

RMCUCC Board of Directors Meeting

Saturday, March 12, 2016
RMC Offices, Denver, Colorado

The meeting was called to order by Rebecca at 9:08 a.m.

Present: Sue Artt, Courtney Dobbins, Judy Baillie, Nate Miller, John Rostykus, Rebecca Kemper Poos, Karen Winkel, Martha Sullivan, Gage Church

Present by Conference Call: Martha Jones

Staff: Lisa Callahan, Cory Kibler, Tamara Boynton (by conference call)

Absent: Matt Huntington, Jan Hepp, Erin Gilmore

OPENING:

Karen Winkel offered the opening prayer.

The Agenda was approved, with additional time allotted for John Rostykus to present a report from the Nominating Committee.

The Minutes from the January 23, 2016 meeting were reviewed. Gage moved to accept the January 23, 2016 Minutes; John seconded. MOTION APPROVED.

FINANCIALS:

Courtney read the Financial Report prepared by Matt.

- A review of the board designated reserve accounts indicates they are all on track or exceeding expectation except the Annual Meeting (33150) account. Monies from our 2015 budget still need to be moved over to the 2016 budget. The Finance Committee will address this at their next meeting.
- The net income for 2015 was \$3,777, and will come out of "Unrestricted Assets 34100" (we actually put \$5,000 in there from the "Reserve to Contingency Fund").
- We still owe ourselves \$81,148 for purchase of the office building. We propose addressing this in the 2017 budget. Sue and Matt will work with Gordon Gilles with respect to investing this with United Church Funds in an attempt to obtain higher returns.
- Camps showed a deficit of \$29,568. Approximately \$11,000 of that amount was for 2016 camp deposits paid to La Foret at the end of 2015. A substantial portion of the remaining deficit was due to creation of new camps that had to be canceled.

- **Courtney moved that the revised 2016 budget be approved as presented. (No second required.)** The Board discussed the budget in detail. Of note:
 - Sue stated there are no new items in the budget but some minor adjustments have been made. It is still a break-even budget and comes in \$582 to the good.
 - There are some changes of note, for example, the 2015-16 OCWM support to national increased from 20% to 21%, and will increase annually until we reach 30%.
 - With respect to the office expenses line, more funds were shifted to accounting because the bookkeeping for the Conference has been outsourced.
 - Legal fees went up to \$3,000 because we have a new person in the national Office of General Counsel, and each Conference has been asked to pay approximately \$2,300 a year. RMC also has retains a Denver attorney for local needs, but defers to the General Counsel in Cleveland for UCC-related needs.
 - Most lines in the budget remain relatively flat and we hope to come in at a break-even point.
 - OCWM is increased by \$15,000 in the 2016 budget. It is not clear why there was a \$15,000 shortfall in 2015, but it was most likely related to a number of things:
 - There has not been a lot of pushing from the Conference for OCWM contributions, so we need to continue promoting OCWM and emphasize to the churches that we are there for them.
 - Conference staff will begin sending letters to the churches mid-year regarding what would be billed to them if the Conference charged billable hours.
 - Sue will push harder on OCWM, and target a few churches with respect to their OCWM giving.
 - At the next Board meeting, the Board (not Conference staff) will write notes to the churches thanking them for their OCWM contributions. Additionally, we will recognize the churches that are extraordinary givers at the Annual Meeting, and perhaps publish this in a newsletter.
- **After much discussion, the budget was accepted unanimously.**

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE UPDATE:

Martha Jones presented an update on the Personnel Committee’s activities. They have had one meeting, and designated a subcommittee to work on staff evaluations. This report was postponed for a telephone update on La Foret.

LA FORET UPDATE:

Larry McCullough joined the meeting via Conference call. Larry thanked the LaForet Board of Directors for all their hard work and dedication, and stated they are working well. Larry reviewed La Foret’s vision, purpose and mission, the work that has been done since 2013, and the goals to thrive in the 2015 and beyond. In 2015 La Foret was thriving, but there is still more work to be done.

