

**New Hampshire Conference United Church of Christ
Board of Directors
Minutes of the Meeting
February 4, 2017**

Present: Rev. Dawn Berry, Neal Cass, Brian Edwards, Rev. Paula Gile, Kenneth Gould, John Herbert, Philip Kimball, Rev. Edward Koonz, Rev. Stacey Kullgren, Rev. Richard Leavitt, William McIntyre, Marcie Miller, Laura Sevigny, Rev. Martell Spagnolo, and Rev. Gary Schulte

Missed: Rev. Dawn Garrett-Larsen and Rev. Carolyn Keilig

President Neal Cass opened the meeting at 9:01 am. Rev. Gary Schulte led a meaningful service of worship reflecting on Matthew 5:14-16 with references to light and celebrated Holy Communion.

John Herbert moved to accept the minutes as printed and Paula Gile seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Board of Directors Visioning, Paula Gile and Neal Cass:

Paula and Neal explained the process of determining priorities from among 14 categories of responsibilities for the mission of the NH Conference as we move toward the future. We first prioritized the responsibilities in groups of 5, then took those results and made one group prioritized in thirds: Results Attached

Conference Minister's Report, Gary Schulte:

Gary suggested that a resolution recognizing Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight for his consulting role to churches' discernment on becoming ONA be drafted for the April meeting. Gary noted the number of churches becoming ONA since Carlos' began as the consultant.

Gary has registrants responding to his invitation to active clergy to gather and talk about some of the stresses of preaching and pastoral ministry in these days of divisiveness post- election. The tension for many clergy comes between their calling to be faithful to the gospel and their care for their parishioners in the pews. Their ordination vow is to both preach the gospel and maintain the unity of the church. Gary has offered four possible gathering dates/times and ministers are reserving space in the session of their choice.

The proposal for the changes in MOM is moving toward one form of authorized ministry rather than the three – ordained, licensed, and commissioned ministry – to ordained ministry or member in discernment for ordination. Present licensed ministers would be expected by church and ministry committees, in this new model, to be on a track for

ordination as a member in discernment. There will be a meeting on the updated manual for Church and Ministry Committees in March.

The new local church profile from national has been modified by Gary with pieces of the former profile that better fits NH local churches. He has also developed a local church profile for those churches seeking a designated term minister.

Churches have responded appreciatively to NH Conference Attorney Scott Harris' letter explaining a NH Supreme Court Decision regarding the downside of leasing church space to outside groups. Gary suggested that a written thank you note be sent to Scott for his helpful guidelines. The Secretary will write a note of thanks.

The Cornerstone Fund sent an interest rebate check for \$557.31 to the NH Conference on the roof loan based on the number of investors to Cornerstone coming from NH.

CT, RI, and MA will form one new Conference. There will need to be clarification about staffing and financial pooling. The questions that need to be asked in consolidation are – What's to be gained? and What will be lost?

Welcome Rev. Leslie Anne Chatfield, Acting Director of Outdoor Ministries:

Leslie gave personal background information regarding her home church, new puppy, and interim work. She distributed a list of what she has been doing since she arrived January 3, 2017. Her summarized report included: training retreats, email management, meeting with US Forest Service for permit use which has been difficult because of gag orders from the administration, meeting with Bryan Breault, meetings with Reuban Rajala for operational reviews, meeting with OMG. Leslie is grateful for the support and help. Mollie has been very helpful for Leslie and has set good boundaries with OMG. Leslie is working toward the accreditation process of Horton Center. The BOD can help Leslie connect with local churches.

Neal requested a written report from her for our April BOD meeting, and then be present at our June meeting at Horton Center with a report, and he thanked her in advance for the hospitality of Horton Center.

Ad Hoc Visioning Team, Rev. Ed Koonz, Rev. Emilia Halstead, Rev. Eric Jackson, Rev. Gayle Murphy (not present), Rev. Stacey Kullgren, Phi Kimball, and potentially, Rev. Renee Rowse (not present)

The group is tasked by the Board of Directors to:

1. Consider what the Board needs to be faithful to its coordination and communication function in the visioning area.
2. Identify, create, suggest and advocate for opportunities for visioning to happen throughout our Conference structure and its processes.
3. Be on the agenda of every BOD meeting with a report and/or education moment related to visioning.

The group meets monthly. The Visioning Team addresses the question "why?" we do what we do.

