



WESTERN ONTARIO WATERWAYS
REGIONAL COUNCIL EXECUTIVE MINUTES – 2019

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Executive
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Connecting, Supporting, Transforming
Wednesday, June 5, 2019

The Executive of the WOW Regional Council Executive was called to meet at Silver Lake Camp, Kinloss, on Wednesday, June 5th, 2019.

Roster: Gary Clark (President), Rod Coates (Secretary), Brent Caslick (Treasurer), Heather Leffler (Past Chair), Jessica Cottrell, Heather Davies, Gord Dunbar, Margaret Krauter, Joyce Johnston, Mark Laird, Tim Reaburn, Peg Schieck, Joyce Ward

Staff Support: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Executive Minister
Sue Duliban, Executive Assistant

Present: Gary Clark, Rod Coates, Brent Caslick, Jessica Cottrell, Heather Davies, Gord Dunbar, Margaret Krauter, Joyce Johnston, Mark Laird, Laurie O’Leary, Tim Reaburn, Peg Schieck, Joyce Ward

Regrets: Heather Leffler

Welcome and Constitute Meeting

Gary Clark opened the meeting at 1:05 PM, welcoming those present for this first Executive meeting, and followed by introductions from those in attendance. Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa noted that the Governance Handbook executive terms were such that 1/3 of Executive positions were to be replaced each year. Further discussion about representation noted that:

- Joyce Johnston represents an indigenous representative on Executive
- Tim Reaburn represents one preferred position, as well as being a General Council Executive representative.

Mandate Review

Gary Clark led a review of the Executive mandate & responsibilities (from the Western Ontario Waterways Governance Handbook). Gord Dunbar provided some background to the Mission Statement – Connecting, Supporting, Transforming – noting that “Connecting” is a key part of the relational connection with the regional council and communities of faith.

- 1) *Keep the purpose statement before the region and evaluate the life and work of the region and its commissions against this;*

Gary Clark asked if it was intentional that the Executive would be actively seeking relationships with communities of faith. Laurie O’Leary said that initially this was the role of the Transition Commission, but much less so now. Mark Laird said that role will now be with the commissions and that keeping them accountable to their roles will be done by their having a seat at the Executive table. Gord Dunbar said that we need to hold the vision and keep the oversight, although each of us represents the region in our own communities of

faith and local areas. Cheryl-Ann noted that a small group (Transition Commission) was doing all the work of the commissions and the Executive and, while not ideal, decisions and work can be done by a small group and only done once.

- 2) *Hold accountable the Covenant Commission, Human Resources Commission and Mission and Discipleship Commission for the responsibilities delegated to each respectively;*

Cheryl-Ann said any commission decision challenge would go to a judicial committee.

- 3) *Deal with any matter referred to it for action by one of these three Commissions;*

Cheryl-Ann said commissions have the right to refer matters to the Executive if they so choose.

- 4) *Oversee the finances of the region including preparing a budget for the consideration of the Regional Council and taking responsibility for the administration of the assessment funds, Mission & Service grants and other resources of the region;*

It was noted that M&S grants are administered by the Executive. Cheryl-Ann said that our administration funding is guaranteed by General Council for at least 2 years, but thereafter there will be some uncertainty. Tim Reaburn said that going forward the budget will be approved by the region. Gary Clark said that in the past there was some discussion & input to Conference budgets via discussion at presbytery, and that doesn't happen in the current process. Cheryl-Ann said that budget discussion and approval will now happen at the region's annual meeting, with information shared in advance of that meeting, and that one option would be to do a webinar prior to the annual meeting as well as provide some opportunities for online learning. Joyce Johnston said that it is important to have transparency with the budget information. Cheryl-Ann said that the current financial accounting includes cost centres such that there is better understanding of where expenditures have occurred, and that there will be a better financial statement at the September Executive meeting based on real data. She went on to outline some of the legacy presbytery & conference funds which are yet to transfer to our region. Gord Dunbar noted that the diversity in our constituent groups (3 conferences, 4 presbyteries) gives a good deal of opportunity for doing things differently. Cheryl-Ann & others noted that we have accounting services provided by General Council, which represents a significant cost savings and is working well for us (e.g., good monthly reporting).

