**Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

**Fall 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**“We Are One – Living Into Right Relations”**

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council was called to meet on Thursday, September 28, Friday, September 29 and Saturday, September 30, 2023 via Zoom with approximately 110 to 120 participants online in attendance each day.

***Meeting Session:* Thursday, September 28, 2023**

**4:00 – 9:00 PM**

**Welcome & Constitute Meeting**

President Jennifer Irving constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ, the one true head of the Church and by the authority vested in him by the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it.

Those gathered were invited to share the territory they were joining the meeting from, in the chat.

**Opening Worship:** Worship Team

**Proposal #1 Opening & Procedural Motion**

Terry Smith, Chair Agenda & Business Committee, provided an overview of Proposal #1 – Opening & Procedural Motion.

**MOTION:** Terry Smith / Mark Laird

That the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council adopt the following as a consent docket:

1. Adopt the agenda as circulated and authorize the Agenda and Business Committee to make any changes as necessary;

2. Approve the minutes of the meeting of 2023-05-26-27;

3. Receive the following minutes of the following meetings of the

i. Executive

23-07-19

23-06-15

23-05-17

23-04-19

ii. Congregational Support Commission

23-06-20

23-05-11

iii. Human Resources Commission

23-05-16

iv. Discipleship and Justice Commission

2023-06-27

2023-04-13

for information.

Note: Minutes are posted on the website www.wowrcucc.ca “About” page

4. Appoint Fred Monteith as Parliamentarian;

5. Appoint Terry Smith as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;

6. Name Maggie Dieter to serve as Equity Support Team Member;

7. Name President Jennifer Irving, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Terry Smith, Acting Executive Minister Mark Laird, and Executive Assistant Sue Duliban, as the Agenda and Business Committee;

8. Set the bounds of the meeting as the zoom call and the Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, Ontario;

9. Make the designated representative from any United Church ministry, other than a congregation, which has been invited to become a community of faith by entering into a covenant with the regional council, a member of the regional council for this meeting (Section C.1.2 c);

10. Make all guests corresponding members;

11. Set the deadline for new business to be submitted to the Agenda and Business Committee as 9:00 p.m., Thursday, September 28;

12. Receive all written reports in the workbook;

13. Adopt the following method for dealing with proposals for action by the regional council

Step One:

The Presenter will outline:

A) What is the issue? and

B) The suggested way in which the regional council might respond to the issue.

Step Two:

The President will inquire if there are questions for clarification. Please note this is for clarification only.

Step Three:

The President will then ask if there are changes or additions being suggested for the proposal. Using warm and cool signals, the regional council will seek to come closer to agreement on how to respond to the issue.

Step Four:

Once there is significant agreement, the President will invite the Presenter to move the motion at which point the regional council enters the formal debate process. **CARRIED.**

**Leadership Team Introductions**

President Jennifer introduced the leadership team, including herself as President:

Terry Smith: Agenda & Business Chair

Mark Laird: Acting Executive Minister

Fred Monteith: Parliamentarian

Ann Harbridge, Rebekah Duncan, Joyce Johnston: Worship Team

Sue Duliban: Executive Assistant/Minutes Secretary

John Neff, Michele Petick: Zoom Tech

Kevin Steeper, Lesley Fox: Chaplains

Maggie Dieter: Equity Support Team Member

**BRAVE, Affirming Statement**

Equity Support Team Member Maggie Dieter introduced her role and raised up BRAVE: Commitments to Community Safety and the tri-region Affirming Statement.

President Jennifer invited those attending their first Regional Council meeting or new to the regional council, as willing, to raise their hand, turn on video and introduce themselves. Those not comfortable being onscreen were invited to add their information to the chat. Those introduced included:

Aidan Legault, Student minister at Westminster, Orangeville; Anne Eadie, Pine River UC, Gail Clarkson, Fordwich; Hoeun Lee, First United, Waterloo; Curtis Marwood transferred from ARWRC; Nancy Flagel, from Dundalk and studying to become a Licenced Lay Worship Leader; Connie Shiell, Belgrave; Yun-Hee Noh-Perry, Kitchener.

