

**Northern Spirit Executive Minutes
December 8, 2021 via Zoom**

Present	Gord Waldie (Chairperson), Donna Kline (Treasurer), Mary Annan, Marilyn Carroll, Peter Chynoweth, Margaret-Anne Hall, Alistair MacKay, Leslie Penny. A quorum was present.
Corresponding Members	There were no corresponding members in attendance.
Regrets	There were no regrets.
Staff Present	Shannon McCarthy (Executive Minister), Earl Reaburn (Pastoral Relations Minister), Heather Dootoff (Finance Administrator), Julie Graham (Justice and Communications Minister), Kathy Jackson (Office Administrator), Jamie Mckay (Executive Assistant & Recording Secretary).
Call to Order	Gord Waldie opened the meeting at 9:30 AM (MDT).
Opening Worship and Check-in	Gord Waldie gave a reflection and led a prayer.
Agenda Review	We reviewed the agenda.
031 – 2021/2022	It was agreed by consensus: That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive accepts the agenda, as distributed.
Correspondence	There was no correspondence.
Approval of Minutes	There were no minutes to review. We will review the following minutes at the meeting in January: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• October 13, 2021• November 10, 2021• November 17, 2021
FINANCE	Heather Dootoff reported. The departmental income statement (Appendix A) and restricted fund balance sheet (Appendix B) were shared for information. The actuals only include salaries, grants, mission and service grants, and incorporated ministry costs to October 31. Northern Spirit does not have much other income, and since we rely heavily on grants, if grants get cut, at some point that will have an impact. Donna Kline will be bringing finance policy adjustments to the meeting in January.

PASTORAL RELATIONS Earl Reaburn reported.

Pastoral Relations Commission There are several ministers retiring this year. Pastoral Relations Commission is busy recruiting pastoral relations liaisons to work with congregations to complete their faith profiles. A pastoral relations liaisons training session is planned for February. Our goal is to have as many active or retired ministry personnel as possible trained as pastoral relations liaisons.

Committee on Lay Leadership Support The Committee on Lay Leadership Support had a gathering of the licensed lay worship leaders on in late November. In conjunction with the 40 days of engagement with anti- racism, the committee asked Lloyd Nyarota to be our guest at the meeting. Our question for him was, “Can you help us to see and understand where racism shows up in small rural communities?” Since our licensed worship leaders are generally working in smaller communities, we felt that this was a good opportunity to reflect on that question.

Committee on Communities of Faith Support The Committee on Community of Faith Support Committee is meeting tomorrow.

Committee on Ministry Personnel Support The Committee on Ministry Personnel Support Committee continues its work. Currently, they are collecting what they need to distribute the bursaries from this student bursary fund.

REPORTS

Executive Minister’s Report Shannon McCarthy reported.

Prairie to Pine office move The Prairie to Pine regional office downsized and moved into three offices at the Centre for Christian Studies. The last step will be to clear out any remaining furniture and supplies.

Kirk Centre holiday hours Kirk United Church Centre will be closed December 20, 2021 to January 4, 2022. Staff are using up remaining holidays before the end of the year.

GC changes to salary schedules The General Council recently approved a proposal made to remove the two-tier salary schedules which will come into effect in January 2022.

GC changes to Designated Lay Ministry program A task group set up by the General Council to review the Lay Ministry Program has sent back a proposal. The proposal is to take the program back to its original intention of those locally called would serve locally, when their call was done they were also done, and that those feeling a lifelong call will go through a process to discern if they will become ordained or diaconal ministers.

More information can be found on the United Church Commons or on the GC44 website.

Incorporated Ministries

There was nothing new to review from incorporated ministries.

Justice & Communications

Julie Graham submitted a Justice and Communications report (Appendix C) and we received it for information.

Follow up on Anti-Racism Proposal

We had a discussion on how to move forward on setting up an Anti-Racism task group.

We had the following questions:

- How far and wide are we looking?
- Is there a job description?
- Do we need a task group?

The task group does need to be looking at more than education pieces around anti-racism. General Council is creating an anti-racism action plan and they will ask regional councils and congregations to create one as well. A task group could help to shepherd that process forward.

We also think all the various parts of the regional council needs to do anti-racism education including the Executive, ministry personnel, and education sessions at the annual meetings.