- 5) *Be accountable for the number and position descriptions of regional staff;*

Gord Dunbar said that the staff are not assigned to a committee, but are to be out supporting communities of faith, and that we don't have the same level of staff support which existed in the previous organization. Cheryl-Ann said that we are tracking staff hours to see where their hours are being allocated, for awareness purposes.

- 6) *Serve as the Nominating Committee preparing a proposed slate for the consideration of the regional council;*

Cheryl-Ann noted that the Transition Commission assigned commission membership based on diversity and needs. Tim Reaburn noted that the Executive is also responsible for

nominating General Council representatives. Cheryl-Ann said that she was experienced with preferential ballots and would make a proposal to a fall Executive meeting on how this might work at the next annual meeting.

- 7) *Work with the Executive Minister to ensure clear and timely communication within the region.*

No comments.

- 8) *Meet annually with the Executive of the neighbouring Regional Councils served by the same Executive Minister and Executive Assistant;*

Following discussion, it was concluded that we need to decide when and where to meet as a full regional council, with general agreement being to have a fall meeting (Nov 16, tentatively at Mount Forest). Regarding the 2020 annual meeting, it was suggested that Gary Clark & one other Executive member meet with representatives from the other two regions to consider and decide upon a joint annual meeting in 2020. Tim Reaburn said that the process of raising proposals might be well served by having workshops of three regions to discuss common proposals. It was also noted that the annual meeting doesn't have to be the only time or venue for ordination and commissioning.

Joyce Johnston said that, as an aboriginal student minister, she and her peers would like to be ordained by indigenous peers; in other words, she would like to be ordained by her own people. She noted it would be addressed at the National Indigenous Spiritual Gathering in August. Tim Reaburn said that it might be our call (or purpose) to support Joyce's position.

- 9) *Facilitate an annual event with the Covenant Commission, Human Resources Commission, and Mission and Discipleship Commission to focus on purpose and planning.*

No additional comments.

MEETING DATES

After discussion and consultation, the following meeting dates were decided:

Sep 18 – Regional Council Executive (Drayton United Church)

Nov 16 – WOW Regional Gathering (Mount Forest – TBD)

Nov (Date TBD) – Joint Executive Meeting

Feb 19 – Regional Council Executive Meeting (Electronic)

Apr 15 - Regional Council Executive Meeting (Location TBD)

UCW Correspondence

A letter received from the Western Ontario Waterways United Church Women (UCW), dated June 2, 2019, expresses disappointment with respect to the exclusion of a UCW representative on the Executive. Referencing the UCW letter, Joyce Ward made note of being inclusive, and making decisions with, not about, that the UCW is a national organization, and that the UCW had elected a person for this position. Cheryl-Ann said that the position was in the original Governance Handbook, but that it was eliminated to be consistent with representation on the General Council Executive; several others (Tim Reaburn, Laurie O'Leary) noted there was some question amongst the Transition Commission members as to whether the UCW position was

ever intended to be in the Governance Handbook as part of the Executive membership. Tim Reaburn noted that the Executive positions are now approved and filled but there is an option of having a corresponding member. Margaret Krauter said that a better spot for UCW representation would be on the Mission & Discipleship Commission, where the voice would be a better fit.

Cheryl-Ann said that we could appoint someone to be on the Mission & Discipleship Commission, or as a corresponding member of Executive, or bring a proposal to the region at the fall meeting.

Gary Clark said one option is to have a corresponding member, but Cheryl-Ann said the UCW has raised a question which is beyond the authority of the Executive. Gary Clark asked for round table comments from the Executive regarding their thoughts: most voices at the table stated remarks sympathetic to the UCW position and continuing the conversation, with Tim Reaburn providing some additional context regarding the General Council Executive perspective. Gary Clark said the action we can take is to name a UCW member to the Mission & Discipleship Commission, and possibly have representation of the Executive to the UCW, or vice versa.

Other Business

Cheryl-Ann proposed that we authorize a search for a 0.75 FTE Minister, Social Justice, beginning September 1st until the balance of the Diane Matheson-Jimenez leave, and that Margaret Krauter be one of the interview team members. Gary Clark declared this proposal approved by consensus.

Laurie O'Leary asked for clarification of the Huron Shores United Church proposal distribution following the May regional council annual meeting, arising from a query from Kate Crawford. It was agreed that the proposal had been approved by Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council at its annual meeting, and Rod Coates noted that the proposal would be attached to the meeting minutes for all to read.

