

**Living Skies Executive Minutes
February 25, 2021 via Zoom**

Present Tricia Gerhard (Chair), Donna Brown (Treasurer), Ron Brandow, Linda Gunningham, Tim Ellis, Brian Maitland, Eugene Oh, Dave Whalley.

A quorum was present.

Corresponding Members Rob Reed (Convenor), Annette Taylor (Convenor of Property Commission).

Regrets Cam Fraser.

Staff Present Shannon McCarthy (Executive Minister), Julie Graham (Justice and Communications Minister), Kent Mohn (Youth and Young Adult Minister), Heather Dootoff (Finance Administrator), Bev Diebert (Administrative Support), Jamie McKay (Executive Assistant & Recording Secretary).

Call to Order Tricia Gerhard called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

Opening Worship and Check-In Tricia Gerhard read a reflection and said a prayer.

Approval of Agenda We reviewed the agenda.

033 – 2020/2021 **It was agreed by consensus:
That Living Skies Regional Council Executive accept the agenda as distributed.**

Approval of Executive Minutes There were no minutes to review. We will review the minutes from January 28, 2021 at our next meeting.

BUSINESS ARISING

Update on Third Avenue United Church, Saskatoon Annette Taylor joined the meeting to give an update on Third Avenue United Church in Saskatoon.

After discussion with the Living Skies Regional Council lawyer, Elizabeth Williamson, and the Third Avenue United Church lawyer, Andrew Mason, the Property Commission decided to approve the foreclosure on the Third Avenue United Church property.

The foreclosure procedure is complete, and they are now in the process of transferring the property back into the names of their trustees.

Shannon McCarthy and Annette Taylor are meeting with the Third Avenue Trustees, their lawyer, and folk from the City of Saskatoon to negotiate the reduction of the \$498,836.76 in back taxes.

The Property Commission is has not set a date for the disbanding as this decision needs to wait until after the transfer of the property is completed. Cynthia Gunn said we need to the give Third Avenue at least two-week's notice before the proposal is debated/discussed.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence to review.

Report from the Executive Minister

Shannon McCarthy has been working the with the Property Commission on Third Avenue. Shannon is still working on anti-racism pieces with General Council.

Shannon has had meetings with other executive minister to talk about budgeting principles and assessments. They have been discussing ways to bring some regional councils up to paying 100% of their assessments and what is the best and fairest way to do that.

Staff are trying to use up the vacation days they carried over from 2020 which must be used up by March 31, 2021.

STAFF REPORTS

Justice and Communications

Julie Graham reported.

Conversion Update

Thirty-three people attended an affirming gathering. Julie had hoped to have a final draft on a provincial ban on conversion therapy. The draft is currently with the NDP shadow critics.

Sponsorship Request: Decriminalization of Illegal Substances

We reviewed a proposal submitted by Jeffrey Dale of Shining Waters Regional Council about co-sponsoring a three-part conversation around the need for the Decriminalization of Illicit Substances for Personal Use across the country. Part of this conversation also includes how The United Church of Canada is involved in harm reduction. The proposal does not include a request for money, and it is not suggesting the regional council take a position on the issue. The regional council would join a space to hear stories and have a conversation about this issue.

We agreed that we support having a space available for people to be part of this conversation. Tricia Gerhard will reply to Jeffrey Dale letting him know we have agreed to support his co-sponsoring proposal.

PASTORAL RELATIONS

Tracy Murton reported.

Fallout from the pandemic has touched every piece of pastoral relations work.

Committee on Community of Faith Support

The Committee on has recommended to communities of faith that they submit a modified version of their annual reports. The pandemic implications are becoming clear in their budgets and have caused some to review their governance structure.

KelWood Pastoral Charge has submitted a motion to revise their governance structure which would combine their two governance structures into one.

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It was agreed by consensus:

That Living Skies Regional Council Executive, on the recommendation of the Committee on Community of Faith Support, having reviewed all the appropriate documentation, approves the revised governance structure for KelRose Pastoral Charge.

Committee on Lay Leadership Support

The Committee on Lay Leadership Support has been working to enable lay leaders to provide worship leadership. They have received a number of requests for exemptions to the policy that limits the number of services one person can do in a church.

Committee on Ministry Personnel Support

The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support sent out a wellness survey. Approximately 33% of those who were sent the survey responded.