One person expressed interest to work on an anti-racism task group. We would like to invite that person to share how they imagined their work on the task group to be and what sorts of things they want to do. That discussion could help lead us to make our own recommendations for members.

Marilyn Carroll agreed to contact the person who expressed interest.

2020 Annual Meeting

We are currently still searching for a meeting convenor and volunteers to join the planning committee. Nominations still needs feedback on what expectations are for members of the planning committee.

We agreed to think seriously about what we are hoping to accomplish by holding a regional meeting. Everyone is experiencing online meeting fatigue and we do not want to hold a meeting for the sake of holding a meeting. If we want to build community, there are other and better ways to accomplish this.

We decided to wait to hold the annual meeting until after General Council 44 in August 2022.

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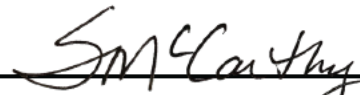
It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council will wait to hold the annual meeting until after General Council 44 in August 2022, with the format and new dates to be determined.

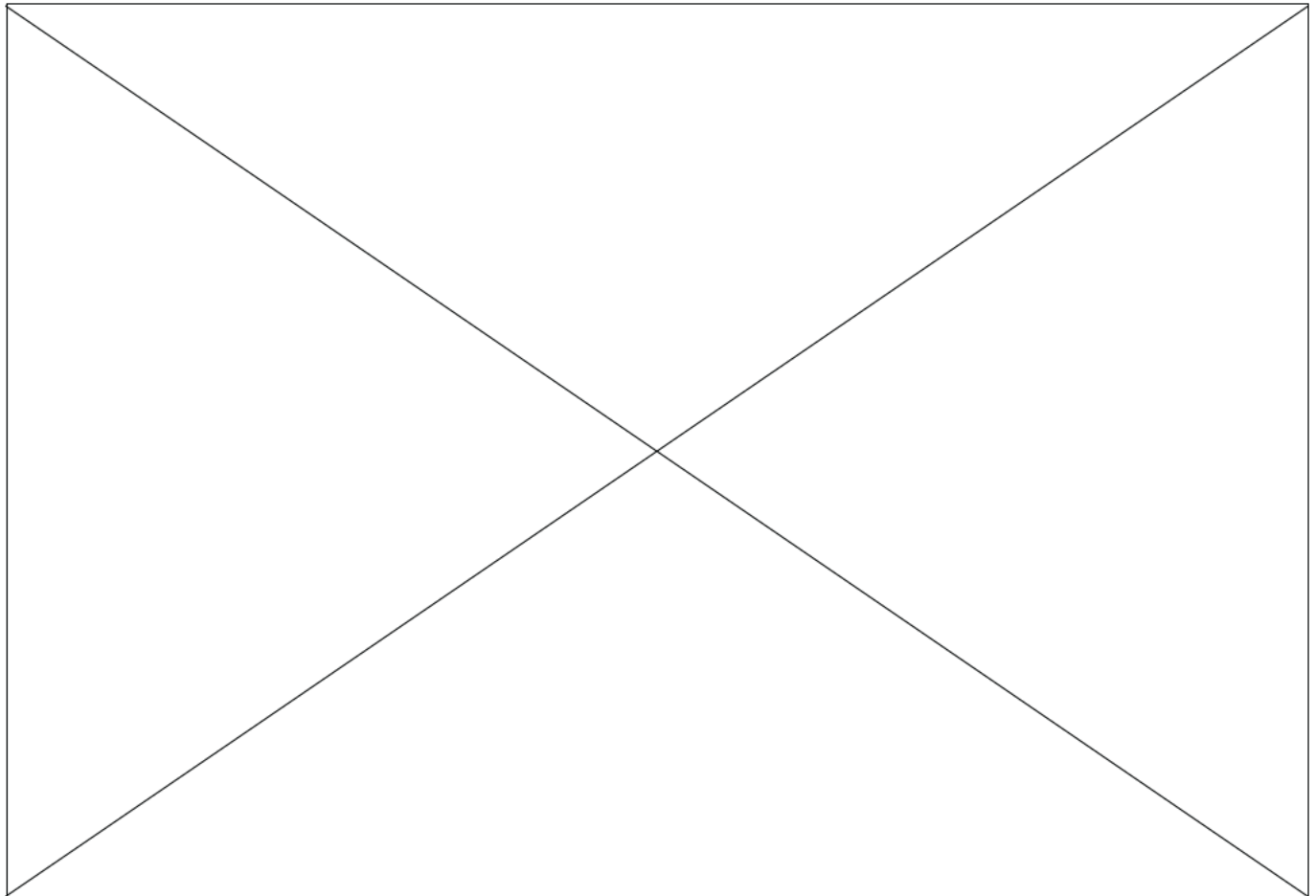
- GC Nominations** General Council is seeking nominations or expressions of interest for multiple committee vacancies. More information can be Found on the United Church website under '*Job and Volunteer Opportunities.*'
- Nominations** Nominations continues the challenging work of filling spots on commissions and committees. They are still seeking a chair-elect and members to the join the Executive.
- Next Meeting** The Executive agreed to meet on the second Wednesday of each month from 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM via Zoom with the next regular meeting date:
 • January 12, 2022
- Closing Prayer** Gord Waldie led us in a closing prayer.
- Adjournment** Gord Waldie adjourned the meeting at 12:00 PM (MDT).