Gary Clark declared the meeting closed at 3:30 PM

Next Meeting: 09-18-2019 Drayton United Church

Signature of Chair

Signature of Secretary

Executive
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Connecting, Supporting, Transforming
Wednesday, September 18, 2019

Roster: Gary Clark (President), Rod Coates (Secretary), Brent Caslick (Treasurer), Heather Leffler (Past Chair), Jessica Cottrell, Heather Davies, Gord Dunbar, Joyce Johnston, Margaret Krauter, Mark Laird, Tim Reaburn, Peg Schieck, Joyce Ward, Micol Cottrell (Human Resources Commission), Deanne Dickson (Mission & Discipleship Commission), Norm Eygenraam (Covenant Commission)

Staff Support: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa (Executive Minister), Sue Duliban (Executive Assistant)

Present: Gary Clark, Brent Caslick, Rod Coates, Jessica Cottrell, Micol Cottrell, Heather Davies, Deanne Dickson, Sue Duliban, Gord Dunbar, Joyce Johnston, Margaret Krauter, Mark Laird, Heather Leffler, Tim Reaburn, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa, Peg Schieck

Regrets: Joyce Ward, Norm Eygenraam

The Executive of the WOW Regional Council Executive was called to meet at Drayton United Church, on Wednesday, September 18th, 2019. Gary Clark called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM

Welcome and Constitution of Meeting

Gary Clark declared the meeting constituted in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the Church and by the authority invested in him by the first meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it. The bounds of the meeting were defined as the basement meeting space of Drayton United Church.

Acknowledging the Land

Gary Clark stated that we were meeting together on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, asking that we pray for the healing of relationships, living in respect for all gathered here.

Opening Worship

Gary Clark distributed a reading excerpted from the book *We Make the Road by Walking*, by Brian McLaren. A group reading of the passage was followed with reflection by each person on a word or phrase which spoke to them. Gary concluded by inviting a moment of silence for each one to connect with God.

Introductions with Check-In Question

Gary Clark asked each Executive member to identify their community of faith and what hope they had for the Regional Council Executive. Round the table comments were received from those in attendance, with *Connecting & Transforming* being common comment themes. ["Not same old structures and procedures." "Engage the communities of faith."]

Agenda Brainstorming

Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa asked that the Executive contemplate the November 16th full Regional Council meeting agenda and how we would devote time to “Connection” – and especially, *connection as church*. Cheryl-Ann then led the Executive through a discussion of agenda items and time allocations to construct a draft agenda for the November 16th meeting with suggestions received.

Procedure: Parliamentary or Consensus model

Gary Clark asked the Executive for their thoughts about the use of consensus and parliamentary decision-making. Tim Reaburn said that it was his hope that the consensus model could be used, even for financial decisions. It was agreed that consensus decision-making would work and there is no need for separating issues of financial matters into parliamentary-style motions. Cheryl-Ann said that any involvement with government agencies or financial institutions require motions. Tim Reaburn said that in those instances we can come to an agreement via consensus but document the agreement with a motion, thereby giving honour to the consensus model.

Moved by: Tim Reaburn

Seconded by: Heather Leffler

That the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Executive adopt the consensus model for decision-making. **CARRIED**

(Refer to Attachment #1 for additional details.)

Cheryl-Ann noted that we would forward this information to the commissions for their consideration.

Consent Docket Proposal

Gary Clark asked if there were any questions or concerns about the consent docket items. Following a brief discussion, Gary declared the consent docket approved by consensus, with a few amendments made to the agenda.

A. Email Vote Results – Appointment of John Gregory Smith

Receives the following email vote results:

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Executive agreed by email vote, August 6, 2019, to name John Gregory Smith as its representative to the interview team for the Minister, Social Justice position, in place of Margaret Krauter. [11 of 15 eligible voted, all in favour]

B. Western Ontario Regional Council Commission Appointments

Appoints Keith Reynolds from Avondale United, Stratford to be a commissioner on the Mission and Discipleship Commission.