People were given many options to express how they are doing, feeling, and coping. The highest response from the survey was weary. There was also a positive element to the replies in that people were weary but also hopeful; they feel depleted but also supported. The survey connects to the retreat at St. Andrew's College next month. A number of unique workshops are being offered for people to engage with.

The General Council responded to the letter from Rick McCorrister and other pensioners about increased pension/benefit premiums saying they would review the plan in 2022.

In the meantime, the Committee on Ministry Personnel Support is working on ways to support pensioners. The first thing they will do is send a survey to pensioners and ask how they are being impacted by the increase. The next piece is to think of ways to offer concrete support to those who are feeling negatively impacted.

Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Kent Mohn reported.

Camps are starting up again and have been coming up with creative ways to offer ministry programs online. Everyone is struggling with the online meetings, especially the youth.

FINANCE

The audit is underway and there is nothing new to review from finance at this time.

Incorporated Ministries

There was nothing new to report from incorporated ministries.

REPORTS

Nominations

Susan Reed joined the meeting to discuss the updated process to nominate commissioners for General Council 44.

Nominations began the process a year to seek applications from people who were interested in letting their names stand to be considered as commissioners for General Council 44. The pandemic impacted the timeline of this process and they had to restart the course of seeking commissioners.

There are a lot of things that are unknown at this time. We believe there is a likelihood that General Council 44 will take place entirely online with other pieces of the meeting happening in the weeks and months leading up to that summer. General Council is still asking for regional councils to submit names for commissioners by June 14, 2021.

A letter was sent out in March 2020 seeking commissioners which outlined a regional council approved process and timeline. The Nominations committee received a few applications as a result of this letter.

2020 Process to Name Commissioners

The 2020 approved process to name commissioners:

- Interested applicants would fill in a form.
- Submit the form to the Nominations committee by a set deadline.
- Nominations committee would review the applications received.
- Based on diversity requirements, put together a slate to bring to the regional meeting.
- The regional council would vote on the slate of names at the regional council meeting.

What process does the Executive envision for the election of General Council commissioners? Does the Executive think the approved process from 2020 will still work?

We think the past process of naming commissioners has worked and we are comfortable with the Nominations Committee bringing a slate to the Regional Council. If the Nominations Committee sent a preliminary report to the Executive, it could be reviewed for the diversity requirements with a second set of eyes.

A note needs to go out stating there will not be an option for names to come forward past the deadline and nominations will not be taken from the (virtual) floor.

Applications need to be submitted to the Nominations Committee by mid-May.

Nominations to the Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee is down to three members. Please forward any names you have to join the Nominations Committee.

Support for GC Commissioners

We want to avoid people not applying to be named as a General Council commissioner because so many details of General Council 44 are still unknown. Whether the meeting takes place virtually or in-person, the Executive is prepared to ensure those who are elected as commissioners will have the tools they need to

participate fully, such as internet access and/or equipment to attend a virtual meeting.

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It was agreed by consensus:

That Living Skies Regional Council Executive will ensure those who are named as General Council 44 Commissioners, whether the meeting takes place virtually, in-person, or a combination of the two, are given the tools and support they need to participate fully.

Regional Council Gathering

Last year, the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the course and planning of the regional meeting. The Executive ended up taking control over the planning of the regional meeting that took place in the fall. For 2021, the Executive is passing the planning back to the regional gathering planning committee.

The Executive agreed to hold the 2021 Regional Meeting over three evenings in June.

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It was agreed by consensus:

That Living Skies Regional Council will hold the 2021 Regional Meeting from June 4-6, 2021, with the meeting taking place virtually by Zoom.

Letter from Dwaine Dornan

Tricia Gerhard will contact Dwaine Dornan and have something to report at the next meeting.

Chaplaincy Task Group

Work between North and South Saskatchewan Hospital Chaplaincies is still in progress. The task group is consulting with ministry chaplaincies across the country to figure out some different models for chaplaincies.

Next Meeting

The Executive agreed to meet on the fourth Thursday of each month from 1:00-3:00 PM via Zoom with the next meeting date(s):

- March 25, 2021
- April 22, 2021

Blessing & Adjournment

Tricia Gerhard said a prayer and adjourned the meeting at 3:00 PM.



Tricia Gerhard, Chairperson



Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

