

**Northern Spirit Executive Minutes
November 13, 2024**

In-person meeting held at Strathearn United, Edmonton, with some members joining via Zoom.

- EXECUTIVE PRESENT** Leigh Sinclair (Chair), Donna Kline, Leslie Penny, Helen Reed.
Marilyn Carroll and Paul Walfall joined via Zoom.
- A quorum was present.
- REGRETS** Mervin Gallant, Chantal Winslow.
- CORRESPONDING MEMBERS PRESENT** Jim Belliveau.
Gaie Goin joined via Zoom.
- STAFF PRESENT** Shannon McCarthy (Executive Minister); Chloe Burns (Administrative Support); Adam Hall (Pastoral Relations Minister); Leanne Templeton (Archivist).
Heather Dootoff (Finance) joined via Zoom.
- CALL TO ORDER** Leigh called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.. Leigh welcomed everyone gathering in present and joining via Zoom, and led a treaty acknowledgement. Everyone introduced themselves and Leigh shared an opening prayer.
- APPROVAL OF AGENDA** The agenda was reviewed. It was suggested that the proposals from the annual meeting be discussed this afternoon with the visioning conversation. A Property report was added under committee reports.
Shannon noted that we have been using a consensus model to make decisions, and asked whether the Executive wanted to review their decision-making process. No concerns were raised about the consensus model. It was also noted that a part of the consensus model aligns with holy manners and the practice of keeping discussion at the table, upholding decisions once they are made by the group.
The agenda was accepted with the addition and change of order.
- APPROVAL OF MINUTES** The minutes were reviewed. It was noted that in the *September* minutes, the motion regarding Jasper says the Executive committed to supporting their minister's salary until January 2024 – should be 2025.
Heather made some wording changes in the October minutes document. No further changes were requested.
- 011-2023/2024** **It was agreed by consensus:
That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approve the minutes of October 9, 2024 as amended.**
- BUSINESS ARISING**
- Chinese United** Shannon recapped the situation with Chinese United. She outlined the possibility of creating a Regional Council Trust in order to allow someone, possibly Kindred Works, to take over the management of the building, handle rental possibilities, etc. Pursuing

a sale is not ideal at this moment in this part of Edmonton. Right now the Region is covering all the building costs, so whether the trust breaks even or generates a small profit it would be an improvement. Within our governance, the management group would become the 'trustees' of the trust which the Region would hold.

The question of the money transferred from Chinese United bank accounts was brought up. Donna suggested that this should be held separately, potentially into a fund connected with the property trust. This way it is easier to track and would not skew our regional financial statements. Creating a restricted fund, moving the income and expenses from this year and going forward would give us a better reflection of actual financial resources.

012-2023/2024 **It was agreed by consensus:**
That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive empower Shannon to move forward with creating a Regional Council trust for the Chinese United building.

013-2023/2024 **It was agreed by consensus:**
That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approve the creation of a restricted fund for the funds from Chinese United and the expenses associated with the building and church.

To do:

- **Once the trust is established, the Executive will move to officially move Chinese United into the trust.**

Korean United The Property Commission gave Korean permission to sell their building and land for the purchase price of 2.1 million as long as the final disbursement plan for the funds comes back to the Region for approval. They owe money to the Region and for assessments. We expect that after paying back these loans they may ask for an exception on some of the other disbursement pieces since they are continuing on as a church and not disbanding. We are waiting on their request and disbursement plan.

Jasper United Met with the community at an online town hall on November 8th. The majority of the folks who have returned to Jasper seem to want to move forward, and seem to want to work with their local Anglicans. We've heard from the Anglican side that they will only rebuild in partnership with the United Church. There is a desire to use the land of the two churches to create spaces that support the community as a whole, whether that's through housing, their thrift shop, food banks, many possibilities. Question of how to keep these communities sustainable as they make their plans. Question of their minister's salary. National Parks processes with land leases does complicate property pieces.

Supports for Linda McLaren, Jasper's minister: she took a month's leave, has been connecting with Leigh, and also connected with Diane Strickland. Diane sent a proposal for continuing to work with Linda for 6 sessions at a total cost of \$1200, focus on clergy coaching and pastoral care with a traumatic background. Do we want to support this proposal through the Region's emergency fund? No concerns raised.

014-2023/2024

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approve Diane Strickland's proposal for coaching sessions with Linda McLaren, to be paid for out of the emergency fund.