Appoints Emily Perry to the Human Resources Commission (transfer from the Human Resources Commission resource pool)

Appoints Kathi Urbasik-Hindley and Kathy Underwood to be Human Resources Commission resource pool members

C. Omnibus Motion Re Chalmers Community Services Centre of The United Church of Canada

Approves Chalmers Community Services Centre of The United Church of Canada 2019-2020 Board of Directors:

David Bocking
Randy Brant
Matt McQuade
Erin Milley
Steve Pierce
Bruce Ryan
Debbie Stanley
Joan Wilson

This is based on the Minutes of Annual General Meeting of April 7, 2019, the board contact list provided and receipt of other required documentation per The United Church of Canada incorporated ministries policy.

Business Arising

1. Social Justice Minister – Appointment

Cheryl-Ann provided some background regarding Diane Matheson-Jimenez's maternity leave and the need to fill the position until Diane's return. An interview team was formed, and representatives appointed from the three respective regional councils. Cheryl-Ann said there were 13 applicants, all worthy of consideration, and 5 applicants were interviewed. Cheryl-Ann said the interview team recommends the appointment of Joan Tuchlinsky as the Social Justice Minister, effective 23 September, to 30 March 2020. Gary Clark declared this appointment approved by consensus.

2. Website

Cheryl-Ann provided a brief update on the history of the regional council website, noting that she & Pretima Kukadia will be testing out the latest website design in the next week, and optimistic that it will finally be up and running in the very near future.

3. SJNOR Covenant Proposal

A proposal from Social Justice Network Ontario Region (SJNOR) was received, and it was agreed that this item move into the Mission & Discipleship Commissions of the three regions.

New Business

1. Definition of a Community of Faith

With reference to camps, Cheryl-Ann said a community of faith (COF) has a very specific definition in The Manual (See Manual, B.1.1). The previous tradition is that camps are very connected with presbyteries, a connection which has been lost. She suggested that we might want to recognize camps (3 within our region) and the Grey-Bruce & Guelph chaplaincies as COF's, which gives them recognition as part of our regional council.

Responding to a query from Joyce Johnson, Cheryl-Ann said that we have been living in an in-between time with indigenous communities, and the decisions to be part of a region – or not – remain with each indigenous community.

[LUNCH BREAK – 12:30-13:10]

2. Election of General Council Commissioners

Cheryl-Ann said that our Regional Council is eligible to send 13 delegates to the next General Council, and that agreeing to a process to elect commissioners will allow a more efficient election at the May 2020 Regional Council meeting. Tim Reaburn noted that the next General Council will have 260 delegates in total. There was significant discourse about preferential ballot options, ultimately concluding that the Executive wants diversity of representation using two ballots, the first being a preferential ballot.

After discussing various options and seeking consensus, the agreed proposal is for preferred representation from Indigenous communities (2) and one each from youth, young adults, racialized/deaf, differently abled, and LGBTQ2+. The second ballot would elect the balance of delegates and an Executive member.

3. Commission Updates

Micol Cottrell (Human Resources Commission) said the Commission first met in June, then again in August & September. He said that sorting out responsibilities has been its priority (per the governance handbook), followed by approving position descriptions, pastoral relations changes & updates, Licenced Lay Worship Leaders, etc. The three regional commissions are meeting together next week to sort out common policies and processes. Micol said that training liaisons is in progress, notably for those who are now in contact with communities of faith for their search processes, and the commission is always looking for more persons interested in being liaisons. The work is both exciting and daunting, and there are vacancies on the Human Resources Commission - especially for additional ministry personnel.

Deanne Dickson (Mission & Discipleship Commission) said the Commission met this past Monday, its first meeting since June, and it was well attended. Deanne said her Commission is also concerned about representation and looking at different issues which ought to be of interest to congregations.

Cheryl-Ann suggested the Executive agree to the request from the Mission & Discipleship Commission for Youth Rally and Confirmation/Faith Formation & Vocational Discernment event, with funding coming from reserves, as follows:

The Mission and Discipleship Commission of Western Ontario Waterways Region recommends that funding be approved for the projects known as:

Youth Rally 2020: \$1,666.00 (\$2166 with bus) and Confirmation/Faith Formation and Vocational Discernment Event 2020: \$1,734.00.

Gary Clark declared this proposal agreed by consensus.

Sue Duliban reported on behalf of Covenant Commission. She said that the Commission has met regularly since June (4 times) and is presently working on policy issues.

4. Finances – understanding finances; financial records to date; priorities list

Cheryl-Ann provided an overview of funding sources:

- Operating – which derives from assessments and Mission & Service (M&S)
- Savings – inherited from previous organizations, with several assets still outstanding from conference and presbytery accounts.