**Habitat For Humanity Build: John Bedall**

John Bedell joined the gathering, live from the site of a Habitat for Humanity build on the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation to share his experiences and learnings which his sees as reconciliation in action.

**Proposal #2 GC45 Commissioners Election in 2024**

Heather Leffler, a member of the WOWRC Volunteer Recruitment Team provided background and an outline of Proposal #2. (Team includes President Jennifer Irving and Rebekah Duncan).

Discussion/questions for clarification included discussion on diversity of slate, entrusting the slate to the executive, concern about regional council voices being heard when determining the commissioners, streamlining the voting process. For longer discussion and conversation down the line, how can our regional council create a really supportive environment; noted by Heather Leffler for the Volunteer Recruitment Team to consider.

The Regional Council **agreed** by consensus to extend the order of the day by five minutes to conclude Proposal #2.

**MOTION:** Judy Zarubick / Roz Vincent-Haven

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees:

1. To close nominations for Commissioners to GC45 as of midnight April 15, 2024;
2. To publicize the deadline in advance (website, newsletter, with registration materials)
3. To direct the Recruiting Team authorized by the spring 2023 meeting and appointed by the Executive to review the nominations with a view to:
4. Ensure a diverse cohort of Commissioners and alternates who bring both experience and new energy to the role and who are committed to the preparation and online prior requirements for General Council;
5. Recruit nominees to address gaps in representation.
6. To vote on the slate as a whole at the spring 2024 regional council meeting.

**CARRIED**

Reminder from Terry Smith, Agenda and Business Chair, of the deadline for new business: Thursday, Sept. 28, 9 PM.

Sung grace prior to the supper break: 5:30 – 7:00 PM

***Thursday Evening Session:* 7 PM**

President Jennifer welcomed all back to the meeting and noted that retirees will be honoured in person at the Spring 2024 meeting. Those joining the evening session were invited to introduce themselves. Greta Horton, lay representative from Centennial, Stayner, and Andrew Hyde, Ecumenical Chaplain from the University of Guelph, introduced themselves.

**Going Deeper on the Regional Council Evaluation: Conversation Groups**

Those gathered were invited by Beth Kerr, Executive Member, and Mark Laird, Acting Executive Minister, to self-select a topic from the regional council evaluation to explore in depth in breakout room conversation.

The goal for this time of conversation being to focus on how the regional council might move forward with the evaluation recommendations by providing input and ideas that can help strengthen the regional council’s work together. Each breakout group had a facilitator and a notetaker. A compilation of notes taken will be available to the Executive and Commissions and Staff whose work they relate to. Notetakers to send their notes to Mark Laird.

Reminder from Terry Smith, Agenda and Business Chair, of the deadline for new business: Thursday, Sept. 28, 9 PM.

**In Memoriam**

A video presentation honoured and gave thanks for the life of Rev. Elizabeth Praamsma.

**Community of Faith Life Cycle Changes**

A video presentation honoured the legacy and faithful service of Bluevale United Church whose congregation disbanded and offered blessings for the amalgamation of Angus United Church and Grenfel United Church into Grenfel United Church.

**Closing prayer & the Sacred Fire**

The evening closed with a prayer and a hymn and powerful teaching as those gathered witnessed the lighting of the Sacred Fire that had taken place at Cape Croker at the opening of the meeting. This fire will be kept burning throughout the meeting.

***Meeting Session:* Friday September 29**

**4:00 – 9:00 PM**

**Welcome & Land Acknowledgement**

President Jennifer opened the session with prayer. Those gathered were invited to use the chat to acknowledge the traditional territories, nations, peoples of where they were joining from.

Newcomers were again invited to introduce themselves. Those introduced included Bob Funston, Sauble Beach, Shirley Greenwood, Knox Durham.