Julie is working on an update to be shared publicly providing an update on the community and a thank you for the donations and support received. Heather gave an update on financial donations received. Shannon has discussed the emergency fund with General Council, since we know this will not be the last crisis of this kind.

St. Andrew's College Request

This is letter from St. Andrew's College and St. Stephen's College, asking if we can add to our property policy that a percentage of disbursements goes to the colleges. The Executive discussed and agreed that instead of burdening churches with an additional requirement when dispersing, it would be preferable to add an option for each church's discernment and agency. They agreed to add these schools to the list of suggested groups and ministries churches can choose to donate to. The Executive members were invited to brainstorm any other institutions we may want to include, for example the Centre for Christian Studied was mentioned.

To do:

- **Shannon will respond to the letter communicating the Executive's decision.**

CORRESPONDENCE

Agreed that Julie will send the Jasper letter to *Helen* to review and sign, as this is a piece of business wrapping up out of annual meeting and Helen's pastoral care support.

Gift Received through Foundation

Donation through foundation, Heather connected with the donor, who confirmed they don't want their donation posted publicly on the website etc.

FINANCE

2025 budget

Heather went over the proposed 2025 budget. Noted that there is no money allocated for the Centennial, this could come out of a restricted fund, will be discussed along with Centennial plans.

It was asked whether the staff budget can be changed by the Region. Shannon said to change the raise percentage we would have to consult with HR. It was noted that General Council gave a 3% increase to congregational ministers, but for General and Regional Council staff a 2.5% increase only. This is something for future consideration if the Region feels this is unjust. Shannon noted that we are still waiting for a final report from the compensation task group, and that if the Region wanted to consider adjusting this it would have to be discussed without staff input, and across all three Regions, since we have Tri-Regional staff.

015-2023/2024

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approve the proposed 2025 budget.

Mission Support Grants

Leslie presented the recommendations made by the Mission Support Grants committee. They recommended reserving \$25,000 to grant to Hillcrest if they appoint or Call a minister in 2025. The rest of the fund divided as follows: \$32,000 for Bissell Centre; \$20,000 for Camp Maskepetoon; \$16,000 for the Inner-City Pastoral Ministry; and \$32,000 for Kirk Centre.

Noted that Leslie is the only person left on this committee going forward, and we will need to recruit new members.

016-2023/2024

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approve the 2025 Mission Support Grants as recommended by the Mission Support Grants committee.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Incorporated Ministries – Omnibus

Some discussion around communication challenges with incorporated ministries. There was a suggestion of gathering all our outreach ministries for a face-to-face meeting at some point, possibly connected to the annual meeting. There was also a suggestion of sending communication to these ministries indicating that if they wish to be considered for addition to the disbursement recommendation list, they must ensure they are in good standing with the Region and wider church.

017-2023/2024

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approve Jellinek Society Board of Directors 2024-2025.

BREAK

The Executive took a lunch break at 11:57, reconvening at 12:50 p.m..

COMMITTEE REPORTS cont.

**Nominations
018-2023/2024**

It was agreed by consensus:

That Northern Spirit Regional Council Executive approve the following nominations:

- **Lorraine Stewart, to Executive as member-at-large.**
- **Sungsoon Park, to Communities of Faith Support committee.**
- **Carolyn Woodall, to Annual Meeting Planning Committee, as Chairperson.**
- **Susan Silverthorne, to Executive as member-at-large.**

To do:

- **Chloe will communicate with those approved.**

Property

Jim offered a summary of Property's recent and ongoing work, including: McDougall United, looking for a property sharing agreement; Green Grove, disbanding; and the cemetery survey project. Discussed how to send out the survey, whether this could be attached to the needs assessment piece.