Cheryl-Ann recommended maintaining an operational reserve as income is expected to decline over time and expenses will continued to increase slightly.

With respect to building capacity, there are opportunities to invest in churches and people:

Churches:

New Ministry – Embracing the Spirit & New Ministries Foundation

New Buildings – PTCC (Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation), TUCC (Toronto United Church Council), Waterloo Extension Council, UCC (United Church of Canada)

grants

People:

Learning grants

Intentional learning

Events

Commissions

With respect to students, funding has been inherited which can be applied to:

- Ministry candidates
- LLWL (Licenced Lay Worship Leaders)

5. Mission Support Grants – priorities, applications, process

Cheryl-Ann said that our governance handbook left financial decisions with the Executive, but that, in discussions with Gary Clark, it would seem to make sense for the Executive to decide the total grant amount and allow the Mission & Discipleship Commission to allocate the grants in accordance with the grant funding available and the Regional Council's priorities. Gary Clark declared this proposal to be agreed by consensus.

Closing

The agenda having been completed and with no additional business to discuss, Gary Clark declared the meeting closed at 3:15 PM.

Upcoming Meetings:

- ZOOM – Thursday, 24 Oct @ 9 AM
- ARW, Horseshoe Falls, Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Executives, November 21 & 22, 2019, Best Western Stoneridge Inn, London

Signature of Chair

Signature of Secretary

Attachment #1

The Basics of Consensus Decision Making

By Tim Hartnett, PhD

<http://www.groupfacilitation.net>

The Definition of Consensus

Consensus is defined by Merriam-Webster's Dictionary as "general agreement" or "the judgment arrived at by most of those concerned."

The Principles of Consensus Decision Making

Consensus decision making is a process used by groups seeking to generate widespread levels of participation and agreement. There are variations among different groups regarding the degree of agreement necessary to finalize a group decision. The process of group deliberation, however, has many common elements that are definitive of consensus decision making. These include:

- **Inclusive:** As many stakeholders as possible are involved in group discussions.
- **Participatory:** All participants are allowed a chance to contribute to the discussion.
- **Collaborative:** The group constructs proposals with input from all interested group members. Any individual authorship of a proposal is subsumed as the group modifies it to include the concerns of all group members.
- **Agreement Seeking:** The goal is to generate as much agreement as possible. Regardless of how much agreement is required to finalize a decision, a group using a consensus process makes a concerted attempt to reach full agreement.
- **Cooperative:** Participants are encouraged to keep the good of the whole group in mind. Each individual's preferences should be voiced so that the group can incorporate all concerns into an emerging proposal. Individual preferences should not, however, obstructively impede the progress of the group.

An Alternative to Common Decision Making Practices

Consensus decision making is an alternative to commonly practiced non- collaborative decision making processes. Robert's Rule of Order, for instance, is a process used by many organizations. The goal of Robert's Rules is to structure the debate and passage of proposals that win approval through majority vote. This process does not emphasize the goal of full agreement. Nor does it foster whole group collaboration and the inclusion of minority concerns in resulting proposals. Critics of Robert's Rules believe that the process can involve adversarial debate and the formation of competing factions. These dynamics may harm group member relationships and undermine the ability of a group to cooperatively implement a contentious decision.

Consensus decision making is also an alternative to “top-down” decision making, commonly practiced in hierarchical groups. Top-down decision making occurs when leaders of a group make decisions in a way does not include the participation of all interested stakeholders. The leaders may (or may not) gather input, but they do not open the deliberation process to the whole group. Proposals are not collaboratively developed, and full agreement is not a primary objective. Critics of top-down decision making believe the process fosters incidence of either complacency or rebellion among disempowered group members. Additionally, the resulting decisions may overlook important concerns of those directly affected. Poor group relationship dynamics and decision implementation problems may result.

Consensus decision making addresses the problems of both Robert’s Rules of Order and top-down models. The goals of the consensus process include:

- **Better Decisions:** Through including the input of all stakeholders the resulting proposals can best address all potential concerns.
- **Better Implementation:** A process that includes and respects all parties, and generates as much agreement as possible sets the stage for greater cooperation in implementing the resulting decisions.
- **Better Group Relationships:** A cooperative, collaborative group atmosphere fosters greater group cohesion and interpersonal connection.