**Opening worship**: Worship Team

**Congregational Support Commission Engagement: *Paying Pastoral Charge Supervisors Discussion***

Chair Ann Harbridge shared information on Pastoral Charge Supervisors and the new policy, beginning January 1, 2024, of compensation for time spent in supervision of a Pastoral Charge to be paid by the Pastoral Charge. Time in break-out rooms focused on the growing need for Pastoral Charge Supervisors within WOWRC and how people might be encouraged to become Pastoral Charge Supervisors. Feedback can be sent to Ann Harbridge (ann.harbridge@gmail.com).

**Introduction of Candidate/Address to the Court**

Video messages were shared from Sarah Bruer, Program Coordinator for Admissions, Ministry and Employment Unit, the UCC, who introduced admittand Whitton Daley. Whitton then addressed the court. Whitton is serving in ministry at Cedar Hill United Church in Cambridge.

**Proposal #3 Budget 2024**

Treasurer Brent Caslick reviewed the proposal, and, with Acting Executive Minister Mark Laird, answered questions for clarification, noting the regional council has investments and investment income to cover the forecasted deficit.

**MOTION**: Brent Caslick / David Shearman

That the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council

1. Receive the internal 2023 operating statement to date for information;
2. Direct the Executive to deal with the 2022 Auditors’ Report OR Receive the 2022 Audited Financial Statements for information;
3. Endorse the following principles for the 2024 budget:
4. To base costs on the figures from previous years with a 4.5% increase for inflation; (guideline for office expenses that type of thing)
5. To fund expenses for matters involving *The Manual, Section J; Oversight and Discipline*, from the Unrestricted Operating Reserve as these fluctuate in number and cost; and
6. Use the Investment income and the PTCC Net Revenue Grant to help offset the reduction in M&S grant received by the Regional Council to support Mission Support Grants.

4. Appoint KPMG.LCP as auditors for the 2023 Financial Year.

5. Adopt the proposed 2024 budget authorizing the Executive to adapt as necessary within the above guidelines.

**CARRIED.**

**Announcements**

The Volunteer Recruitment Team would also like to hear from those who are part of a cluster group. Please email Heather Leffler, hleffler@rogers.com, the details of who gathers and when to help the regional council find ways to connect to one another.

Cheryl-Ann Stadelbauer-Sampa is currently on sabbatical, with Mark Laird serving as Acting Executive Minister in her absence. Cheryl-Ann has been seconded to the General Council, her position will be advertised shortly.

Annual fundraiser for the University of Guelph Ecumenical Campus Ministry.

Gathering of former Waterloo Presbytery (contact Gary Clark).

Sung grace prior to the supper break: 5:30 – 7:00 PM

***Friday Evening Session:* 7 PM**

President Jennifer welcomed back participants following the supper break.

**Worship**: Worship Team

**Engagement with the Human Resources Commission**

David Shearman shared an entertaining slide show outlining the work of the Human Resources Commission with vocals by fellow HR Commissioner, Harry Disher. Participants were given the opportunity to return to break-out rooms for ten minutes for further discussion on pastoral charge liaisons and pastoral charge supervisors. Feedback/wisdom arising from the break-out room discussion can be shared with Human Resource Commission Chair Doug Hayward and Congregational Support Commission Chair Ann Harbridge.

**Discipleship & Justice Commission Engagement**

Andrew Hyde, Chair of the Discipleship & Justice Commission, shared some of the work the commission has been engaged in throughout the year; highlighting the Commission’s administration of Mission Support grants. Three camps within the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council boundaries, Camp Menesetung, Camp Bimini and Silver Lake Camp shared videos. The court was The court was asked to consider the importance of allocating financial resources to Camping Ministries.

**New Business:** No new business.

***Time for Conversation: Dreams & Imaginings for the Regional Council***

President Jennifer then invited all to a time of conversation in break-out rooms; sharing what may have arisen for participants during the course of the meeting. Anything that was felt would be of benefit to the Regional Council, to be shared with President Jennifer (jennifer@ucstayner.ca).

