

New Hampshire Conference Board of Directors Meeting – June 23, 2018

The Conference Board of Directors met on Saturday, June 23, 2018, at the Conference Center with a full agenda.

We began the day with a brief worship service, which encouraged us to reflect on our gifts for our journey in this time of transition and anticipation. Gifts that we lifted up and committed to embracing include:

Integrity	Openness	Faith	Trust	Faithfulness
Trust in God	Courage	Open to new experiences		

Transitional Conference Minister, Charles Buck, reported on several meetings with the Conference Ministers from Maine and Vermont, highlighting their interest in moving forward with possible shared and cooperative ministries. Serious discussion centered on three areas: outdoor ministries, communications and search and call.

A critical focus for the Board is determining a careful and realistic approach to the use of Horton Center (HC). Both of our outside consultants, Kaleidoscope and United Camps, Conferences and Retreats, provided positive feedback on their site visits to HC, including their opinion that HC clearly has lots to offer for those wanting a camping/hiking/in the woods, rustic experience. Both also noted, however, that some property improvements and maintenance issues must be addressed to make it safe and more appealing to the public. Board members reflected on what a life transforming experience being on Pine Mountain can be, and we support a model for HC that sustains that opportunity. However, given we are currently operating with an average deficit of over \$100,000 per year over the last five years, along with an average occupancy of 20% during that same period of time, we can't keep doing things the same way. With final reports from our two outside consultants in hand, we carefully discussed and explored four options:

- A. **Maintaining:** Continue status quo (i.e., self-management of HC), developing our own summer camp programs, and recruiting from our UCC churches in NH, while caring for and maintaining the property.
- B. **Outsourcing:** Contract with outside management (e.g., UCCR) for site operations, programming and marketing. The Conference would send campers and make long-term improvements.
- C. **Partnering:** Collaborating with Maine and Vermont Conferences to provide outdoor ministries across Northern New England. Pilgrim Lodge would be the primary site for programming with special programs at HC (e.g., hiking, rock climbing, caving, archery and outdoor camping) and third-party camps in Vermont. HC would be available for

rental throughout the summer for churches and outside groups. The Conference would continue to maintain property and buildings and make improvements.

D. Closing: Discontinue outdoor ministries at HC and lease or sell the property.

After wide-ranging discussion, we agreed to eliminate options A and D and to explore both Options B and C. We voted to establish a task force to work with the Maine and Vermont conferences to develop a shared Director of Outdoor ministries model. The Maine Conference, which has also been working with Kaleidoscope, is also in transition, so it's a great time to explore possibilities. In addition, we approved having UCCR complete their feasibility study (at no additional cost) to evaluate potential outside management of HC, for at least part of the season or for various activities, such as marketing.

Other actions taken by the Board included:

- Approved the adoption of the Pension Boards UCC Employer Plans for the NH Conference staff. (This is a formality, not a change. Local churches also using the Pension Boards plans for their benefits plans should have received a letter recently instructing churches to complete and submit their authorization of their plans through the "Employer Adoption Agreement," with an end of June deadline. Please contact the Conference Office if you have questions.)
- Transferred the balance of the remainder of the "Just Peace Fund" to the Frank L. Irvine Fund for Justice and Non-violence. With this, the balance of the Irvine Fund now stands at over \$10,000 and can now be utilized for its stated purpose of bringing guest speakers on issues of justice to New Hampshire;
- Accepted the audited financial statements for fiscal year ending 2017;
- Set a cost of living adjustment of 2% for the 2019 Conference Clergy Compensation Guidelines (as recommended by the Clergy Support Ministry).

On behalf of the Board of Directors I'd like to thank the Conference Minister Search Committee for their ongoing efforts in working to find the best candidate for our new Conference Minister. I am also so grateful for the leadership that Charles Buck provides to me and the Conference staff every day. He is tireless! In addition, we are appreciative of the work of the Conference staff and our ministries and mission groups as they actively engage in changing lives throughout New Hampshire and beyond. It's great to be a part of the New Hampshire Conference at such a busy and exciting time!

Thanks be to God!

Marcie Miller, Conference President