

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes
Pending approval at the December 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), Bill Eash (Moderator elect), Ada Schmidt-Tieszen (Past Moderator), Carolyn Penner, Lois Preheim, Margaret Toews, Jon Zerger

Board Members not present: Mary Ann Boschmann, Tim Hodge, Doug Penner, John Waltner

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

Staff not present: Nathan Koontz (Co-pastor)

Others attending:

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Brad Kohlman opened the meeting by reading the church statement of purpose.
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. Carolyn Penner seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
3. **Financial Report: Mike Claassen** – Reports were sent out ahead of the meeting. Mike distributed a 2025 Budget Worksheet Version 20251106 for board review. Brad asked board members to bring questions about the budget to the December meeting. Mike noted the Service and Endowment fund more than doubled due to a recent donation. Nathan Koontz is looking into the origin of this endowment fund so the church knows more specifically how the fund can be used. Income exceeded expenses in October which is good news. **Jon Zerger moved to approve the Financial Report. Lois Preheim seconded; the motion carried.**
4. **Ice Maker** – The ice maker in the Gathering Place has been repaired many times and is currently not working correctly. Monica investigated the cost of replacement which would be in the neighborhood of \$2500-\$3000 for a Scotsman ice maker from Jim's Appliance of Inman. They would be able to install and service it. Board members and Mike Claassen wondered why memorial funds weren't considered instead of the Plant Fund. The board proposed that **subject to approval by the Finance Committee to pull money from either the Plant Fund or memorial funds, purchase of the ice maker should proceed. Lois made the motion, Jon seconded. The motion carried.**
5. **FY23 Excess Funds** – The Witness Commission brought a request to the board that needs board action. Their request is to set aside \$5,000 (in a carry-over fund) for potential future interns at the church over the next few years.
 - a. These interns would be part of the Work Program at Bethel and not the same as the Ministry Inquiry Program that has been in place for years. The Witness Commission envisions that Committees and commissions could pull money from this fund if they have a particular project that would fit the 5 hours/week requirement. Several issues were raised by board members around this request, including concerns about insurance liability and supervision. Effective

supervision would be needed for an intern experience to be meaningful. This money could stay in the budget but allocated on a semester-by-semester basis. Could Dwight Krehbiel create a template for church internships? Brad will visit with Bethel to find out more specific information about insurance liability. **Ada Schmidt-Tieszen moved to allow the Witness Commission to carry over \$5000 beyond the current budget year for internship possibilities or other peace and justice initiatives. Bill Eash seconded. The motion carried.**

- b. Questions were raised about the solar internship proposal. Jon questioned whether we need to move to a different rate structure with Evergy to reduce the demand charge. He will visit with Dwight about this possibility. The rate structure can only be changed once a year so the earliest chance would be next June. Monica would be the person to contact for such a request from Evergy.

6. Data Retention – The issue of data storage and retention came out of the work of the Structure and Policy Task Group which met for about year in response to the Credence Report of November 2022. SCRC proposed a Data Retention Policy based on Western District Conference Guidelines at the October board meeting. These guidelines are lengthy and more detailed than we might need. Discussion followed around the pitfalls of a policy that is not easily followed and how that might make the church vulnerable in a legal setting. APRC has a new arrangement with Protect My Ministry, a service that provides secure document storage for confidential data generated by compliance with Safe Sanctuary policy. Ada will visit with Monica about how personnel data is currently handled. If current practice is acceptable, the location and access list should be documented.

7. Board Appointments to Committees: After a long search, Bill Swartley has agreed to serve on SCRC. **Brad moved to approve Bill Swartley to serve on the SCRC; Bill Eash seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

8. Reports and Announcements

a. Other reports?

- i. Melanie Mueller is joining the Witness Commission and will need to be approved by the congregation at the January meeting. She will join the meetings now as an unofficial member.
- ii. Publishing of Bylaws and Constitution – Brad will provide Monica with the exact text that needs to be updated on the website.
- iii. A Leadership retreat is being planned for January. Ada shared that Tim Schrag is willing to do a presentation on Welcoming. He suggests 2 hours, possibly targeted for greeters and ushers, but maybe for all. Ada will see if he would be available for the Leadership Retreat, when it could possibly be held during a lunch for ushers and greeters. Once a date for the retreat has been decided, Ada will see if Tim is available.

9. Future Agenda Items – No future agenda items were brought.

10. Executive Session - The board moved to enter executive session at 8:44 pm.

11. Adjournment – The board adjourned at 8:45 pm. The next meeting will be held on December 5 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk.

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