Members of the Team then asked the BOD what makes them "sad" in their congregations. Responses from the committee: lack of children in church, how to dismount "the dead horse" and try something new, disconnect between what is happening inside the church walls with what is happening outside; misunderstanding about policy that affects people and partisan politics in the church when Jesus was all about policy; miss younger leaders in church. Then, the BOD was asked to respond to what was de-energizing: using old matrices for assessing the success of the church; preaching that does not connect with the world, but only a biblical past; the dying away of "God Is Still Speaking;" old news instead of new news; leaders who have moved away are not being replaced.

Next question: What is energizing in our settings from everyone?: Friday morning discussion group where you talk about current events with like minded people, Jazz Sanctuary, working in the nursery, doing a memorial service for Sunday School that allowed the church to move forward when no children are present, developing rituals around adult life transitions for adult faith formation, beginning new conversations called Thirsty Thursdays in the Holy Grail Pub, Family Promise program that provides evening transitional housing and meals and has changed perceptions of the homeless, small group ministries, intergenerational service with Communion and jazz where the sermon is interactive and what children learn there that they are not receiving in church school, sharing a building with a Nepalese congregation.

What does vibrancy look like? What are people seeking from a vibrant organization? What are the indicators of a vibrant congregation? The congregation is so excited about its life and mission that they invite others. Take something outside of norm and give it a try and that it is ok to fail, then go on. People are willing to step up and help. People responded well to a mission component in capital campaigns. The Team understands that these questions are important to raise among our congregations.

Conference Finances, John Herbert:

Even though we budgeted for a \$28,000 deficit in 2016 and started the 2016 year already \$58,000 in the red, we ended the year with \$20,000 in the black. The Executive Committee's calls to churches for OCWM proved helpful.

The Executive Committee discussed OCWM in the MISP for 2017 and thought it best to wait until we have a better idea of what is pledged before we adjust the budget figure. Congregations are encouraged to bring their pledge to Prepared to Serve. We discussed educating congregations and clergy about their OCWM pledges and being aware of what has been paid and what has not. There are churches that take an extraordinary amount of Conference time and give nothing to OCWM.

Gary has asked church and ministry chairs to describe the marks of a church faithful to their covenant with NH Conference UCC and to circulate it among churches in their association.

\$23,533 has already been received in January toward 2017 OCWM. Neal encouraged the BOD to check with their congregations about their pledge.

Resolution Recognizing the Contribution of David H. Bradley, Esq.

John Herbert moved to adopt the resolution recognizing David H. Bradley, Esq. and Brian Edwards seconded the motion. The motion carried. Gary will present the resolution during worship with The Church of Christ at Dartmouth College, Hanover.

Search Committee for Director of Outdoor Ministries

Marcie Miller and Ed Koonz moved and seconded the appointment of the Search Committee for the Director of Outdoor Ministries. The motion carried. The Search Committee includes: Rev. Kevin Pleas, Rev. Gil Healy, Jonathan Gray, Emily Melhorn, Emily Thomas, Amy Zapp, and Rev. Stacey Kullgren. Rev. Gary Schulte will also be on the committee as Conference Minister.

Other Appointments

Phil Kimball moved and John Herbert seconded the motion to approve the appointment of Tina Fletcher from Westmoreland to Local Church Ministries.

Members of the Budget Committee were presented by Marcie Miller. The members include: Brian Edwards, John Herbert, Marcie Miller, Neal Cass, and Ed Koonz. Gary Schulte and Lydia Frasca will staff the committee. Marcie added that the Budget Committee has fun together! The Executive Committee was authorized to add another member from the BOD and a representative from Financial Ministries. Marcie will be the chairperson.

Marcie Miller moved the appointment of the budget committee, and John Herbert seconded the motion. The motion was passed.

Capital Campaign Committee

Stacey Kullgren moved and Bill McIntyre seconded the motion to appoint Rev. Rob Grabill, Doug Hatfield, Rev. Deborah Knowlton, Laura Sevigny, Rev. Art Urie, Rev. Gayle Whittemore, and Neal Cass to the Capital Campaign Committee. The motion was passed.

Employee Handbook Revisions

Marie Davis reviewed the staff handbook in light of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and found one staff person was not listed in correct category for the salary test. One position needed to be reclassified. Overtime pay needs to be given to those who work over 40 hours. On pp 14 and 15 of the Employee Handbook the major changes can be found.

Dick Leavitt moved to adopt the changes to the Employee Handbook and Laura Sevigny seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Evaluation of the Meeting Comments

When we were at our freshest, we did our most creative thinking on priorities.

Appreciated the Vision Teams report

Appreciated the laughter.

The meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm with prayer offered by Dick Leavitt.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn C. Berry, Secretary

Next Meeting: April 8, 2017