The Process of Consensus Decision Making

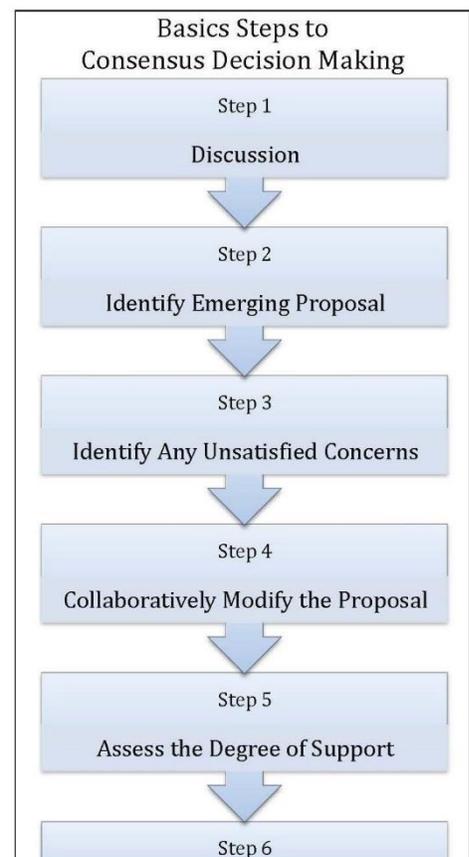
There are multiple stepwise models of how to make decisions by consensus. They vary in the amount of detail the steps describe.

They also vary depending on how decisions are finalized. The basic model involves collaboratively generating a proposal, identifying unsatisfied concerns, and then modifying the proposal to generate as much agreement as possible.

Finalizing a Decision

The level of agreement necessary to finalize a decision is known as a *decision rule*. The range of possible decision rules varies within the following range:

- Unanimous agreement
- Unanimity minus one vote
- Unanimity minus two votes
- Super majority thresholds (90%, 80%, 75%, two-thirds, and 60% are common).
- Simple majority
- Executive committee decides
- Person-in-charge decides



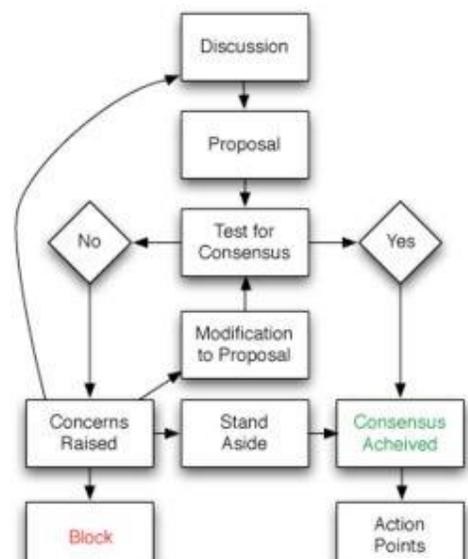
Some groups require unanimous consent (*unanimity*) to approve group decisions. If any participant objects, he can *block consensus* according to the guidelines described below. These groups use the term *consensus* to denote both the discussion process and the decision rule. Other groups use a consensus process to generate as much agreement as possible, but allow decisions to be finalized with a decision rule that does not require unanimity.

Consensus Blocking

Groups that require unanimity allow individual participants the option of blocking a group decision. This provision motivates a group to make sure that all group members consent to any new proposal before it is adopted. Proper guidelines for the use of this option, however, are important. The ethics of consensus decision making encourage participants to place the good of the whole group above their own individual preferences. When there is potential for a group decision to be blocked, both the group and any dissenters in the group are encouraged to collaborate until agreement can be reached. Simply vetoing a decision is not considered a responsible use of consensus blocking. Some common guidelines for the use of consensus blocking include:

- Limiting the option to block consensus to issues that are fundamental to the group’s mission or potentially disastrous to the group.
- Providing an option for those who do not support a proposal to “stand aside” rather than block.
- Requiring two or more people to block for a proposal to be put aside.
- Require the blocking party to supply an alternative proposal or a process for generating one.
- Limiting each person’s option to block consensus to a handful of times in one’s life.

A basic outline of consensus decision making that allows consensus blocking is outlined in this flow chart.



