**Executive**

**Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

**of The United Church of Canada**

***Connecting, Supporting, Transforming***

# Wednesday, March 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, March 16, 2022.

**Welcome and Constitution of the Meeting**

Mark Laird called the meeting to order at 9:18 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**

Referring to the land acknowledgement used at his congregation’s PIE Sunday service, Mark Laird said that as we listen for God to speak to us today in our worship, we also look to see the visible face of God in our lives. In this week of being public, intentional, and explicit (PIE), we intentionally and explicitly look to be inclusive in our welcoming. Part of being welcoming and loving is to acknowledge past wrongs. And one small step in seeing God’s healing love is to acknowledge that we live, work and worship on the traditional territories of the Mississauga, Ottawa, and Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nations.

**Opening Worship**

Lighting a Christ Candle, Mark Laird referenced the book, Taking Flight (Anthony de Mello), noting that especially during Lent we talk about giving up & letting go of things, and sometimes this involves giving up possessions. In contrast to this Lenten practice, he asked each Executive member to share a favourite thing that they have. There was an eclectic set of responses, including a boat, being debt free and free to travel, books, pens, music & musical instruments, time and freedom to say how time is spent, craft supplies & the ability to be creative, an Instapot, a cottage/camp, souvenirs from trip to the Holy Land, a Barbie doll collection, a quilt studio.

Mark closed this sharing period with a prayer, noting that in Ukraine many people must leave items similar to these behind. His prayer focused on assistance for the people of Ukraine.

**Consent Docket**

1. **Enabling Actions**
2. That the Agenda be adopted as circulated.
3. That the minutes of the meetings of January 13, January 19 and February 16, 2022 be approved as distributed.
4. That motions and proposals be written and given to the Secretary.
5. **Correspondence Received**
6. Diane Blanchard: retirement request effective August 30, 2022

**Consent Docket**

Mark briefly noted consent docket contents, then asked each person in turn for their approval.

Mark Laird then declared the Consent Docket approved by consensus

**New Business**

**Proposal #5 -** 2019 Financial Statements

Cheryl-Ann noted there were a few notes in the auditors’ financial statement report which need correction prior to the report being released, but that otherwise the financial elements were correct.

**Moved by**: Brent Caslick

**Seconded by**: Heather Leffler

That the Western Ontario Waterways Executive:

1. Approve the 2019 audited statements for Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council; and
2. Direct that the statements be included in the workbook for the spring meeting of the regional council for information.

Cheryl-Ann provided an overview of the statement and funds held. She noted that funds will be listed in the statements by their former, not current, names.

Mark Laird asked each person in turn for their approval, then declared the motion **CARRIED**.

**Business Arising**

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

Ann Harbridge said that the symbols of community of faith (COF) covenanting have now been finalized to include olive oil (new), walking stick (modified), and candle (transforming); covenanting service wording has been updated and made more inclusive.

Ann said that 31 annual reports have now been received, so COF’s are now doing their annual meetings; she said that a volunteer will be reviewing the annual reports and reporting to the Commission if there are any issues.

Ann said that Fordwich United is now officially closed. She said that COVID has hit some churches more than others and the Commission has been receiving requests for access to restricted funds. Occasionally the Commission asks COF’s to review long-term viability with a focus on new life, not using funds towards prolonging the inevitable.

She said that there is still a need for pastoral charge supervisors.

1. **Human Resources**

Cathy Larmond said the Commission just met yesterday and were sad to hear that Diane Blanchard had decided to retire. Cathy said that recruiting of pastoral liaisons has improved. Some upcoming M&P workshops have focused topics – e.g., basic & advanced - so there is no need to attend all workshops.

1. **Mission & Discipleship**

No report.

Cheryl-Ann noted that Sarah Charters is arranging a round table on M&S granting.

