

Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference
Zoom Board Meeting Minutes
Saturday April 22,2023

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

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

Sharing time – The group shared signs of hope or new life in our respective congregations. A few things noted were new children, new programs, new pastors and moving forward with change process, MCC sales meeting in person and helping migrants in the relocation process.

Scripture & opening prayer – Eric opened with centering on the Earth Day theme, caring for the environment and how our perspective for the environment and life in general can be altered by viewing an object such as a mushroom, from below the cap.

The meeting minutes from the prior meeting have been electronically approved by the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference (PNMC) Board of Directors.

Reports & Action items:

The Gifts Discernment Team has drawn up a slate of candidates for PNMC for the next terms. The slate includes nominations for elected—as well as appointed—positions to be filled. The Board reviewed and approved the candidates for the draft ballot as presented. (Motion Kiara, second Megan) A candidate from CIHAN will be selected and added to complete the ballot.

Nominees to be affirmed by the delegate assembly include:

- Moderator-Elect: Karla Morton, Meridian Mennonite Church, Meridian, ID
- Board of Directors, At-Large Member: Gary Jewell, Shalom Church, Spokane, WA
- Treasurer: Dave Hockman-Wert, Corvallis Mennonite Fellowship, Corvallis, OR
- Gifts Discernment Team:
 - Rick Bollman, Meridian Mennonite Church, Meridian, ID
 - Gloria Nussbaum, Portland Mennonite Church, Portland, OR

Nominees appointed by the Board of Directors include:

- Pastoral Leadership Team: Jennifer Gingerich, Salem Mennonite Church, Salem, OR (clergy)
- Finance Team: Kathy Bilderback, Evergreen Heights Mennonite Church, Caldwell, ID

The ballot will be presented for affirmation by delegates at the June Annual Delegate Assembly.

Eric reported on the Annual Delegate Assembly plans. The theme is from Ephesians 3:14-21 on being Rooted and Grounded in Love. The Board expressed appreciation to Curt Weaver for development of the theme logo. The Pastors/Chaplains/Ministry leaders meeting will be open to all credentialed leaders. Malinda Berry will be the guest speaker for the workshop times. The Portland Mennonite and Ministerios Restauracion churches are hosting the meals, coordinated by Dianna Eshleman and

Cathleen Hockman-Wert. Early registration is encouraged and the registration is open on line at www.pnmc.org. Board members are encouraged to participate with serving at the Pastor/guest dinner and to sign up online to help. Board members may send support for the dinner to Barb Buxman.

Delegates from PNMC to MennoCon 2023 will be Eric Massanari, ECM and Chris Nord, Moderator.

A request from the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Historical Society (PNMHS) was received to help host a traveling exhibit titled "Voices of Conscience" to Oregon. The exhibit will be located at Lewis & Clark College Library from July 28, 2023 to September 24, 2023. The exhibit features the experiences and conflict many young men faced as conscientious objectors to the draft to military service during World War I. The exhibition will help to educate our society about this important time in the history of the Mennonite Community. The motion was made to grant the fund request of \$4000 from PNMC by Emily Toews and seconded by Leonard Nolt. Motion passed. Jack will send a letter of granting the request to PNMHS with notes of reference to PNMC and MCUSA websites for further information about Mennonites.

Digital Security policy – This policy was brought forward from Leonard Nolt for review and acceptance. The Board determined that an additional statement is needed regarding a breach of software/computers and steps needed to resolve the issues. General agreement to accept the policy was made, and in addition to make updates and Board affirmation within four weeks. Leonard has the lead.

Moderator Report (Jack) – Jack referenced notes in the April 17th e-Bulletin regarding the Constituency Leaders Council (CLC) meeting and recommendations to MCUSA Executive Board. Support was given to provide more operational flexibility to Everence and Mennonite Health Services (MHS) to serve as ministry partners as opposed to agencies. This would make them a more broad-range service comparable to Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS) or Mennonite Central Committee (MCC).

The second proposal was to shift the timing of the MC USA delegate assembly from a two-year cycle to a three-year cycle. This proposal was supported as well.

The leaders from the three western conferences (Pacific NW, Pacific SW, Mountain States) met for a dinner discussion. These three groups share a similar history and have a culturally and geographically commonality which supports each other well.

Executive Conference Minister (ECM) Report (Eric) – Eric expressed appreciation for support of PNMC during his recent time of recovery from a concussion. Eric's report followed the mission statement for outline. Eric asked for prayer for the many congregations in the midst of a pastoral search process. Eric has been encouraged by the many resources available and the interest in the Pacific Northwest. Plans are in place for Eric to visit eastern Washington churches in Ritzville and Spokane. In May, Eric will be participating in Board of Director meetings and the annual conference gathering for Spiritual Directors International (SDI). The family will be in Minnesota for Eric and Yolanda's son, Noah's graduation. A road trip home for father and son is planned as a special time to visit. Appreciation was expressed to Eric for extending himself to congregations and increased visibility within conference churches.