Agreement vs. Consent

Unanimity is achieved when the full group *consents* to a decision. Giving consent does not necessarily mean that the proposal being considered is one’s first choice. Group members can vote their consent to a proposal because they choose to cooperate with the direction of the group, rather than insist on their personal preference.

Sometimes the vote on a proposal is framed, “Is this proposal something you can live with?” This relaxed threshold for a *yes* vote can help make unanimity more easily achievable. Alternatively, a group member can choose to *stand aside*. Standing aside communicates that while a participant does not necessarily support a group decision, he does not wish to block it.

Debate Over Decision Rules

Critics of consensus blocking object to empowering individuals to block otherwise popular proposals. They believe this can result in a group experience of widespread disagreement, the opposite of a consensus process's primary goal. Further, they believe group decision making may become stagnated by the high threshold of unanimity. Important decisions may take too long to make, or the status quo may become virtually impossible to change. The resulting tension may undermine group functionality and harm relationships between group members.

Defenders of consensus blocking believe that decision rules short of unanimity do not ensure a rigorous search for full agreement before finalizing decisions. They value the commitment to reaching unanimity and the full collaborative effort this goal requires. They believe that under the right conditions unanimous consent is achievable and the process of getting there strengthens group relationships.

Conditions that Favor Unanimity

The goals of requiring unanimity are only fully realized when a group is successful in reaching it. Thus, it is important to consider what conditions make full agreement more likely. Here are some of the most important factors that improve the chances of successfully reaching unanimity:

- Small group size
- Clear common purpose
- High levels of trust
- Participants well trained in consensus process
- Participants willing to put the best interest of the group before their own
- Participants willing to spend sufficient time in meetings
- Skillful facilitation and agenda preparation

Using Other Decisions Rules with a Consensus Process

Many groups use a consensus decision making process with non-unanimous decision rules. The consensus process can help prevent problems associated with Robert's Rules of Order or top-down decision making. This allows majority rule or hierarchical organizations to benefit from the collaborative efforts of the whole group and the resulting joint ownership of final proposals. For instance, a small business owner may convene a consensus decision making discussion among her staff to generate a proposal for changes to the business. After the proposal is developed, however, the business owner may retain the authority to accept or reject it.

The benefits of consensus decision making are lost, however, if the final decision is made without regard to the efforts of the whole group. When group leaders or majority factions reject proposals that have been developed with widespread agreement of a group, the goals of consensus decision making will not be realized.

More Elaborate Models of Consensus

Decision Making

As the field of group facilitation has evolved, more detailed models of consensus decision making have been developed. One example is the CODM model (consensus-oriented decision making). Newer models focus on the process of group collaboration, increasing understanding within the field of how collaboration can be best fostered and what facilitation techniques can promote it.

Origins of Consensus Decision Making

Historical examples of consensus decision making include the Iroquois Confederacy Grand Council, or Haudenosaunee, who finalized decisions with a 75% majority. Modern usage is often traced to the Quakers, or Religious Society of Friends, who practice unanimity. Activists groups, intentional communities, collective businesses have all developed and refined the process. Professional group facilitators now use the process in a large variety of settings, further developing the model and its effective application.



<http://www.groupfacilitation.net>

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Thursday, October 24, 2019

Roster: Gary Clark (President), Rod Coates (Secretary), Brent Caslick (Treasurer), Heather Leffler (Past Chair), Jessica Cottrell, Heather Davies, Gord Dunbar, Joyce Johnston, Margaret Krauter, Mark Laird, Tim Reaburn, Peg Schieck, Joyce Ward, Micol Cottrell (Human Resources Commission), Deanne Dickson (Mission & Discipleship Commission), Norm Eygenraam (Covenant Commission)

Staff Support: Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa (Executive Minister), Sue Duliban (Executive Assistant)

Present: Gary Clark, Brent Caslick, Rod Coates, Jessica Cottrell, Micol Cottrell, Heather Davies, Sue Duliban, Gord Dunbar, Norm Eygenraam, Mark Laird, Heather Leffler, Tim Reaburn, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa

Regrets: Deanne Dickson, Margaret Krauter

The Executive of the WOW Regional Council Executive was called to meet via ZOOM teleconference on Thursday, October 24, 2019. Gary Clark called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Welcome and Constitution of Meeting

Gary Clark declared the meeting constituted in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the Church and by the authority invested in him by the first meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it.