OTHER

- Centennial Planning** A note went out in the Newsletter and on the website clarifying the centennial invitations that were sent by Brian Brown. Centennial planning includes both how we (the Region) will recognize the Centennial, and how we can support communities in their own planning. How can we make this a true commemoration, incorporating more difficult legacies and histories? The Executive Minister and the Chair will both attend the General Council event in Newfoundland.
- Planning Forward – Dates from staff** In an effort to be more consistent and simplify planning, at the tri-region staff gathering some patterns were proposed for annual meetings. Annual meetings will be held in-person once every three years, and celebration of ministries will be held in person every year. In-person annual meetings will be planned for the last weekend in May whenever possible (excepting when Pentecost falls on that weekend, etc). Online annual meetings will be held in November, with one night for learning and discussing if there are proposals put forward, and one night for business. The agenda for online annual meetings will be restricted to necessary business. Additional spaces and gatherings can be planned separately addressing other pieces (education, support, etc). In-person “party”/cluster gatherings are being planned, which would be held in different parts of the Region, one or two per year. Dates have been set for the next few years of annual meetings, and those will be shared. The 2025 AGM is set for May 29-June 1, in Edmonton, we are waiting to confirm the location.
- NEXT MEETING** Next meeting will be held online via Zoom, December 11th, 9:30 a.m..
- VISIONING** Shannon shared a powerpoint presentation which went over the Regional Council vision statement, our regional Affirming statement, and the Regional Council mandate from the Manual which lists the responsibilities of the Region.
Where are we, the Executive, spending our time?
Discussion: working on developing and strengthening relationships with communities of faith; working through communication challenges; figuring out our new structure; dealing with emerging crises and conflicts; lamenting, recovering from structure shift and covid; picking up missing pieces such as nominations, some justice work as networks develop. Reacting more often than making proactive plans and visions. Much discussion around communication: frustration of people asking for things (connection, education), and then not showing up for them. Balancing in-person and online spaces. Over-communication vs. focussed communications. Should we communicate less, but more clearly? How to communicate things that feel relevant to congregations, while still upholding important but more challenging pieces such as justice work, right relations, etc.
Summary: Executive feels busy reacting to the needs of communities in the Region, and it is a struggle to see or plan beyond the urgent pieces.
Discussion: Who is being left out of conversations? What relationships need to be fostered, and what do we mean by relationship? What could building relationships

look like? Geography was brought up as a challenge, as many communities are far-flung. Trust and intentionality can lead to improved communication. What do we have the capacity for – as an Executive, and capacity of staff to support? What is blocking both communication and relationship pieces? Fatigue was mentioned, fall-out from Covid, and ministers who are also at or over capacity. This connects to the needs assessment piece from the Annual meeting: what do congregations need to learn or access? What do they need to feel we are in relationship?

The Executive discussed the possibility of hiring an additional staff person. We could create a full-time position, with part of the time being devoted to youth work in the Region, and part of the time spent generating clusters, connecting communities to each other. Agreed these are two pieces of work that are harder to do remotely, easier to accomplish in the geographical space of the Region as much as possible. This seems to be a priority in this time: making congregations feel connected to one another and to the Region, encouraging youth ministries.

Other questions: *Where are there gaps? What do we wish we had time for? Does the structure serve us in the way we need it to? How might we do things differently? What can we stop doing?*

***To consider for future meetings:**

- What does relationship mean or look like? What would it mean to have steady relationships with our communities and ministry personnel? If we feel these relationships are at a low point, could the Executive support hiring someone to specifically look at relationships and connections?
- Whether or not this visioning/clustering pieces moves forward, hiring a youth programming staff person is a priority. Both other regions in our tri-region have youth staff. We don't want to lose this piece.

ADJOURNMENT

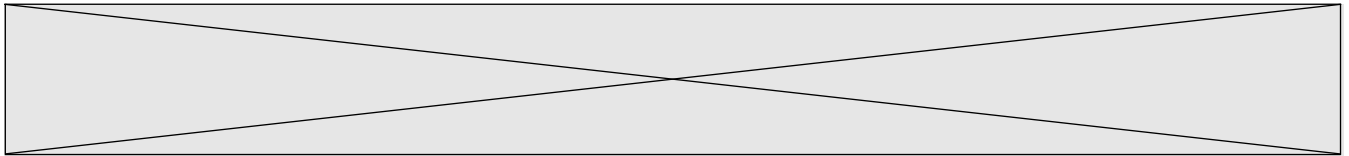
Leigh offered a prayer to close the meeting, and the meeting was adjourned at 2:56 p.m..



