

PNMC Operations Team Meeting
Peace Mennonite Church
Saturday, January 5, 2008
8:30 am – 3:00 pm

Present: Dave Hockman-Wert, Don Bacher, Duncan Smith, Diane Isaak, Brad Roth, Jeanne Rempel, Sheldon Burkhalter, Linda Dibble, Audrey Lowen, Wendell Amstutz, Pedro Olvera, Gilberto Flores, Victor Vargas

The meeting began with team members introducing themselves.

Devotions and Singing was led by Audrey Lowen and Don Bacher. Audrey shared from Hebrews 10:19-25.

Consent Agenda – Agenda review, approval of November 07 Board Minutes, and Committee Reports. Unanimous consent.

Operations Team – Who are we? How will we function?

The group spent considerable time discussing how the Operations Team will function. As we move into the future, the Board will be moving into more of a governance role.

Policy governance – Dave reviewed the document “Four Philosophical Foundations of Policy Governance.” Four philosophical foundations include 1) accountability, 2) servant-leadership, 3) clarity of group values, and 4) empowerment. Discussion followed on ownership of congregations in PNMC. Communication with the present Board and Transition Team and its subcommittees is needed for everyone to be on the same page and have understanding. We need to spend time defining what the Board does, what its structure is. Dave asked if there was any concern with using this model. Some feel it is a good model but some of the language is questionable (cause for concern). We need to think of how we approach this in relation to all age groups/generations we are preparing for – we have different generations and diversity in our congregations. Not all may agree with this method/model.

Logistics – when do we want the new policies to be in effect? Is there interest in starting to develop our own set of policies? Feedback was that now is not too soon. What are the steps? What is a reasonable timetable? What is the process of communicating this to people in our churches? What does this process consist of? We need to have it clear enough in this group to be able to clearly communicate to congregations/delegates. This body (Operations Team) would generate the policies; the policies do not need to go to delegates for approval, but would still be communicated to delegates and the wider body of PNMC. As far as the timeframe for policy development, it was suggested that by June we have some sort of framework done. This will involve policy review – vision statement, old policy book, MCUSA policies. The policies need to reflect how we are multi-cultural; openness, diversity, gender. They need to reflect this not only in vocabulary but also in principle (in documents/policies). Policies are a living document, always changing, so it would be good to have someone on the committee designated to continuously work with policies. A Policy Development Committee was formed, with members Brad Roth, Dave Hockman-Wert and Wendell Amstutz volunteering to serve.

Term lengths – Board positions officially begin in July 2008. It was proposed that current Operations Team members give Dave a range of years they are willing to consider serving (1 to 4 years). In order to stagger the terms, the positions will include 1 4-year, 1 3-year, 2 2-year, and 2 1-year terms.

Personnel/Hiring Subcommittee Report

The staff present (Conference Ministers) were dismissed for this portion of the meeting. Linda Dibble reviewed the subcommittee’s written report. The present draft proposes a total staff FTE of 2.75 including the Conference

Executive and Administrative Assistant positions. While it is not their desire to lose the experience of our current staff, they do recognize that there likely will be changes to their positions. It has been suggested that the Conference Executive also serve as a Conference Minister over at least 6 congregations in addition to their executive duties. In reviewing the proposed plan, there is concern of the cultural breadth that a person would need to cover the Hispanic congregations plus all of the Washington congregations. Another concern is whether we can get a balanced budget with this proposed FTE. Currently the answer is no. We were reminded that we had a strong message from delegates last year that they want a balanced budget. Does this mean cutting more positions? The possibility of cutting FTE is because of our current budget deficit. Some members of the Operations Team shared that we need to take care of our Conference Ministers. We should go to the congregations with the reality that it costs to have them. Some would not like to see us cut FTE. It was felt by some members that we haven't been stretched creatively enough to come up with the funds needed to cover the expenses of staff. Another felt we need a minimum of 2 full time conference ministers and that the current proposal is not realistic.