Acknowledging the Land

Gary Clark stated that we were meeting together on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnabe, the Neutral Nation and more recently the Mississaugas of New Credit. Their stewardship of this land has been a great gift to all who have enjoyed it's bounty. In this season of honouring our ancestors we pray that we are honest about the treaties, the betrayals and the woundedness of relationship between First Peoples and Settlers. We commit ourselves to being part of a healing process as we seek justice and equality for all in this land.

Check-in

Gary asked the Executive to conduct a "round-the-ZOOM-screen" introduction exercise stating who we were and where, and how we were greeting the day.

Consent Docket

Gary Clark asked if there were any questions or concerns about the consent docket items.
Gary Clark declared the consent docket approved by consensus.

A. Enabling Actions

1. That the Agenda be adopted as circulated.
2. That the minutes of the September 18, 2019 Executive Meeting be approved as distributed.
3. That motions and proposals be written and given to the Secretary.

B. Western Ontario Regional Council Commission Appointments

Appoints Kate Crawford to be a commissioner on the Covenant Commission
Appoints Lyn Workman to be a commissioner on the Covenant Commission

C. Receive correspondence of:

1. PTCC Shared Funds – Shining Waters
2. Spring Educational Event
(to be addressed when arising in the agenda)

Business Arising

1. Financial Updates: PTCC Shared Funds

Cheryl-Ann said she recently met with Bob Savaria and other regional council treasurers at the Regional Council Office to review financial information in detail. She said that the 2019 budgets set by transition commissions were completed using ball-park figures but there are now more detailed budget figures for 2020 – e.g., staff salaries.

Cheryl-Ann provided some background to the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation (PTCC), noting that each presbytery affiliated with PTCC originally had a base fund allocated (approximately \$3m each). The Transition Commission spent some time in spring 2019 meeting with the PTCC president as Northern Waters Presbytery was deemed to be a successor organization of the PTCC funds. This money is available as a resource, but our regional council needs to be a part of the discussion as to how the funds are to be spent; Cheryl-Ann said that the regional council makes recommendations, but the PTCC board makes decisions.

Cheryl-Ann said we have received an invitation from Jody Maltby (Shining Waters Regional Council staff) to participate in the New Ministries Development and Leadership Fund (NMDLF) of the former Toronto Conference. The invitation is for Western Ontario Waterways to partner in the grant selection committee or to have our own process. Heather Leffler suggested that we establish a small group to look at our total funding as well as these funds and those from the PTCC resources. Cheryl-Ann reinforced the point that while we have access to the funds we have limited control. It was agreed that this proposal has merit, and that our core group be Brent Caslick, Gary Clark, Heather Leffler, and Cheryl-Ann. This group will meet separately to review and make recommendations to the Executive.

Cheryl-Ann said that the remaining assets from Hamilton Conference have been received, noting that there is a residual mission fund to which we have access, and would be included in our overall assets. Cheryl-Ann said that our November 16th regional council meeting would be provided with a summary of the current financial information.

2. November 16th Meeting - Planning

A draft agenda for the upcoming November 16th Fergus regional council meeting was made available as part of the meeting materials. Executive members discussed and updated the draft agenda with decisions, suggestions & comments, fleshing out some of the detailed minutia affiliated with the planning. The detailed comments, suggestions, were updates were documented on the master agenda document edited by Sue Duliban.

3. Website

Cheryl-Ann said that the website will be operational shortly, and that an email announcing its launch will be issued within the next few days.

New Business

1. Potential Education Event – Spring 2020

Cheryl-Ann said the former general secretary of Uniting Church of Australia is offering seminars (Feb/Mar 2020) in "Understanding and Responding to Conflict" and "Working Together Well"; she asked if this might be a possible education event in which we could share with other two regions. After discussion, the general reaction was that there was insufficient interest to make an informed decision at this time. Heather Leffler suggested that while we were unlikely to commit at this time, if the other two regions decided that they would, we could reconsider.

Closing

The agenda having been completed and with no additional business to discuss, Gary Clark declared the meeting closed at 11:15 PM

Quick Checkout

Gary Clark asked for final round-the-ZOOM-screen comments from participants prior to signing off.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Regional Council meeting, November 16, 2019, Centre Wellington Sportsplex, Fergus
- Antler River Watershed, Horseshoe Falls, Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Executives, November 21 & 22, 2019, Best Western Stoneridge Inn, London