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 item to be carried forward to a future meeting**

**New Business** (Continued)

1. **Executive Minister’s March 2022 Accountability Report (For Information)**

Cheryl-Ann highlighted from her report that the last of the staff position descriptions were recently updated and ready for approval, but General Council Human Resources has implemented a position description template so the updates will need to be reviewed in consideration of this change.

1. **Proposal 1 – Sabbatical Plan (Kevin Steeper)**

Cheryl-Ann noted that Kevin Steeper is working towards a master’s degree in pastoral counselling, and the program is quite intense. Executive members briefly discussed covering staff positions during this and other upcoming staff sabbaticals.

The proposal is that the Western Ontario Waterways Executive:

Approve the Sabbatical Proposal presented by Minister, Pastoral Support, Kevin Steeper, and authorize his sabbatical leave from May 1, 2023 - July 31, 2023.

Mark Laird asked each person in turn for their approval, then declared this proposal approved by consensus.

1. **Proposal 2 – Sabbatical Plan (John Neff)**

Cheryl-Ann said there is a growing concern among staff that there will be congregations who will not have ministers of their own, and how do we staff or resource those congregations, and this will be a focus of John Neff’s sabbatical.

The proposal is that the Western Ontario Waterways Executive:

Approve the Sabbatical Proposal presented by Minister, Congregational Support and Mission, John Neff, and authorize his sabbatical leave from May 9, 2022 – August 8th, 2022.

Mark Laird asked each person in turn for their approval, then declared this proposal approved by consensus.

1. **Proposal 3 – Support for Racial Justice Training**

Mark Laird said that this proposal arose as follow-up from the recent Executive racial justice training. One of the items arising from the training was developing an opportunity to offer it to other people, which this proposal addresses.

In response to a question from Andrea Allan, it was agreed to add the term “Adherent” to the proposal. There was also a brief discussion regarding how United in Learning would administer the training and how to support everyone who might wish to attend.

**Moved by**: Cathy Larmond

**Seconded by**: Andrea Allan

That the Executive agrees:

1. To cover the full cost for four sessions of racial justice training through United-in-Learning for any ministry personnel belonging to Western Ontario Waterways regional council and for any member or adherent of a congregation within the regional council who registers before December 31, 2022 and
2. To provide this financial support from the Learning Grants Fund

Mark Laird asked each person in turn for their approval, then declared the motion **CARRIED**.

1. **Proposal 4** **– Search Team**

Cheryl-Ann noted this proposal was straightforward and that the timeline was tighter due to Diane Blanchard’s personal circumstances. She said that Marg Krauter has agreed to be part of the interview team.

The proposal is that the Western Ontario Waterways Executive agrees to:

1. Receive Diane Blanchard’s request for retirement with gratitude for her time with us, and with regret, and ask the Staff Support Committee to plan a celebration to honour Diane’s service;
2. Direct the Executive Minister to initiate a search to fill this vacancy; and
3. Authorize the Staff Support Committee to create a search team from its membership provided each regional council is represented.

Mark Laird asked each person in turn for their approval, then declared this proposal approved by consensus.

1. **Postponing April 20th Executive meeting until April 27th**

The Executive agreed to change the April meeting date from April 20th to April 27th.

**Ongoing**

1. **May meeting**

Mark Laird said the May regional council meeting would be online, and that a camp day in person would occur in June. The location of Camp Day is still under discussion.

1. **Celebration of Ministry service: open to holding two services in a year if needed?**

Cheryl-Ann said that Adele Halliday, General Council General Council Office Anti-Racism and Equity Lead, will be preaching at the Celebration of Ministries service.

Mark Laird said that there is another candidate for ministry but they will not ready (for ordination/commission) until the end of June.

Cheryl-Ann noted that accreditation is affected by years of service and must be recognized by June 30th in any given year in order to count towards years of service. She also noted that a new practice will be for the 2-year supervised ministry experience to begin July 1st and end June 30th.

Mark Laird thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 11:05 AM

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 27th, 9:15 am, Zoom