Gord Waldie, Chairperson



Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister



<u>2021 Northern Spirit Regional Council</u>	2019 Actual	2020 Actual	2021 Budget	30-Nov	Projected	
Governance Revenue						
Governance and Shared Services (from assessments)	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000	\$ 270,833	\$ 325,000	actual to oct 31
Shared Staff Grant Governance	\$ 67,000	\$ 67,000	\$ 67,000	\$ 55,833	\$ 67,000	actual to oct 31
Annual Meeting Meal Fee	\$ 27,538	\$ -				
Misc	\$ 4,836	\$ 16,126		\$ 9,167	\$ 9,167	
	<u>\$ 424,374</u>	<u>\$ 408,126</u>	<u>\$ 392,000</u>	<u>\$ 335,833</u>	<u>\$ 401,167</u>	
Governance: Office and Staffing Expenses Region 2						
Office Expenses:						
Office Rent (Kirk Centre)	\$ 37,800	\$ 38,272	\$ 38,748	\$ 35,516	\$ 38,745	
Office Costs (supplies, phone, wifi, etc)	\$ 13,427	\$ 13,489	\$ 16,000	\$ 11,165	\$ 13,500	
Shared Service GC	\$ 11,045	\$ 11,619	\$ 11,505	\$ 8,116	\$ 11,505	actual to oct 31
Website	\$ 4,441	\$ 1,056	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,005	\$ 1,005	
Audit/Professional services	\$ -	\$ 5,433	\$ 5,500	\$ 6,169	\$ 6,169	
Discretionary fund	\$ 2,232	\$ -	\$ 5,000			
Shared Staff Costs						
Shared EM, Asst and Finance staff	\$ 84,499	\$ 85,972	\$ 88,363	\$ 75,470	\$ 90,000	actual to oct 31
Shared Staff Office Costs (office space and other costs)	\$10,418	##### #	\$11,000	\$ 8,659	\$ 11,000	
Shared Staff Travel Costs	\$ 6,213	\$ 1,118	\$ 10,000	\$ 743	\$ 3,000	
Staffing						
Regional Staff - Governance	\$ 137,315	\$ 140,040	\$ 143,121	\$ 119,148	\$ 142,500.00	actual to oct 31
All Staff Con-Ed	\$ 2,467	\$ 1,706	\$ 3,500	\$ 126	\$ 1,000	
All Staff Training Event	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,000	\$ -	\$ -	
Staff Travel	\$ 4,597	\$ 367	\$ 4,000	\$ 142	\$ 500	
Governance: Committee and Structure						
Annual meeting	\$ 59,874	\$ 619	\$ 35,000	\$ 1,424	\$ 1,424	
Governance Committee costs*	\$ 12,478	\$ 6,867	\$ 12,000	\$ 1,936	\$ 3,000	
TOTAL GOVERNANCE	\$ 386,806	\$ 316,790	\$ 386,737	\$ 269,619	\$ 323,348	
Remainder of Governance Total	\$ 37,568	\$ 91,336	\$ 5,263	\$ 66,215	\$ 77,819	
Mission & Ministry (Mission & Service Fund)	\$ 289,000	\$ 289,000	\$ 240,000	\$ 233,562	\$ 240,000	actual to oct 31
Other M & M Income	\$ 12,030	\$ 3,503		\$ 187	\$ 187	
	<u>\$ 301,030</u>	<u>\$ 292,503</u>	<u>\$ 240,000</u>	<u>\$ 233,749</u>	<u>\$ 240,187</u>	
Mission and Ministry Costs for Region 2						
Staffing						
Salaries and benefits	\$ 71,755	\$ 109,219	\$ 111,622	\$ 94,812	\$ 112,274.40	actual to oct 31
Mission & Ministry						
Mission Support grants	\$ 150,300	\$ 139,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 138,750	\$ 150,000	actual to aug 31
Clusters & Events, other grants	\$ 24,122	\$ 30,260	\$ 20,000	\$ 5,109	\$ 10,000	
Mission & Ministry Committee Costs	\$ 166	\$ 205	\$ 5,000	\$ 1,224	\$ 5,000	
	<u>\$ 246,343</u>	<u>\$ 278,684</u>	<u>\$ 286,622</u>	<u>\$ 239,895</u>	<u>\$ 277,274</u>	
Remainder of Mission & Ministry Total	\$ 54,687	\$ 13,819	\$ (46,622)	\$ (6,146)	\$ (37,087)	
* 2020 Includes \$20000 grant for Kirk UC Centre						
Restricted/Designated Funds						
Revenue				\$ 171,690	\$ 171,690	transfer of student bursary funds \$164567
Expenses				\$ 15,133	\$ 15,133	
				<u>\$ 156,557</u>	<u>\$ 156,557</u>	
Combined Surplus (Deficit)				\$ 216,625	\$ 197,289	

