**Executive**

**Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

**of The United Church of Canada**

***Connecting, Supporting, Transforming***

# Wednesday, February 16, 2022

**Roster:** Mark Laird (President), Gary Clark (Past President), Rod Coates (Secretary), Brent Caslick (Treasurer), Andrea Allan, Jessica Cottrell, Heather Davies, Joyce Johnston, Heather Leffler, Terry Smith, Cathy Larmond (Human Resources Commission), Bruce Dickson (Mission & Discipleship Commission), Ann Harbridge (Covenant Commission)

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

**Present**: Andrea Allan, Brent Caslick, Gary Clark, Rod Coates, Jessica Cottrell, Heather Davies, Bruce Dickson, Sue Duliban, Ann Harbridge, Mark Laird, Cathy Larmond, Heather Leffler, Terry Smith, Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa

The Executive of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council was called to meet via Zoom teleconference on Wednesday, February 16, 2022.

**Welcome and Constitution of the Meeting**

Mark Laird called the meeting to order at 9:17 AM. He declared: I constitute this meeting in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the Church and by the authority vested in me by Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it. The bounds of this meeting will be the Zoom call.

**Acknowledging the Land**

Mark Laird said that our region covers a larger territory which crosses invisible boundaries & borders which we have set. We are all one in this creation and meant to share what God has given us. Continuing, he said: I acknowledge that there were many peoples on this land before my ancestors arrived. My people forcibly removed First Peoples from their land and claimed it as their own. I acknowledge that I live, work and worship on the traditional territory of the Mississauga, Ottawa, and Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations. May this acknowledgement be a beginning step of many on the journey toward reconciliation and justice.

**Opening Worship**

Mark Laird said that this year’s General Council theme is, “Who do you say that I am?”

Mark presented a video from General Council containing the scripture passage of Jesus & his disciples at Caesarea – sung by Shayna Jones, We Are STORYFOLK - Who do you say that I am?

[Reference: General Council YouTube Channel GC44 Opening Worship at 1:44:17 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CF6O_GrP4ak>]

Mark then asked each of the Executive members to share who Jesus is to them. Some ideas expressed by the Executive were teacher, guide, confidante, friend, role model, savior, counsellor, bridge to the divine, one who makes holy human experience, and companion.

Heather Leffler closed this check in with a brief prayer.

**Consent Docket**

1. **Enabling Actions**
2. That the Agenda be adopted as circulated.
3. That the minutes of the meetings of October 20, November 27 & December 20, 2021 be approved as distributed.
4. That motions and proposals be written and given to the Secretary.
5. **Confirmation of Email vote**

February 10, 2022

**MOTION**

Moved: Ann Harbridge, Seconded: Heather Leffler

That the Executive of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council appoints Rev. Heather Davies, Rev. Kristal McGee and Rev. David Shearman as Trustees of the Howitt Memorial Cemetery and directs them to facilitate its transfer according to the November 17, 2021 motion of the Executive.

**CARRIED**

1. **Omnibus Motion (note: dates are correct)**

Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council (8) Omnibus motion - February 16, 2022

That the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council (8) Executive take the following actions:

1. Bimini United Church Camp (Camp Bimini)

….approve Bimini United Church Camp 2020-2021 Board of Directors

Bob Doupe

Amy Halls

Harry Hengeveld

Scott Kell

Scott Jackson

Dannielle McLagan

David MacLennan

Andrew Middleton

Kathy Poirier

Mary Taylor

Golda Wilson

Blake Wood

This is based on the draft Minutes of the 2020 Annual Meeting of December 7, 2020, the 2020 board member approval form, the board contact list provided and receipt of other required documentation per The United Church of Canada incorporated ministries policy.

1. Chalmers Community Services Centre of The United Church of Canada

….approve Chalmers Community Services Centre of The United Church of Canada 2021-2022 Board of Directors

Winslow Douglas

Steve McAnulty

Steve Pierce

Bruce Ryan

Hillary Schlaht

Debbie Stanley

Eric Tuffnail

Janet Wood

These are based on the Minutes of the 2021 Annual General Meeting of

May 17, 2021, the 2021 board member approval form, the board contact list provided and receipt of other required documentation per The United Church of Canada Incorporated Ministries Policy.

Mark Laird declared the Consent Docket approved by consensus

**Business Arising**

1. **Commission Reports**
2. **Covenant**

Ann Harbridge said the activities were mainly routine. She referenced her written report, as follows:

* We are now using SharePoint rather than Dropbox for the sharing of items for our meetings. There were some members who had not logged in by our last meeting but this is being addressed. Those who have logged in have found it worked well.
* We approved the listing of the Auburn United Church for sale with an asking price of $300,000.
* A gathering of Regional Lay Representatives is planned for Feb. 22nd at 7:00 pm.. John Neff is hosting. This is in response to suggestions that Lay Reps are feeling disconnected from the regional council.
* We are receiving concerns and comments about members of the governing body needing to be Members of the United Church. There has been some pushback on this. We will wait until after General Council to see if this is addressed before taking action ourselves on this.
* Several congregations are working with UPRC in looking at redevelopment of their properties.
* A meeting of Pastoral Charge Supervisors was held by John Neff and other regional staff, and was reasonably well attended. (63 attended from the 3 regions)
* Disbandment of Dungannon UC was confirmed as of Dec. 31, 2021
* Massie UC has updated their title to Trustees of the United Church from the former Methodist Church. We believe there are still churches out there who have not done so. This becomes an issue when they want to sell their property.
* We are looking to form a Property Committee. Members will have expertise in property matters, to help us deal the multitude and complexity of Property matters in the region.
* Symbols for covenanting – it was brought to our attention that our symbols for covenanting were not necessarily culturally sensitive. We agreed, the chain was not an appropriate symbol, particularly for people of colour. We have changed this symbol to Olive Oil, which is often used in baptism, and is a reminder of our connection to one another through our baptism. Concern was also expressed about the walking stick, as it might not be appropriate for those who are not able bodied and able to walk. However, we decided to stay with it, as we felt that it is an aid for those who have difficulty walking, and so is appropriate.

