

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference
Zoom Board Meeting
Saturday January 21, 2023

Members Present: Jack Swaim, Moderator, Chris Nord, Moderator-elect, Julia Todd, Secretary, Dave Hockman-Wert, Treasurer, Deren Kellogg, Nelly Moran-Ascencio, Kiara Yoder, Leonard Nolt, Megan Ramer, Emily Toews and Dianna Eshleman.

Staff present: Eric Massanari, Executive Conference Minister; Barb Buxman, Administrator.

Members Absent: None

Sharing time – Each board member named something that is on the mind of our respective home congregations. Several congregations are advocating for shelter and housing for homeless. Also significant is that our meeting date today is the recognition of our forebearers first Anabaptist baptism many years ago.

Centering time was led by Eric sharing a poem written by Howard W. Thurman titled “How Good it is to Center Down.”

The meeting minutes from the prior meeting have been electronically approved by the PNMC Board of Directors.

Board Education - Jack led the discussion on consideration of the resolutions approved at the 2022 MC USA Delegate Assembly, in combination with Forbearance and the Confession of Faith. PNMC’s Ministerial Credential Review Process, policy no 5.3.2, is based on the MCUSA membership guidelines which were rescinded in 2022. Accordingly, it was proposed the PNMC policy 5.3.2 be rescinded, effective immediately.

Discussion included recognition that we cherish diversity, we understand the Confession of Faith is a guideline, we recognize the tension in all conferences between the resolutions passed -and-continue to hold tension within our conference, and we believe that our faith is to be lived out and not in documents. We also recognize and honor the fact that congregations are the cornerstone of our church, and so congregations decide how to proceed based on their own context. The PNMC policy 5.3.2 had been developed to be in alignment with the MC USA membership guidelines which have been rescinded thus making the PNMC policy void.

Action: The motion was made by Chris that the PNMC Executive board rescind PNMC policy 5.3.2. The motion was seconded by Deren. Motion passed 8-0.

Reports & Action items:

Executive Conference Minister (ECM) Report- Eric -Regarding Pastoral Leadership Team (Noting a conflict of interest, Megan excused herself from the initial discussion regarding the PLT action) Eric reported from the Pastoral Leadership Team (PLT) regarding action held on

credentials of pastors who previously were sanctioned due to performing same sex marriage. The PLT is requesting from MC USA to have the variance flag on their records be removed in light of the affirmed “Resolution for Repentance and Transformation” statement. The PLT is seeking out pastors hurt by the review process and is seeking to have a listening dialogue with them. A letter would be sent to the conference with the action taken. The PNMC board supports the action of the PLT process.

The preparations for the Conference Communications Council (CCC) are being made and all board members were encouraged to register. Malinda Berry, PhD, Professor of Theology and Ethics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary will be the keynote speaker. Malinda will speak on the practice of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) and nurturing empathic connections within our interpersonal relationships and the communities we are part of.

Eric reported visiting various congregations in PNMC and asked that we pray for the churches in our conference. He also reported finding joy in working with several search committees in pastoral transition within conference.

Finance Team (FT) & Treasurer Report (Deren, Dave) Dave presented the Treasurer report for the 2022-23 fiscal year and the budget proposal for the 2023-24 fiscal year. The past year saw an overall decrease of cash though not worrisome at this time. The Investment funds are down approximately 10% with the great fluctuations in the market. The Healthy Congregational Grants have been used minimally this past year. The staff salaries will be increased this year. It was researched by Eric and found that a 9% increase would bring the staff salaries in alignment with other conferences. The net operating income is around \$25,000 this year. A deficit of about \$18,000 is projected for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. This level of deficit is not too concerning given that it is generally offset by the net operating income from the prior year. However, we are projected to have a slightly growing deficit annually due to gradually decreasing congregational contributions and gradually increasing staff salaries, including having a full time ECM. It was noted that congregations are encouraged to contribute 6% of their annual budgets to PNMC.

Action: The motion was made to accept the 2023-2024 budget as presented. (Megan) Second (Nelly) Motion passed 6-0.

Deren reported the Finance Team met with Dennis LeFevre, Finance Advisor from Everence. Dennis reports that while the market is unstable, the long- term prognosis for investments is good. PNMC investment funds are in a moderately conservative socially responsible investment fund. Everence provides services and is willing to meet with groups or individuals regarding financial literacy and estate planning. Webinars are available. The conference

checking account is being moved to Everence with physical locations available in Portland, OR to make deposits.

Executive Conference Minister (ECM) Report- Eric -Church plant status. Eric reported that Community of Hope Church, Bellingham, WA and Iglesias Anabautista Ebenezer, Keizer, OR are both at the three-year point in the application process. Our hope is that both churches will work toward full membership at the 2024 Annual Meeting.

Moderator & Gifts Discernment Team (GDT) Report (Jack & Chris)

Proposed action: Confirm PNMC appointments to West Coast MCC board:

Nelly Moran-Ascencio to fill the remainder of Beth Landis' term (4/1/22-3/31/2025)

Twila Lehman for a full term (4/1/23-3/31/2026)

It was noted that Kevin Malamma, WC MCC Board Chair, concurs on behalf of their board. Kevin also expressed the WC MCC Board's appreciation for the contributions from Eva Flores and Beth Landis over the past years.

Action: The motion was made to accept the appointments to the West Coast MCC board as proposed. (Emily) Second (Kiara) The motion passed 7-0 with great enthusiasm!

A letter will be sent to the conference pastors from the GDT with the slate of nominees open positions, seeking suggested appointees.

CIHAN Report (Nelly) – The CIHAN pastors continue to meet monthly. Eric and Jack hope to join the pastors at a meeting in the near future. The Board has not met in over a year. Family losses have had an impact on the board meeting.

Policy Committee Report (Leonard)- Leonard reported the policies have been reviewed without any changes noted in policies 5.1.1 -5.1.10. Leonard continues to lead the work to further develop and refine the digital security policy.

The Board thanked Leonard and expressed appreciation for his leadership on the policy review process he has provided over the years

Chris reviewed the Board meeting evaluation form by the previous moderator and proposed retaining the questions in the form. He may experiment with presenting the linear scale questions in meeting using Zoom polls while retaining the google form for the free response questions.

Chris closed the meeting in prayer.

Meeting adjourned at 12:17

Discussion & Action Items:

1. Conference Communication Council Zoom meeting- February 4, 2023 (8:30 -12:30 PT)
2. PNMC Board Zoom - April 22, 2023 (8:30-12:30 Pacific Time)
3. Annual meeting- June 23-24, 2023 at Portland Mennonite Church.
PNMC Board to meet at the conclusion of the annual meeting to welcome new members.
4. PNMC Board Retreat – September 22-23, 2023 at Camp Camrec in Leavenworth, Washington

Submitted, Julia Todd PNMC Secretary