	Opening Balance January 1, 2021	Receipts	Expense	Balance	Internal Transfers	Closing Balance November 31, 2021
		\$569,581.89	-\$509,515.38	\$60,066.51	\$7,400.00	\$52,666.51
Externally Restricted						
Archive Trust Fund	137,884.40		-3.08	137,881.32		137,881.32
Emergency Relief Trust Fund	13,912.00			13,912.00		13,912.00
Reclaiming the Mission Fund	24,159.77			24,159.77		24,159.77
Special Conflict Resolution Trust Fund	7,606.17			7,606.17		7,606.17
Ann Mazur Fund	183,516.87	2,325.00		185,841.87		185,841.87
Student Bursary Fund	250.00	164,070.64		164,320.64		164,320.64
Living Spirit United Church	10,549.99	4,580.00	-15,129.99	0.00		0.00
Internally Restricted						
Conflict Resolution Trust Fund	25,804.84			25,804.84		25,804.84
Pastoral Relations Emergency Fund	2,600.00			2,600.00	7,400.00	10,000.00
Mission and Ministry Fund (Finance Policy 4.1.3)	292,851.00	714.49		293,565.49		293,565.49
Contingency Reserve Fund (Finance Policy 3.1.1.)	150,000.00			150,000.00		150,000.00
				0.00		0.00
Totals	\$849,135.04 **	\$741,272.02	-\$524,648.45	\$1,065,758.61	\$7,400.00	\$1,065,758.61
Conexus chequing	51,727.63	ATB Bursary Acct	51,803.39	Receipts	741,272.02	
Conexus Savings	79,519.78	Frontier (Bursary)	112,117.25	Less Expense	-524,648.45	
St. Stephens loan	32,576.06	Term Deposits	920,292.50	Income/Loss	216,623.57	
Ann Mazur loans	18,225.73	Accrued Interest	8,908.44	Beginning balance	849,135.04	
Cash on Hand				Ending balance	1,065,758.61	
Accounts Receivable	856.42	Deposit/Prepaid		Liability	1,095.78	
			\$1,276,027.20		\$1,066,854.39	
				Retained earnings	200,172.81	
					\$1,267,027.20	

** 2020 adjustments included

Justice/ communications report to Executives, Communications and Justice Minister, November-December 2020, Northern Spirit

I am making this report mostly “tri-Region”, because there is considerable overlap. At the end you will see three questions for you. Answers are not at all expected, but I want to begin to raise some broader structural questions and needs.

