

Executive
Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council
OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
Connecting, Supporting, Transforming
Wednesday, April 15, 2020

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

Regrets: Norm Eygenraam

The Executive of the WOW Regional Council Executive was called to meet via ZOOM teleconference on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. Gary Clark called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM, noting the robust agenda for the day.

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:

Easter is a time of renewal and celebrating that the power of God can draw out of death new life and new hope. That vision calls us to seek reconciliation with the first peoples of this land.

We seek forgiveness for the devastation that contact with Europeans brought with it. Our ancestors were like a pandemic destroying the culture, religious practices and leadership structure of the first peoples. We brought small pox, measles and others diseases as well as a lust for land that clearly wasn't ours to possess. Many of us have not repented of the destruction that these diseases nor the damage our prejudices continue to inflict. Both still ravage these nations.

Repentance is an act of hope. Despite hundreds of years of harm, there is still reason to hope for resurrection and healing.

So it is that we acknowledge that we are gathered on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnabe, the Neutral Nation and the Mississaugas of New Credit. Our gain has come at a great cost to these peoples. Some day may all celebrate as new life is breathed into relationships that have felt and regularly feel, crucified.

Opening Worship & Check-in

Gary Clark shared a scripture reading from John 20. [*“It was late that Sunday evening and the disciples were gathered together behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish authorities . . .”* Gary then asked each person to share whether they were experiencing fear at this time in their lives. Some common themes which emerged from the responses were:

- Concern about spouses and family members working in health care roles or living/working in long-term care facilities.
- Will our communities and relationships ever be the same again once we survive this period - fear of the unknown.
- Inspired by innovation, how people are remaining connected, and the circles of care which have been set up to keep in contact with our congregations.
- Concern for businesses who are challenged weathering this shutdown.
- Concern for those who are confined to homes which are not safe spaces.
- Concern that most of our congregations are in a high-risk demographic.

Gary thanked the Executive for their honesty and concluded with a brief prayer.

Consent Docket

Referencing the Consent Docket, Gary Clark asked if there were any questions. There were several questions of clarification about the previous meeting actions, with Brent Caslick asking about some financial items discussed at the February meeting minutes.

Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with consent docket, then declared the Consent Docket approved by consensus.

A. Enabling Actions

1. That the Agenda be adopted as circulated.
2. That the minutes of the February 19, 2020 meeting be approved as distributed.
3. That motions and proposals be written and given to the Secretary.

B. Actions

1. Authorize Heather Leffler, a member of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council Executive, to serve as President should President Gary Clark be unable to function in his role.
2. PTCC (Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation) is updating its bylaws and is making provision for two representatives from Western Ontario Waterways to serve on its Board of Directors. Because the corporation will now serve more than one regional council, a specific regional council needs to be designated as the supervisor according to the Manual C.2.13 c.

That Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees that Shining Waters Regional Council is the supervising regional council for the Presbyteries of Toronto Conference Corporation according to the Manual C. 2.13c.

Staff Items

1. Technology HUB Proposal (John Neff)

Marg Krauter asked about the origin of the HUB proposal, which involves interactive participatory worship services with one or more communities of faith (COF's) at a time. John Neff provided some context, noting that there is an ongoing trial at Midland (St. Paul's United, Partners Engaging Worship) as well as an initiative of the General Council to encourage Communities of Faith to participate in these joint sessions. Several additional points of discussion were raised concerning the details of how many test sites were either in use or being proposed.

Heather Davies noted that Edge is involved in promoting these technologies and that this is presently under review at Southampton United Church. It was determined that there are still some questions about details since Edge appears to be doing this work in parallel.

John Neff's recommendation was that our regional council take on some of the initial costs such that COF's would be able to experiment and eventually take on the full cost. Gord Dunbar pointed out that this is a good way to demonstrate our values and support congregations (Connecting, Supporting, Transforming). John Neff said that the Covenant Commission has already supported this project via the current testing at Midland.

Gary Clark restated the HUB proposal by asking if we could authorize \$5,000 to the Covenant Commission to support their ongoing Partners Engaging Worship (PEW) project. Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with this proposal, then declared the proposal approved by consensus.