Board/staff Relationship – The question was raised of whether we want to empower Duncan as team leader to function more like a Conference Executive for the remainder of his term, i.e. be more in charge of the transition work, including leading or delegating some of the following tasks: finding someone to lead the capacity building team, working more with CIHAN, theological education team formation, etc. It was agreed by all that this is something we want to do. We need to set parameters for Duncan as team leader and empower him to delegate to other staff or ask the Board for guidance.

The Conference Ministers returned, and Dave announced the decision to empower Duncan as team leader.

It was stressed that it is important that the Personnel Subcommittee hear the congregational impacts that will occur with the pending Conference Minister changes. The Board needs to own the decisions that are made and support the Conference Ministers in those decisions. It was suggested that the Board prepare a letter to be sent to pastors to update them on the transition.

Conference Minister Report

Victor Vargas reviewed his written report at this point in the meeting, as he had to leave early for a prior commitment.

Bylaws

Harold Nussbaum, Chair of the Bylaws Subcommittee, presented the draft Bylaws. The following items were noted:

- Page 9, #4 – this is the statement that came out of MC USA documents – may be tasks that the Secretary or Treasurer need assistance on (verbiage needs more clarity).
- Page 10, #3 – thought CEO was part of budgeting process – doesn't see that included
- Secretary and Treasurer positions – someone who may be very good at these positions, but may not have “gifts” needed to be on the Board. These positions have to be officers to meet legal obligations.
- Page 11, 1b – remove CIHAN and make more general – CIHAN is currently working on their structure document.
- Page 3, #3 - #b – many congregations have in their bylaws that if the congregation/church closes or leaves conference, the church reverts to conference.
- Page 4, 5a3 – two-thirds vote – feels it shouldn't be included – gives license to manipulate politics in order to kick a congregation out. Include language of efforts of mediation, giving/receiving counsel, etc.
- Page 6, d,I – (i) conference staff; (d) micromanaging the how – not a function of the Board of Directors
- page 9, #3 – Board hires Conference Executive; Conference Executive hires rest of staff.

The Bylaws Subcommittee plans to have the draft bylaws reviewed by legal counsel. Specific comments on the bylaws should be sent to Dave by January 19 and he will forward them to the Bylaws Committee.

Delegates

It was suggested that maybe last year's delegates should serve as delegates again this year for continuity. It was discussed and decided that monthly emails will be sent to churches to be included in their bulletins. The purpose of these communications would be to keep churches informed of what is happening with the transition and to keep PNMC in front of the congregations. They would also include a thank you for financial contributions to PNMC with updates of how ahead or behind we are, and a request for prayer. Audrey Lowen will explore how we can get this accomplished.

Outreach Development Committee

The Outreach Development Committee will be meeting by conference call at the end of January to see where they can fit into the Passion-based Ministries group. Other committees may want to consider this as well, as an exit interview type function.

CIHAN Transition

Wendell Amstutz reported that CIHAN met in November to begin formulating their response as to how to relate to PNMC. They are still writing a proposal. CIHAN wants to 1) call PNMC to include multi-cultural not just Hispanic; and 2) not consider them as a work team or passion based ministry.

MCUSA CLC Representation

At the last Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) meeting there was a very low number of women. This is of concern and they want to work at increasing female representation. Dave has talked to Linda Dibble about attending, so now PNMC would send 3 people (Sheldon, Dave, Linda) to CLC.

Budget Report

Don Bacher presented the budget report. Currently giving is at 40%, which is unusual based on previous years. We should be at least 50% by now. The Finance Committee has met and they hope to have letters sent out to congregations by the end of January, and hope to have information by March to put next year's budget together.

Insurance Committee Update

A draft Policy was distributed for review and feedback. This policy provides assistance for monthly health insurance premiums for pastors.

Conference Minister Reports

Sheldon reviewed his written report, highlighting items including 3 congregations with new pastors, 2 congregations going through pastoral changes, a couple congregations are struggling with their relationship to PNMC. The River Mennonite Church in Bend, Oregon will be bringing information to us regarding entering membership in PNMC. Sheldon also shared that there are exciting happenings with the church plant in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sheldon also shared a bit about his sabbatical plans and welcomes any comments.

Duncan briefly reviewed his written report.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm, with Jeanne Rempel giving a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Isaak, PNMC Secretary