

Bethel College Mennonite Church Board Minutes
Pending approval at the May 2025 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), Mary Ann Boschmann, Tim Hodge, Carolyn Penner, Margaret Toews, John Waltner

Board Members not present: Doug Penner, Lois Preheim, Jon Zerger

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

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

Others attending:

1. **Welcome and Opening Prayer** – Brad Kohlman acknowledged the busyness of lives in the spring and thanked members and staff for their time and attention to the meeting.
2. **Consent Agenda** – Brad asked for questions and comments on the Pastors' reports and online minutes which were made available to the board before the meeting. The board acknowledged the work of the staff at the many funerals in the church community recently. **Tim Hodge moved to accept minutes from the previous meeting, pastors' reports, and online minutes of commissions and committees. Bill Eash seconded the motion; approved by consensus.**
3. **Financial Report: Mike Claassen** – Financial reports were distributed before the meeting. Mike reported that for the first time in recent history the general fund balance fell below the target range of 1-2 months of budgeted expenses. There are now .8 months in the general fund reserves. The Finance Committee will write an announcement for the bulletin. Brad will ask the Finance Committee to think about responses to the situation. Money from undesignated benevolences cannot be used for the general fund. PPP (Covid loan forgiveness funds) money can only be used for the general fund. **Ada Schmidt-Tieszen moved to transfer \$9323 to the general fund from the PPP fund. John Waltner seconded; the motion carried. If there are excess funds at the end of 2025 the PPP fund will be paid back first.** Brad thanked Mike for his work. **Tim moved to approve the Financial Report. Bill seconded; the motion carried.**
4. **SCRC Policy Change** – The board unanimously approved the following policy change to the SCRC handbook: **Pastors will submit receipts for expenses incurred to the church treasurer.**
5. **ESSC Discussion** – Margaret Toews explained the responsibilities of the board appointed Education and Service Scholarship Committee (ESSC). There are two main tasks; first, managing the scholarship program for BCMC youth who are attending anabaptist colleges or universities; second, managing and providing vision for the BCMC Mission and Service Endowment Fund, especially since the fund received a large donation recently. Brad will join the committee with Margaret Toews and Karen Ediger continuing. Joanna Harader will act as staff liaison.

6. Pastoral Search Discussion

- Process Update
 - Search Committee – The search committee is still being formed.
 - WDC – has been updated
- Job Description
 - Ada has been working on job description. Brad thanked Ada for her work. Discussion followed around whether to search for an associate pastor (typically younger, less experienced, lower levels of independent responsibility) or co-pastor (more experienced). The job description can be tweaked once the search is underway. Personal contact between search committee and potential candidate is as important as the job description. If a candidate for co-pastor is a good fit, the church can be flexible.

Bill moved to make this job description for an associate pastor with an FTE range of .75 to 1. Discussion points included the possibility of mentoring a young pastor as a way of contributing to the larger church. The job search may be more productive if we narrow our options. **John seconded; the motion carried.**

7. Congregational Meeting May 4 – The agenda as of now is: 1. Pastoral search update; 2. Financial update; 3. Announcement of Gifts Discernment Committee (GDC) appointments and vote on Board officers; 4. Update on security system.

8. Reports and Announcements – Bill reported that he and Adam Akers did a walk through the building and Adam will give us some audio advice in the near future. Brad asked Bill to keep Ken and the AV team in the loop.

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

10. Executive Session – The board entered executive session at 8:41 pm. The board exited executive session at 8:43

- **Brad moved that Nathan be paid $\frac{3}{4}$ time during his sabbatical because that's how he was paid when he deferred his sabbatical. The motion passed by consensus.**

The board re-entered executive session at 8:45. The board exited executive session at 9:16

11. Adjournment – The board adjourned at 9:17 pm. The next meeting will be held on May 1 at 7:00 pm.

Submitted by Margaret Toews, clerk

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