Cheryl-Ann noted that transitioning from Dropbox to SharePoint is beginning with the Covenant Commission, and that in the coming months all of the region, including commissions, will transition to SharePoint.

1. **Human Resources**

Cathy Larmond said the Commission is moving along making appointments & calls. She said that the Commission is working with LLWL’s to arrange ongoing training and that new minister orientation will receive some focus. Cathy also noted improvement with respect to liaisons and that additional training for them has been completed.

1. **Mission & Discipleship**

Bruce Dickson referenced his written report, as follows:

**Areas of work being undertaken:**

**Within the commission**:

* Better tracking of expenses and committed funds
* Equity monitor for each meeting
* Importance to start with the land acknowledgement at each meeting even with a guest present.
* Succession planning for leadership in the commission. Two of the group willing to co-lead after the May meeting given the approval of the commission as a whole.

**In the region:**

Approval of support for YAT Forum (spring) & Youth Rally (fall) Project. Implications for WOW region is the request to house the fund collection and payment part of this project.

An Observation: Continuing theme of need or struggle. Loneliness and loss/need of belonging. Depression and grief in our time and community of faiths. Depressed church. Opportunity that pandemic unveils.

Racial Justice workshops (series of four conclude tonight) - Staff support

Proposed Right Relations Winter-Spring Events

* Acknowledging the Territory
* Together in Art/ Together in Prayer: Tobacco Tie / Together in Story
* Follow-up to TRC Sessions

Anti-bullying Workshop being worked on

Meet next on March 3, 2022 at 1 p.m. we will be visited by one of our Mission support partners – ECM.

Bruce noted that with the timing of the early May spring meeting and Easter, it may cause some scheduling issues for the Commission and wondered if there would be a requirement for a contribution/presentation from the Commission at this meeting. Mark Laird said this would only occur once per year, and not at the spring meeting. Cathy Larmond asked if there was a place to learn which mission grants had been issued, which prompted a discussion as to how to make this more readily available.

1. **Discussion: From Proposal #2: Cost of Supporting Congregations (January 19, 2022 meeting)**

2) Authorizes staff to offer the resources best suited for supporting and strengthening congregations in crisis provided the President and Treasurer are consulted in advance and both agree that the matter can proceed without requiring action by the Executive. This consultation to be documented in the pastoral charge file.

**This topic will be deferred to the next meeting**

**Communication/Updates**

1. **Massie Update**

Cheryl-Ann said some of the decisions have been difficult, but the congregation are making good decisions, taking initiative & managing their affairs. There are still some issues, but progress is being made.

1. **Spring Meeting Update**

Mark Laird said the May regional meeting planning group met this week and decided that this will be an online-only meeting. He added that there will be an outdoor regional camp meeting held in June which will allow for more socializing.

**New Business**

1. **Nominations for executive/commissions: encouraging diversity, tapping people on the shoulder**

Mark Laird referenced the list of current Executive and Commission members, noting their remaining terms in their respective roles. Cheryl-Ann said that asking for volunteers doesn’t work as well as tapping people on the shoulder and being intentional. She noted that we need a President-Elect and asked about the merits of a nominating committee. Heather Leffler described how that might work based on past practice. Cheryl-Ann said it would be helpful to review the list of regional reps and suggested Heather Leffler, Tim Reaburn & Jennifer Irving would be an intentional nominating committee to engage more people in the work of the regional council. It was also suggested that we re-communicate videos we have previously used to describe the work of commissions. The Executive provided some round table feedback, with several comments about addressing diversity within commissions and the Executive.

The Executive agreed to contact Tim Reaburn & Jennifer Irving and ask them to assist us in recruiting names of nominees for our Executive and commissions.

Heather Leffler declared this proposal approved by consensus.

1. **Question to reflect upon: How do we lift up and affirm who we want to be as a regional council on an ongoing basis at executive. Future discussion?**

Mark Larid posed the question: How do we take this training to lift up on a daily basis?

Cheryl-Ann said our intention statements are: 1) Connecting, Supporting, Transforming; 2) Affirm Action Plan; 3) Anti-Racism. Continuing, she posed the question, How has our work today been an expression of our intentions and how have we fallen short? Cheryl-Ann said that that one possibility is to briefly review these intentions at the end of each meeting and see how we have addressed them.

For the upcoming February 24th meeting, Cheryl-Ann suggested some guided reflection might help inform the discussion. Mark Larid said he would prepare some notes for that occasion.

Mark Laird thanked everyone for their participation and closed the meeting at 10:38 AM

[Note: Several Zoom meeting connection interruptions were experienced by Jessica & Mark due to power instability, with Heather Leffler stepping in for Mark when he was offline.]

**Ongoing**

1. Racial Justice training: Feb. 16
2. Racial Justice training discussion/feedback/takeaway: Feb. 24

Next regular Executive meeting: Wednesday, March 16, 2022, 9:15 a.m.