Like everyone else, I’m seeing just how tired and stretched people are. I’m also shocked at how much work the regional gatherings/ annual meetings were, and am only now getting back on track. Given fatigue levels, I’m setting up for some gatherings on key issues, but plan to roll those out over the winter and spring based on what people tell me they can handle. Here are some details:

Priorities

Northern Spirit-specific: Being Good Relations Network, including Cluster development and understanding how a dual-Region network might work (or not); Affirming work (hard to know where this is going at this point); some connecting with the Rural Connect project; Clusters more generally (see below).

Communications: Our websites have carried us well through the last six months of crisis communications, supported in a collaborative three-Region team of Kathy Jackson, Cherry Abad, Bev Diebert and myself, with paid tech support as needed from Spencer Moore. The result has been sites that are very active and up to date. Maintenance and learning curves are always ongoing in the background, and I welcome any thoughts from committees, commissions, and individuals about changes and materials they would find helpful.

Some next communications steps will focus on newsletters, including working out new Mail Chimp accounts and sign up forms; considering newsletter content overload and how to address this. Regional Council directories and integrations with the websites have also become more of a priority.

Promoting education opportunities: As many have noted, there are a huge number of online gatherings available. Too many, in some ways. Tracking them all has been difficult. I’m focused on promoting United Church, KAIROS, Indigenous church-related, anti-racism, and ecumenical opportunities.

For our Regional Councils, I think a missing piece is space to gather and check in, where community rather than content is the focus. I’m focusing on that through the first half of 2021. These include: Clusters and Networks associated with Right Relations/ truth and reconciliation and treaty work; Western Intercultural Network “chai and coffee” learning/ connecting series; Affirming ministries and ministries in process check in and support gatherings; possible refugee sponsorship/ support check in across all three Regions, with national staff present for updates.

Clusters and Networks: Related to the above, I am working with the Pastoral Relations ministers and administrators to put together lists of known Networks and Clusters for both the websites (already done for Living Skies) and for a letter send out. The letter encourages Clusters and Networks to meet, reminds people of resources available to support their work, and names staff support.

The absence of structures, formal connecting points, and connections back to governance continue to trouble a number of people. As we live into new structures or lack thereof, I’m inviting people who are committed to a

specific aspect of justice to name what they would find helpful. Then we can work out together what is needed. It may evolve into a Network or Cluster, and may not. Where nothing is needed at the moment or there's little response, as is mostly the case, I set it aside and move on.

Nominations: Communications is a key part of this work, and I'd like to improve how the websites are used to make Nominations easier. A discussion with Prairie to Pine's Nominations Committee surfaced some good strategies, including working with Networks and Clusters to ask their help in finding people; and developing "job descriptions" that name the position, the skills, and the time commitment in a clear, inviting way. They acknowledged this would take a lot of work, but should pay off over the long term.

Questions for the Executive and other Regional leadership:

These are for 2021 and the longer term.

1) Regional/ annual meetings in 2021: Evaluations for 2020 need to be sent out. If, as seems likely, we need to be online, how can we strategize about best practices that will make the most of the time and energy required of everyone, and be as inclusive and engaging as possible?

2) Anti-racism work in the Regional Council context: I have lots of question about holding space and resources for this wider church priority: who and how are at the top of the list. I'm not sure where to start or what if anything my role is.

3) Holding justice in our structures: We are two years into this restructuring, and I'm wondering about the place of what we might call (non-youth and young adult) program and justice work within it.

I've been speaking with people involved in Networks and Clusters who are feeling a bit cast adrift in the new structure, especially related to justice and right relations broadly speaking. Some want a seat on the Executive. Others think this would be ineffective, but want a formal space where ideas and concerns can be brought. Others just want to know that the Regional Council still cares about justice and right relations.

Some have also asked how the Regional Council addresses emerging justice concerns, whether anti-racism, negative and positive impacts from government decisions, and more long-term engagement on concerns like climate justice, the TRC Calls to Action, poverty, and more. I think this is more a question of how to engage the Regional Council and how it can remain aware of justice concerns; I don't think people are suggesting that the Executive should do it all. But it does raise questions about how the space can be held formally.

Is there a way we can open this conversation and begin to think about it? Has the Executive, including some of its earlier members, had such a conversation before?

I remain in awe of the amount of work and care carried by all three Executives and hope you will somehow get some much-needed down time for rest, reflection, and renewal over the holy journey of Christmas.

Julie Graham, Regional Minister, Justice and Communications (Northern Spirit, Living Skies, and Prairie to Pine Regional Councils).