CIHAN Report (Nelly) – Nelly expressed appreciation for Eric and Jack’s being present at the recent Pastors’ meeting. A generalized peace has been experienced with the understanding of the individual churches’ decision-making ability in addressing the resolutions passed at the denominational special delegate session held May 2022. The CIHAN council is to meet this afternoon, with the intention to recommend a new Board representative.

Policy Committee Report (Leonard)- Leonard will make a list of the policies due for review and updates as needed. Chris will pass on this responsibility to the next policy person appointed. The policy committee is made up of the moderator, moderator-elect, ECM and one additional experienced Board member.

Speaking for the Board, Jack expressed appreciation to Leonard for his diligent and thorough policy work over the past years.

Finance Team (FT) & Treasurer Report (Deren, Dave)- Deren noted that starting in July, the Finance Team will cycle into overlapping two- year terms for appointed members. The Finance Team will invite Dennis LeFevre to be present at the 2023 PNMC Annual Meeting to answer any questions attendees may have about PNMC investments with Everence. A suggestion was made to have Dennis provide a webinar which could be available to a wider group. Dave also observed that congregational giving was at 97% for year-end giving, noting that giving lags early in the year but catches up. Dave also noted that we are close to having all financial accounts transferred to Everence for banking.

The budget and balance sheets were reviewed. Dave noted this is the first time the current assets are less than \$100,000 and so we will transfer funds from the investment funds. This would be the first time to use funds from the investment accounts. Also noted is that we still have money in the Healthy Congregational Grant fund. Overall expenses were slightly less than income which is normal for this time of year.

Speaking for the Board, Jack expressed appreciation to Dave for his excellent work with the financials and for his willingness to serve another term as Treasurer.

Discussion & Planning

1. Update on church plants – Eric reported that both church plants will be in a good position to join PNMC at the 2024 annual meeting. Timing has been adjusted due to family losses and Covid delays. Pastors Rachael Weasley and Jesus Fuentes will be participating in the worship service to introduce them to PNMC as church plant pastors and for the opportunity to know them better. Both church plants have District Pastors and others working with them. Eric reports that ordination prior to the church plant is an option if desired. Both congregations are very welcoming and have a broader church than their immediate areas with using online services. Jack noted that we could have more church plants and asked what we can do to encourage those developments.
2. Chris expressed the need for continuity of Board meeting dates. The second Saturday of each quarter has been used in the past – excluding December. A welcome to new Board members will be held at the annual meeting.

Next scheduled meeting dates are:

- September 22-23, 2023 BOD in person at camp CAMREC in Leavenworth, WA
- November 11, 2023 (Zoom BOD meeting)
- January 13, 2024 (Zoom) BOD Budget reviews and planning for CCC
- February 10, 2024 Conference Communications Council (BOD to participate /Zoom)
- April 13, 2024 (Zoom BOD mtg)
- June 21-23, 2024 (Location to be determined.) The Annual Delegate Assembly is held the weekend after Father's Day every year.

Chris will relay the dates to the new Board members and CIHAN rep as soon as possible.

For Board retreat, Barb needs attendees to verify the number attending for meal planning. Friday evening meal is planned tentatively at Blewett Brewery in Leavenworth as a meeting place for those who wish to meet. Megan will provide more information. The retreat weekend is from Friday pm to Sunday noon. Chris will send out a reservation request and agenda in the near future. Logistics – RVs are welcome, outdoor electric is available.

Location for 2024 Annual Delegate Conference - Discussion was held for possible locations. Seattle has major plans for this next year and not a good fit for 2024. They want to be kept in the loop of possible hosts. Alaska was mentioned as a possibility. It could be a hybrid meeting with in person/online possibilities. Funding could possibly be arranged as it would be a costly trip. Evergreen MC in Kirkland, WA is also a possibility.

Other Business:

Nelly asked if the CIHAN representative would need to be English speaking. The Hispanic churches make up 19% of the congregations in our conference and bilingual representation is needed on the Board. Nelly was encouraged to have the group bring forward someone who has a heart for the PNMC, and the Board would work with an interpreter as needed. It was noted that the Board has had a non-English speaking member before. This is an accessibility to power issue and the Board is willing to make accommodations.

Dave raised concerns about the MC USA Sexual Misconduct policy observing that the tools for dealing with misconduct or safe sanctuary can be used for harm when used inappropriately for non-sexual misconduct accusations. Tools can be used as implements for good or for weapons depending on who uses them and how they are used. Dave has been supporting a pastor for the past three months through the investigation and charges process from a non-PNMC congregation. PNMC policies may need to be revised to reduce the potential for harm.

Emily led in a centering prayer for closure.

Submitted,

Julia Todd, PNMC Secretary and Dave Hockman-Wert, PNMC Treasurer