Worship and Orange Shirt Day Message (video) from the Moderator, the Right Reverend, Dr. Carmen Lansdowne. President Jennifer invited those gathered to join her in wearing Orange Shirts in the morning.

***Meeting Session:* Saturday, September 29, 2023, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

**9:00 AM – 12 Noon**

**Worship**: Worship Team

**Truth & Reconciliation Sharing**

Thérèse Samuel, Minister, Right Relations & Social Justice for Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council, and Joyce Johnston, Indigenous Ministries Representative to the WOWRC Executive, joined the gathering from Cape Croker and shared reflections and stories. Thérèse invited the court to share one word that was coming to their hearts in that moment that reflects an important aspect of the work toward reconciliation. With the words that were shared in the chat, she created a Word Cloud. Those words that are bigger reflect that they were shared multiple times.



**Remit Education Update & Questions for Clarification**

Thérèse Samuel, Minister, Right Relations & Social Justice, and John Egger, Minister Social Justice led a time of further education, including questions, comments and discussion, on the General Council Remit #1. President Jennifer clarified that the court could not make changes to the Remit. The Remit vote was called by President Jennifer.



**Remit Vote: Yes to Remit #1**

After the vote, President Jennifer shared in a prayer and when requested shared that 92% of the votes on the Zoom Poll were in favour with 8% opposed.

**Save the Dates:** Spring 2024 Tri-Regional Council Meeting, online and in-person. May 24, 25, 26, 2024

at the UNIFOR Centre, Port Elgin. Speaker: Moderator Carmen Lansdowne.

**Courtesies:** President Jennifer thanked all those who shared in the leadership and work of the meeting. Joyce Johnston, her son Ken (Sacred Fire Keeper) and all other Sacred Fire Keepers. Ann Harbridge and Rebekah Duncan, Joyce Johnston for worship. Acting Executive Minister Mark Laird for his humour and constant encouragement. Terry Smith, Agenda and Business Chair, who calmly assured all was in order. Work behind the scenes by staff (Sue Duliban, amazing tech staff John Neff, Michele Petick) that does not go unnoticed. Gratitude for parliamentarian Fred Monteith’s experience and guidance. A blessing to have Maggie Dieter, Kevin Steeper and Lesley Fox, knowing support was available if needed. Thanks to Thérèse Samuel and John Egger and Cathy Hird for their work around the Remit. And a thank you for those who gave presentations. Thanks for the commitment and work of all involved.

**Thanking President**: Mark Laird, as Past President, thanked President Jennifer for her leadership, continued leadership, grace, compassion, preparedness and her willingness to engage in challenging conversations and lead us through difficult and hard times for some in this space. Spirit has shone through; thank you for a spectacular job.

 **Unfinished/New Business**: There was no unfinished or new business brought forward.

**Proposal #4: Closing Motion**

**MOTION:** Terry Smith / Mark Laird

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees to:

1. Entrust any unfinished business from its September 28-October 1, 2023 meeting to the Executive;
2. Authorize the Executive to fill any vacancies on the understanding that appointments will be confirmed at the next regional council meeting;
3. Direct the Executive to plan to convene a meeting of the regional council in the spring of 2024;
4. Entrust the Executive and Commissions with the responsibilities and authority of Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council in accordance with The Manual of The United Church of Canada and the Governance Handbook of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council;
5. Close the September 28-October 1, 2023 meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council at the close of the Celebration of Ministries Service on Sunday, October 1, 2023.

**CARRIED.**

  **Closing Blessing**: Worship Team

  **Adjournment**

Sunday October 1

10:30 AM: World Wide Communion. Service livestreamed from Centennial United Church, Stayner

Sunday October 1

4:00 PM: Celebration of Ministry Service. Celebrant: Whitton Daley. Service livestreamed from Cedar Hill United Church, Cambridge