes of the Congregational Meeting for details. Holding the January '24 congregational meeting in Fellowship Hall when budget discussions are on the agenda was discussed. The goal would be to provide discussion time around tables. The sound system downstairs is not as good as upstairs for many. Discussion in the sanctuary could be encouraged by forming small groups in pews.

8. Board Appointments to Committees: SCRC still needs one more member. Brad is continuing to work on this.

9. Reports and Announcements

a. Other reports?

- i. APRC – Joanna reported that APRC has started a subscription with Protect My Ministry. They manage confidential data for congregations. Joanna provided additional reports from APRC..
- ii. Publishing of Bylaws and Constitution – Brad will check with Monica about updating the website. One hard copy will be placed in the library.
- iii. Apache Stronghold – Brad officially signed on to the amicus brief.
- iv. Ada reported that Sarah Augustine was here at Bethel last weekend. One of the events was a Sunday late-afternoon meeting with 5 other churches with the intent of developing a central Kansas repair network. This network would hopefully take on one or two legislative campaigns to address indigenous justice issues here in Kansas.
- v. Mike is recommending an increase in liability coverage for the coming year. The board agreed.
- vi. Faith Formation wants to expand its support for adult ss classes. The commission also needs someone to take on the BCMC nursery roster.

10. Future Agenda Items

- a. BCMC – Legal Representation – no discussion or action
- b. IT needs for BCMC & Staff – no discussion or action

11. Executive Session - The board moved to enter executive session at 8:48 pm.

12. Adjournment – The board adjourned at 8:52 pm. The next meeting will be held November 7 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk.

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