2. Camping Proposal: Think Muskoka (Kathy Douglas)

Kathy Douglas said this Camping Proposal originated with an Antler River Watershed Mission & Discipleship Commission idea to begin a discussion about the future of our camps. Kathy said that camps are one of the strongest places for faith formation in our church, as well as leadership development. She said that some of the initial questions which arose about camps were: What is their mission and how is their mission being met? If all camps can't stay open, how will it be decided which will close?

Think Muskoka Consulting has a lot of experience with camps & Kathy said she had been in detailed discussion with them. The original as-presented proposal, which involved consultation and site tours, will be now reworked into a recovery plan given that camps are not likely to be open this season; the original proposal was developed pre-COVID-19.

Cheryl-Ann noted that this was primarily the work of, and funded by, the three regional council Mission & Discipleship commissions.

In response to a question from Brent Caslick, Kathy Douglas said that the camps agree with this approach, "Don't talk about us. Talk with us." Her role is to assist them with their mission.

In summary, the proposal is: Would the Executive approve an additional \$3,000 from reserve funds to allow more flexibility for full camping proposal to proceed?
Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with this proposal, then declared the proposal approved by consensus.

Business Arising

1. WOW Learning Fund

Cheryl-Ann outlined the Learning Fund criteria as presented in the written summary prior to the meeting. Gord Dunbar expressed concern that the criteria presented do not limit some outlier opportunities – e.g., a ministry retreat – and that the processes not be wholly staff-driven with respect to the approvals of funds. Several comments were voiced that the stories of these learning experiences ought to be shared with the broader church. After receiving these and other comments, Marg Krauter, Gord Dunbar & Tim Reaburn volunteered to include the additional comments into the proposal and bring it back an updated version to the Executive for approval.

2. Commission reports

a) Covenant (John Neff)

John Neff said the Covenant Commission would be meeting weekly during the COVID-19 pandemic to keep up with supporting Communities of Faith. He said that most sabbaticals have been deferred. The Commission continues to provide timely information on an as-required basis, adapting to the frequency of rapid change. In response to a question from Marg Krauter, John said that Covenant Commission needs to be informed about grant and loan requests from Communities of Faith and will process these requests to General Council to be authorized.

b) Human Resources (Micol Cottrell)

Micol Cottrell reported that the Commission is doing building and still looking for an additional representative, ideally from the Huron-Perth region. He reported that all policy documents worked on last year are now updated and on the website. One of the next focus areas will be reviewing position descriptions.

Gord Dunbar raised the matter of a retired designated lay minister (DLM) who is now a Voluntary Associate Minister. Micol Cottrell said that a congregation can always establish a relationship with a retired minister. Cheryl-Ann said that as the One Order of Ministry remit was not approved, once a DLM retires they revert to being a lay person. Micol reported that this issue is being addressed by the Office of Vocation as a recommended change to church polity (i.e., The Manual).

c) Mission & Discipleship (Deanne Dickson)

Deanne Dickson said that her Commission is still missing representation from youth & indigenous peoples. She went on to say that before the next round of grants is reviewed the Commission wants to be better informed about the applicants and has now assigned two people to meet with each applicant before year-end. Deanne said that she is getting

updates from the Commission members about their willingness to serve – i.e., how long they wish to remain on the Commission. She noted that mental health issues remain a concern of the Mission & Discipleship Commission.

3. Staff Support Committee Update (Margaret Krauter)

Marg Krauter provided a brief update on two staff support positions:

- Kim Uyede-Kai has now left for a position with Shining Waters Regional Council so our region now has a Minister, Right Relations & Indigenous Justice position vacancy.
- Diane Matheson-Jimenez has now returned to half-time work as Minister, Social Justice. Filling the vacant half-time position is recommended to be put on hold pending clarity around the budget and finances.

Cheryl-Ann noted that the relationship with indigenous ministries and dual belonging continues to evolve and it may be that the dual belonging will ultimately reside with the national indigenous council.

