

**Northern Spirit Executive Minutes
April 14, 2021 via Zoom**

Present	Gord Waldie (Chairperson), Donna Kline (Treasurer), Shauna Scott (Past Treasurer), Mary Annan, Marilyn Carroll, Peter Chynoweth, Margaret-Anne Hall, Alistair MacKay. A quorum was present.
Corresponding Members	There were no corresponding members in attendance.
Regrets	Julie Graham (Justice and Communications Minister), Jamie Mckay (Executive Assistant). Concern was expressed for Jamie Mckay, recovering from a knee injury.
Staff Present	Shannon McCarthy (Executive Minister), Earl Reaburn (Pastoral Relations Minister), Heather Dootoff (Finance Administrator), Kathy Jackson (Office Administrator & Recording Secretary).
Call to Order	Gord Waldie opened the meeting at 9:30 AM (MDT).
Opening Worship and Check-in	Gord Waldie led an opening. The Executive members checked in by sharing the highlights of their Easter weekend. Gord read Acts 6:1-4, and reflected that special treatment complaints aren't new, and our job is not to solve the issues, but to find people suited to the work. The struggle of nominations is not new, and the issues of finding people skilled or called to a task vs. finding a warm body are real. Donna Kline, a lay member of Trinity United Church, Edmonton, was welcomed and introduced to the Executive members, who introduced themselves to Donna.
Agenda Review	The agenda was reviewed.
044-2020/2021	It was agreed by consensus: That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive accepts the agenda as distributed.
Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Letter to Denis Davis Taylor re: Faith Lift
Approval of Minutes	The minutes from the March 10, 2021, Executive meeting will be reviewed at the May Executive meeting.
Appointment of a New Treasurer	Marilyn Carroll, Nominations Committee, reported that Donna Kline had volunteered to serve as the Regional Council Treasurer.

Shauna Scott was thanked for her service as Regional Council Treasurer in addition to her 12 years as Treasurer for the former Alberta and Northwest Conference.

045 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That the Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive appoints Donna Kline as Treasurer for the Northern Spirit Regional Council.

FINANCE

Shauna Scott presented the draft Financial Statements and reported that there were no significant issues raised. The financial position shows approximately \$1 million in the bank as of December 31, 2020, including designated and undesignated trust funds.

The Statement of Operations shows that approximately \$100,000 was unspent in 2020, which will go into reserves. The major reason for unspent funds was careful spending due to COVID-19 pandemic uncertainties.

The notes to the Financial Statements were reviewed. It was noted that there were a couple of typos to be corrected.

046 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That the Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approves the Draft Financial Statements, ending December 31, 2020, pending the above-mentioned corrections.

Heather Dootoff reported that the Kirk Centre payroll is no longer being processed by the Regional Council, and that the Pastoral Emergency Trust Fund will be topped up in 2021.

The March 31, 2021, YTD to Budget by Department Report and Balance Sheet were reviewed. The YTD report indicates a \$16,000 surplus as there has not been a lot of activity so far this year.

Living Spirit Pastoral Charge expenses will be paid out when Erin Hickman is available. Concern was expressed for Erin as her father is in palliative care.

It is expected that 2021 Insurance costs will be higher due to the cost of insuring the (former) Beverly United Church property.

047 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That the Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive receives the financial statements ending March 31, 2021, as presented.

An offer for purchase of the former Drayton Valley UC property offer was very low and was rejected. The Property Commission is continuing with the listing and is working on a proposal for the distribution of the assets. It was noted that the Drayton Valley Trustees will need to be thanked for their long-standing work, beginning as a Commission of Yellowhead Presbytery appointed in 2017.

Shauna Scott was excused from the meeting at this point, amid further expressions of appreciation.

PASTORAL RELATIONS

Earl Reaburn reported.

Pastoral Relations Commission

The Pastoral Relations Commission continues to do the routine work of pastoral relations.

Pastoral Relations Liaisons were trained about two years ago, but more Ministry Personnel will be approached to take the training. It has been noted that if Liaisons are not Ministry Personnel, search processes involve only laypersons. A training session will be planned for the fall.

Exit Interviews are being arranged for one change in pastoral relations and four retirements. Earl raised the question of how retirements will be recognized.

The Annual Pastoral Relations Commission Status Report is the record of the decisions of the Commission and is distributed to the Regional Council for its Annual Meeting. Pastoral relations policy decisions are recorded in Executive Minutes when they are approved. Decisions of the Community of Faith Support Committee still need a reporting mechanism.

The second draft of the Moving Assistance Policy was reviewed. The formula for determining grants was amended, as requested by the Executive. Further amendments were suggested. The list of ministries to be designated as “isolated” will be considered at a future Executive Meeting.

048 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That the Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive is agreement in principle with the draft Moving Assistance Policy; and

That Peter Chynoweth and Donna Kline will work on further amendments to be considered at the May Executive Meeting.

Community of Faith Support Committee

There is still some confusion about reporting procedures. The Pastoral Relations Commission set a program of remediation for McDougall United Church, involving the Community of Faith Support Committee. There is some confusion related to procedures for Regional Council approval of the resulting new Terms of Reference for McDougall United Church.

The committee-members are the load bearers for the Regional Council in terms of support to Communities of Faith. To assist with the load, a Reading Team has been recruited to review Annual Reports. Training and a rubric for them to use in reporting to the committee are in the works.