Leigh Sinclair – Chairperson



Shannon McCarthy, Executive Minister



2024 Northern Spirit Regional Council	Dec 31-2023	2024 Budget	31-Oct-24	Projected	2025 Budget	
Governance Revenue						
Governance Grant	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000	\$ 243,750	\$ 325,000	\$ 325,000	To Sept 30
Shared Staff Grant	\$ 76,375	\$ 67,000	\$ 50,250	\$ 67,000	\$ 67,000	To Sept 30
Annual Meeting Meal Fee	\$ 23,190	\$ -			\$ 23,000	
Misc income	\$ 47,998	\$ 5,000	\$ 178,994	\$ 180,000	\$ 30,000	
	\$ 472,563	\$ 397,000	\$ 472,994	\$ 572,000	\$ 445,000	
Governance: Office and Staffing Expenses						
Office Expenses:						
Office Rent	\$ 31,365	\$ 31,365	\$ 11,341	\$ 12,341	\$ 6,600	revised budget 12,341
Office Costs (supplies, phone, wifi, etc)	\$ 8,539	\$ 13,500	\$ 7,610	\$ 11,000	\$ 13,000	
Shared Service GC	\$ 13,378	\$ 14,000	\$ 11,693	\$ 15,591	\$ 15,500	To Sept 30
Website	\$ 1,132	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,032	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	
Audit/Prof Services	\$ 9,859	\$ 11,000	\$ 15,399	\$ 15,399	\$ 10,000	
Move and Chinese UC	\$ -		\$ 32,592	\$ 40,000	\$ 40,000	Chinese United Church 2025?
Contingency		\$ 5,000		\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	
Shared Staff Costs						
Shared EM, Asst and Finance staff	\$ 104,195	\$ 105,414	\$ 77,886	\$ 100,248	\$ 110,339	To Sept 30
Shared Staff Office Costs	\$ 1,332	\$ 2,000	##### ##	##### ##	##### ##	
Shared Staff Travel Costs	\$ 8,907	\$ 9,000	\$ 4,647	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	
Staffing						
Regional Staff - Governance	\$ 141,787	\$ 154,508	\$ 99,360	\$ 132,480	\$ 135,792	To Sept 30
All Staff Con-Ed	\$ 1,600	\$ 3,553	\$ 125	\$ 3,553	\$ 4,000	
All Staff Training Event	\$ 3,775		\$ 767	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,500	
Staff Travel/meals	\$ 3,958	\$ 7,000	\$ 2,492	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	
Governance: Committee and Structure						
Annual meeting	\$ 40,045	\$ 16,000	\$ 4,643	\$ 19,383	\$ 68,000	Actual includes 15K for 2025
Governance Committee costs	\$ 1,853	\$ 8,000	\$ 2,094	\$ 8,000	\$ 8,000	
TOTAL GOVERNANCE	\$ 371,725	\$ 381,840	\$ 273,149	\$ 385,995	\$ 439,231	
Remainder of Governance Total	\$ 100,838	\$ 15,160	\$ 199,845	\$ 186,005	\$ 5,769	
Mission & Ministry	\$ 240,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 174,571	\$ 180,000	\$ 180,000	to Sept 30
Other M & M Income	\$ 66,278		\$ 24,995	\$ 24,995		
	\$ 306,278	\$ 180,000	\$ 199,566	\$ 204,995	\$ 180,000	
Mission and Ministry Costs						
Staffing						
Salaries and benefits	\$ 106,353	\$ 110,607	\$ 79,821	\$ 106,428	\$ 109,089	to Sept 30
Mission & Ministry						
Mission Support grants	\$ 134,100	\$ 136,000	\$ 119,750	\$ 136,000	\$ 136,000	to Sept 30
M&S/Indigenous from sales/closures	\$ 25,853					
Clusters & Events, other grants*	\$ 46,616	\$ 20,000	\$ 4,365	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	
Mission & Ministry Committee Costs	\$ 2,361	\$ 6,000	\$ 1,892	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	
	\$ 315,283	\$ 272,607	\$ 205,828	\$ 268,428	\$ 271,089	
Remainder of Mission & Ministry Total	\$ (9,005)	\$ (92,607)	\$ (6,262)	\$ (63,433)	\$ (91,089)	
Restricted/Designated Funds						
Revenue	\$ 28,465		\$ 86,444	\$ 80,000		include 50K from Foundation
Expenses	\$ 23,119		\$ 58,973	\$ 80,000		
	\$ 5,346		\$ 27,471	\$ -	\$ -	
Combined Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 97,179	\$ (77,447)	\$ 221,054	\$ 122,572	\$ (85,320)	

2025 details
2.5% increase in salaries
Conservative estimate of revenue
Deficit to be covered by retained earnings

2024 Details
\$60,000 cut to Mission and Ministry grant