4. Proposal #3: Guelph Ecumenical Campus Ministry (Brent Caslick)

Brent Caslick outlined some of the details of Proposal #3, which includes recommendations for the Waterloo Presbytery legacy funds bequeathed to the Guelph Ecumenical Chaplaincy. The proposal is that the Regional Council Executive agrees:

- a) To the principle of providing all funds to the Guelph Ecumenical Chaplaincy within one calendar year;
- b) To provide \$60,000 immediately;
- c) To commit to providing the balance not later than one year from now and sooner if market conditions stabilize, and that the Executive will consult with the Guelph Ecumenical Chaplaincy about the balance of remaining funds before the year is over.

Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with this proposal, then declared the proposal approved by consensus.

New Business

1. Proposal #1: Regional Council Meetings

Gary Clark said we are not having an in-person annual meeting in May. Cheryl-Ann said that since cannot have an in-person meeting in the original time frame (May), the question now is whether the Executive would prefer an electronic meeting instead or an in-person meeting in the fall.

Marg Krauter expressed support for an in-person meeting and questioned the opportunity for celebration of ministries, to which Cheryl-Ann said that this could be worked out. Heather Leffler said that meeting in person is costly, and that if some of the routine business could be done electronically, we could then focus on “connecting” when we are meeting in person.

Several suggestions were made concerning when and where to meet, and Cheryl-Ann confirmed that while there is no need to meet immediately we do need to set a date for a fall in-person meeting or no venue will be available.

Gord Dunbar said he had done some investigation into fall regional meeting venues so agreed to do some follow-up based on the proposed dates, taking into consideration places to accommodate those who might need to stay overnight.

Tim Reaburn warned about the possibility of a second pandemic wave in the fall, which might negate the possibility of a meeting at that time.

Cheryl-Ann stated that for the May 2021 meeting it was not originally planned to meet as three councils, but many plans have now changed considering our circumstances. Cheryl-Ann has confirmed that the May 2020 guest speaker, Senator Murray Sinclair, would be willing to come in May 2021. Sue Duliban confirmed that May 2021 has been booked with UniFor in Port Elgin, but only for the Western Ontario Waterways region.

The proposal is that the Regional Council Executive agrees to:

For 2020

- a) Affirm its preference for an in-person meeting in 2020 provided public health guidelines permit
- b) Extend that in-person meeting from the previously scheduled one day to two days to allow for business and the Celebration of Ministry;

For 2021

- c) Consider a tri-regional meeting in Port Elgin in May 2021, provided theme speaker, the Honourable Senator Murray Sinclair can reschedule.

Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with this proposal, then declared the proposal approved by consensus.

2. Proposal #2: Government Assistance

The proposal is that the Regional Council Executive agrees to authorize:

Any two of the following three: the President, the Treasurer and the Executive Minister, to apply for government assistance for which the regional council is eligible.

Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with this proposal, then declared the proposal approved by consensus.

3. Social Media Guidelines

Cheryl-Ann asked that the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agree to adopt the Social Media Guidelines circulated prior to the meeting.

Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with the proposed Social Media Guidelines as presented, then declared them to be approved by consensus.

4. Staff Support Committee Mandate: Margaret Krauter

Marg Krauter asked that the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council endorse the mandate of the Staff Support Committee and add it as an appendix to the Governance Handbook.

Gary Clark asked if there was anyone who could not live with this proposed Staff Support Committee Guidelines, then declared them approved by consensus.

5. Executive Minister's Accountability Report

It was agreed to receive the Executive Minister's Accountability Report for information. Cheryl-Ann asked that any questions to be forwarded to her.

6. Supporting Communities of Faith during the COVID-19 Crisis

Gary Clark noted that we have spoken about supporting our Communities of Faith at various times throughout this meeting.

Next Executive Meetings

Cheryl-Ann said that she & Brent Caslick would meet to sort out some details for the April 28th money meeting, for which it was agreed that the meeting would be held in the 9:30-12 time frame. It was also agreed that May 20th, 9:30-12, would be the next Executive meeting.

Closing

Gary Clark thanked everyone for their time, work & attention. He asked everyone to pause and take a deep breath, commenting that Jesus breathed on the disciples and gave them power of the Holy Spirit.

The agenda having been completed and with no additional business to discuss, Gary Clark declared the meeting closed at 1 PM.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Regional Council executive money meeting, April 28, 2020. 9:30 AM
- Regional Council executive, May 20th, 9:30 AM