There has been no further progress on the New Ministries Development Fund Terms of Reference or application process.

The committee has become increasingly aware of the struggles of congregations facing financial hardship and depleting lay leadership energies as a factor in community of faith viability. An assessment tool, similar to the Financial Viability Assessment would help congregations to examine their ministry and mission viability. This could possibly be a project for Earl's upcoming Sabbatical Leave.

Helen Reed and Mary Ann Pastuck are developing a workshop on Governance for Local Governance Bodies. It will to be tested with the Daysland Pastoral Charge, and then available for use in other places.

The committee continues to work with Communities of Faith that are closing and is referring property issues to the Property Commission.

Ministry Personnel Support Committee

The results of the Clergy Wellness Survey have been compiled and the report was presented to the Tuesday Ministry Personnel Zoom gathering. Responses indicate that Ministry Personnel coping well in this difficult period of world history, but it also identifies clearly some supports that could be helpful.

The weekly Zoom gatherings for Ministry Personnel will continue. The committee is planning to host an online gathering for retired Ministry Personnel.

The Northern Spirit Administration Association was consulted about how to support retired church administrators. The response was that this is not necessary.

Lay Leadership Support Committee

A gathering will be held for Licensed Lay Worship Leaders. The applications for designation and renewal of designation as a LLWL are being updated. LLWL Standards of Practice have been developed and will be submitted for approval at the May Executive meeting.

Overall, the Commission and its committees are still pondering how to engage Communities of Faith in deep conversations about the future of The United Church of Canada in their local area. We need to find ways for small congregations to be willing to work together and share ministry and leadership resources.

Earl was thanked for his report and was excused from the meeting.

Ordination/Admission Consensus Motions

Shannon McCarthy reported that the Office of Vocation has confirmed that Matthew Heesing, Candidate for Ordination, is ready for ordination.

049 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council, having received confirmation of readiness of the following candidate from the Office of Vocation, and confirmed through the Northern Spirit Pastoral Relations Commission that a covenantal relationship is in place with a community of faith, will hold a Celebration of Ministries service on June 27, 2021 (or an alternate date if necessary due to Covid restrictions) in Fort

Saskatchewan, Alberta, to ordain Matthew Heesing. (The Manual H.4.8).

The Rev. Johnny Rhoad was confirmed for Admission to the Order of Ministry by the Office of Vocation in 2020. Due to COVID restrictions, his Admission has not yet been celebrated.

050 – 2020/2021

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council, having received confirmation of readiness of the following admission and from the Office of Vocation, and confirmed through the Northern Spirit Pastoral Relations Commission that a covenantal relationship is in place with a community of faith, will hold a Celebration of Ministries service at a date and time to be established by the Executive Minister and chairperson of the Regional Council to admit Johnny Rhoad to the order of ministry within The United Church of Canada. (The Manual H.4.8).

REPORTS

Executive Minister's Report

Shannon McCarthy reported.

General Council staff changes: the Rev. Dr. John Young, Executive Minister for Theological Leadership, will retire later this year. After his retirement, he will take up the position of interim Principal for Victoria (Emmanuel) College until June 2022. The Rev. Dr. Japhet Ndhlovu has been appointed as the Executive Minister for Church in Mission.

The Property Commission is working with the Drayton Valley Trustees to sell the former Drayton Valley United Church property; and with McDougall United Church, Edmonton, in a re-visioning process for the use of the church building.

There is no news from the General Council Office re Incorporated Ministries. The shift in GCO staffing is complete.

Shannon's new puppy, Mari, was introduced.

Commissioners to the 44th General Council

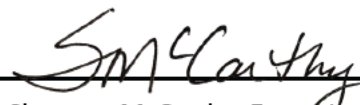
Gord Waldie reminded the Executive that the formerly, attention was only paid to clergy/lay balance, and trusted that other diversity balances would work themselves out.

Marilyn reported that there has been only one nomination for Commissioner. We need to seek out and encourage nominees for GC44 Commissioners.

Technical support will be provided to the Commissioners if possible. At its next meeting, the General Council Executive will consider setting the date, and how to make it possible for Commissioners to travel to and be accommodated in a community where internet access is better than at home.

- Communications & Justice** Julie Graham sent her regrets.
- Incorporated Ministries** There was nothing new to review from incorporated ministries.
- 2021 NSRC Regional Meeting** Registration Forms for the Annual Meeting will soon be distributed. Communities of Faith need to submit the names of their Lay Representatives.
- General Council Strategic Plan** Michael Blair, General Secretary, wants to consult widely on a strategic plan for 2022-2024. GC and RC staff have been invited to complete a survey. Richard Bott, Moderator, will be hosting Town Hall gatherings to engage people throughout the church and hear about their priorities and responses to the re-structuring.
- Nominations** Technological issues have become a struggle for Marilyn in this position.
- Next Meeting** The Executive agreed to meet on the second Wednesday of each month at 9:30 – 12:00 PM via Zoom with the next regular meeting date:
 - May 12, 2021
- Closing Prayer** Peter Chynoweth led a closing prayer.
- Adjournment** Gord Waldie adjourned the meeting at 11:48 AM (MDT).


Gord Waldie, Chairperson


Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister

