**Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council**

**of The United Church of Canada**

**Spring 2024 Meeting**

The Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council was called to meet on Saturday, May 25 and Sunday, May 26, 2024 in hybrid fashion, in person and on zoom, in conjunction with the Tri-Regional Council gathering at the Unifor Family Education Centre, Port Elgin. For the WOWRC business sessions, there were approximately 90 participants in person and 55 participants online for each session.

***Meeting Session:* Saturday, May 25, 2024**

**9:00-10:30 a.m.**

**Welcome** President Jennifer welcomed all to the meeting.

**Morning Song** Those gathered sang acapella, *Great is Thy Faithfulness*.

**Constitution of Meeting (President Jennifer)**

With strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, 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 me by the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council for whatever business may properly come before it.

**Proposal 1: Opening and Procedural Motion**

**MOTION:** Roz Vincent-Haven/Doug Hayward

That the 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 September 28-October 1, 2023;
3. Receive the following minutes of the following meetings of the
4. Executive

24-04-17

24-03-20

24-02-21

24-01-17

24-01-13

23-12-06

23-11-15

23-10-18

23-09-19

1. Congregational Support Commission

24-04-11

24-03-21

24-03-14

24-02-08

24-01-11

23-11-09

23-10-16

23-09-19

1. Human Resources Commission

23-10-17

23-09-19

23-07-18

23-06-20

1. Discipleship and Justice Commission

23-09-19

for information.

*Note:  Minutes are posted on the website*  <https://wowrcucc.ca/meeting-minutes/>

1. Confirm the appointment of Colin Snyder to the Congregational Support Commission;
2. Confirm the appointment of Sharon Norton to the Congregational Support Commission;
3. Confirm the appointment of Peter Kupfer to the Congregational Support Commission;
4. Confirm the appointment of Kate Ballagh-Steeper to the Discipleship and Justice Commission;
5. Confirm the appointment of Wonder Chimvinga to the Executive;
6. Appoint Fred Monteith as Parliamentarian;
7. Appoint Terry Smith as Chair, Agenda and Business Committee;
8. Name Maggie Dieter to serve as Equity Support Team Member;
9. Name President Jennifer Irving, Chair Agenda and Business Committee Terry Smith, Recording Secretary Beth Kerr, and Parliamentarian Fred Monteith, as the Agenda and Business Committee;
10. Name the Chair of the Agenda and Business Committee and Parliamentarian as scrutineers.
11. Set the bounds of the meeting as the zoom call and the UNIFOR Family Education Centre, Port Elgin, Ontario;
12. 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);
13. Make all guests corresponding members;
14. Set the deadline for new business to be submitted to the Agenda and Business Committee as of 2:00 p.m., Saturday, May 25, 2024;
15. Receive all written reports in the workbook;
16. Adopt the following method for dealing with proposals for action by the regional council

Step One:

The Presenter will outline:

1. What is the issue? and
2. 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.**

**Introduction of Leadership Team:**  President Jennifer introduced the leadership team for this meeting.

**BRAVE, Affirming Statement**

TheEquity Support Team (Maggie Dieter, Linda Roberts, Andrea Allen) described their role and raised up BRAVE: Commitments to Community Safety and the tri-regional council Affirming Statement.

**Introductions**

President Jennifer invited those attending their first regional council meeting or new to the regional council, as willing, to introduce themselves. Those introduced included: Ayla Mackie from Westminster (Waterloo), Aiden Legault from Westminster (Orangeville), Linda Roberts from Trinity (Lucknow), Barbara Schoch from Avondale (Stratford), Jayden Excalante-Jones from Three Willows (Guelph), Rebecca Whiting from Westminster (Waterloo), Kate Monk from Thamesview (Fullarton), Ruth Cook from Trinity (Guelph), Wendy Cartwright from Hope Springs, Penny Inkster from Port Elgin, Marnie McDonough from Trinity-Annan.

**WOW Regional Council Directory**

The WOW Recruitment team are working to create a WOW Regional Council Directory. Speak to Rebekah Duncan during the meeting to verify your information or email at [rebekahjane73@gmail.com](mailto:rebekahjane73@gmail.com)

**Proposal 2: GC45 Commissioners Slate**

**MOTION:** Cheryl Oliva/Mary Weidner

That the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees to:

1. Approve the GC45 Commissioners Slate prepared by the Recruitment Team as presented:

**Ministry Personnel**

Wonder Chimvinga

Whitton Daley  
Alexander Jebson   
Neil Parker  
Roz Vincent-Haven  
Judy Zarubick  
Jennifer Irving: First Alternate  
Linda Roberts: Second Alternate

**Lay**

Dawn Blanchard  
Mark Breathwaite

Karen Cartmell  
Brent Caslick  
Christine Grose  
Neelah Irving  
Ann Harbridge: First Alternate

Douglas Hayward: Second Alternate  
Carol Leibold: Third Alternate  
Penny Squirrell: Fourth Alternate

1. Empower the WOWRC Executive to name one Youth or Young Adult (aged 30 or under) Alternate to General Council 45 who would serve if either of our two Youth or Young Adult commissioners is not able to attend.
2. Encourage the Recruitment Team to gather diverse voices to discern slates for Regional Council Meetings and General Council Commissioners.

**CARRIED.**

**Proposal 3: Proposal to GC 45 from Glen Morris United Church**

Representatives from Glen Morris presented the proposal.

**MOTION:** Lynne McRuer/Jenn Westbrook

That Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council agrees with Proposal 3 from Glen Morris United Church to allow adherents to be elected to governing bodies. **DEFEATED.**

**MOTION:** Craig Bartlett/Diane Dunseith

That Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council disagree and forward to the General Council, Proposal 3 from Glen Morris United Church to allow adherents to be elected to governing bodies.

Comments: While the Regional Council was supportive of the principle of this proposal, it was felt that it needed further clarification or work. Further discussion and vote on the Proposal 3 motion was moved to Unfinished Business on Sunday as we arrived at our time limit for this session.

***Meeting Session:* Saturday, May 25, 2024**

**7:30 to 9:00 p.m.**

**President Elect Nominee Speech**

Rebekah Duncan addressed the court about why she is offering to serve as President Elect.

**Honouring New Affirming Ministries**

Andrew Hyde and the Discipleship and Justice Commission presented WOWRC Pride Flags to newly affirming ministries: Grace United Church in Hanover, Lakeshore United Church in Goderich, Rockwood United Church in Rockwood, Stone United Church in Eramosa.

**Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada**

Ann Harbridge shared ideas for honouring the 100th anniversary. Every community of faith was encouraged to get a puzzle piece from Rebekah Duncan to decorate before the Spring 2025 meeting to represent their ministry. It will be collected ahead of that meeting to create a mosaic with the other pieces for the Spring 2025 meeting. Those in person can take for their neighbours and the organizers will figure out how to get the puzzle pieces to other communities. There is also a survey to fill out about a rally/worship service idea for Spring 2025 and a list of ideas for local communities of faith to consider.

**Proposal 4: Executive/Commissions Slate**

President Jennifer thanked those who have finished their terms or are stepping down from their positions.

Andrea Allen was removed from those stepping down from the WOW Executive as her term is not yet up.

**MOTION:** Bruce Dickson/Roz Vincent-Haven

That the Regional Council approve the slate prepared by the Recruitment Team as presented:

**Executive/Commissions Slate**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Executive** |  |
| **Secretary** | Dawn Blanchard L (27) |
| **Discipleship & Justice Commission** | John Adeyemi OM (27) |
|  | Diane Dick L (27) |
|  | Kristal McGee OM (27) |
| **Human Resources Commission** | Lena Medeiros OM (27) |
|  | James Montgomery L (27) |
|  | Cait Stewart L (27) |

**CARRIED.**

**Proposal 3: Motion** to disagree and forward was briefly discussed until the Moderator arrived as the Order of the Day.

**Order of the Day: Visit from Moderator.** The Moderator responded to questions from the Regional Council.

**Closing**: President Jennifer invited those gathered to finish out the day together by singing *Taps*.

***Meeting Session:* Sunday, May 22, 2024**

**9:00-10:00 a.m.**

**Opening Prayer:** President Jennifer began the day with prayer.

**Election of President Elect**

**MOTION:** Greta Horton/Penny Squirrel

That the Regional Council elect Rebekah Duncan as President Elect of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council.  **CARRIED Unanimously.**

**Proposal 3 continued**

The Mover and Seconder of the motion to transmit Proposal 3 to the General Council without Regional Council agreement **withdrew** that motion.

**MOTION:** Craig Bartlett/ Roz Vincent-Haven

That the Regional Council refer Proposal 3 to the Congregational Support Commission who will take into account the original proposal, the conversation at this meeting and any input sent to them following this meeting to bring back a revised proposal to the Fall 2024 meeting in November. **CARRIED**

**New Business**

* Mervyn Russell from Horseshoe Falls Regional Council, Discipleship and Justice Commission, shared a petition regarding humanitarian aid for Gaza. By consensus, the petition was available for folks to sign after this meeting and given to the WOWRC Discipleship and Justice Commission.
* Penny Inkster from Port Elgin United Church invited anyone who was interested in learning more about the history of Gaza to an event sponsored by Ceasefire Grey-Bruce on Wed. June 5 in Port Elgin or July 3 in Owen Sound.

**Regional Council Evaluation Update**

Beth Kerr walked those gathered through a quick summary of where the regional council is at with the results of the evaluation. There is a document in the meeting workbook updating everyone with the suggestions that were made. If you have further feedback for the Executive, please email [bethkerrdm@gmail.com](mailto:bethkerrdm@gmail.com)

**Announcements**

* **Licensed Lay Worship Leaders**: There is a Facebook group. Send a friend request to Phyllis Brown Fleming if you want to join**.**
* **Dublin Street United Church:** Invited to 150th anniversary and encourage our prayers.
* **Queer Vespers Service:** June 2 at 7 p.m. at Wesley United in Cambridge with music and poetry and food following.
* **Centennial Launch Celebration at Metropolitan:** You can meet at Forest Hill United Church (Kitchener) at 2 p.m. to take a bus to the National Centennial celebrations. More information can be found on the Forest Hill website and name and contact information can be provided to them.
* **Spirit Refresh:** Sue Campbell invited people to purchase her book of reflections.
* **Ministry with University Students:** Our Mission and Service dollars support the ecumenical chaplaincy at the University of Guelph. Their Zoom AGM is soon; speak to Andrew Hyde to get an invite. Intentional work is also starting up at Laurier and Waterloo Universities through First United (Waterloo). If any of our churches have young adults heading to these schools, we can encourage them to connect with the chaplaincy programs.
* **Cedar Hill (Cambridge) 200th anniversary:** Invited to join them on June 23 for their celebration service. General Secretary Michael Blair will be the guest preacher.
* **Christian Resource Centre (Mitchell): A**ttempt was made to show a video but there were multiple technical challenges. President Jennifer will make the link available to the Regional Council.

**Thank You’s** – President Jennifer offered thanks to all those who helped make this meeting safe, inclusive and loving.

**Proposal 5: Closing Motion**

**MOTION:** Peter Kudelka/Arthur Hills

That Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council:

1. Entrust any unfinished business from its May 24, May 25 and May 26, 2024 meeting to the Executive;
2. Authorize the Executive to fill any vacancies on the understanding that appointments will be confirmed at the next spring regional council meeting;
3. Direct the Executive to plan to convene a meeting of the regional council in the fall of 2024; and
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 May 24, May 25, and May 26, 2024 meeting of the Western Ontario Waterways Regional Council at the close of the worship service on Sunday, May 26, 2024.

**CARRIED**.