- La Foret needs to increase their finances to meet short-term and long-term capital improvements and to make La Foret solid, including upgrading bathrooms, new cabins, and paved roads.
- The La Foret Board is considering several options to raise capital, one of which is selling portions of the property - not the “core” area - but parts that are not actively used in execution of camps, to select buyers that understand La Foret’s mission, and agree to restrictions on the use via the deed.
- La Foret received a \$200,000 grant from the State for restoration of Ponderosa. They are in the process of getting through the remaining negotiations with the state and hiring a contractor. Work will begin this fall, and will concentrate on the structural integrity and exterior. When completed, Ponderosa will not look difference, but the rain gutters, warped floors and water damage will be repaired.
- The La Foret Board still has one opening that has never been filled. The Board is not geographically diverse, so they would like to have someone from Wyoming or Utah fill this seat.

BREAK:

The meeting paused for a 10 minute break, and resumed at 10:30.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (continued):

With respect to staff evaluations, the Acting Conference Minister evaluation will include asking a select group of people to give input – three members of the Board, two or three Association leaders identified by Sue, and several people with a lot of interaction with her over the last couple years, plus six churches they select representing all sizes. The Personnel Committee will then meet with Sue to give feedback.

The [Acting] Associate Conference Minister reports to the [Acting] Conference Minister, so the role of the Personnel Committee is to assist with evaluation of the [Acting] Associate Conference Minister. The Committee will collect information from key stake holders and participate with Sue in the evaluation, but Sue is the immediate supervisor, not the Board of Directors.

Three people from the Board of Directors are needed to give feedback on Sue, and two people are needed to give feedback on Tamara. Rebecca, Judy and John will give feedback on Sue. Karen and Courtney will give feedback on Tamara. The intent is to look at what they are each doing compared to their job descriptions, and not do a full evaluation of what they should be doing. The evaluations will be incorporated into the data to see how realistic their job descriptions are going forward.

CONFERENCE UPDATE:

Sue gave an update on what is happening in our churches and around the Conference,

Church News:

- Deanna Armstrong from Columbus, Ohio, has been placed at First Congregational in Craig. She will start next Sunday, March 20.

- Rick King is concluding his time at First Congregational in Longmont on Easter Sunday. The church is working on an interim candidate. John expressed his appreciation to Sue and Tamara for their support during this transition.
- Sue and Tamara are working together on all churches, and keep each other apprised of the status, which helps each church feel supported by the Conference.
- Some searches are starting to land and some are moving on their own, so that level of intensity has shifted a little bit.
- Ken Ingram is coming to Laramie. He has been a part of the RMC before, moved away, and has returned. Ken starts this week.
- Jack Wieczorek is moving from Laramie to Northglenn as their interim.
- Chris Braudaway-Bauman has been called at First Congregational in Boulder.

Accounting Update:

- We have transitioned most accounting tasks to Ellis Bottom Line Bookkeeping.
- Invoices are sent on a weekly basis so this slows down payments. We are still keeping up with payables but checks may be processed a little later.

Website:

- The new website was launched on February 25.
- We have received lots of positive feedback that it looks and works better.
- The website is more responsive and is easy for Cory to update from anywhere.
- All critical issues have been corrected;
- Cory will continue to work on improving the search results and other items it would be “nice to have.” We are always looking for more feedback – critical or positive.
- The UCC Legal council issued dos and don’ts for politics. It is linked on the website and will be add to the RoMoCo.

Computers:

- Michael from PC911 was in regarding the computers, and did some diagnostics.
- The server is old, and will not be supported by Microsoft beyond 2017. We plan to remove the server totally and use cloud storage.
- All critical documents have been moved from the server to a Google drive.
- Other files and documents will be evaluated to determine if they are still useful. Some are from old databases that are obsolete.
- New computers are needed, especially for Lisa and Cory, and are in the budget.

Conference Minister in Residence:

- Tamara is currently in Wyoming at the Wyoming Women’s Retreat in Pinedale.
- She will also be at Community UCC in Pinedale for worship tomorrow.

- She is unable to catch up with as many pastors as she would like, but the message is that we are there, and is important even if she is unable to connect as hoped.
- Sue and Tamara will continue to do the “in residence” program. It is working really well. They will not do this every month, but will try to get out and let everyone know they are available.

UCC COVENANT:

National Youth Event:

- Scheduled for July 26-30, 2016 in at Disney World in Orlando
- Originally announced to include families. A new group has taken over NYE and determined that they lose money for every person that attends, so they rescinded the invitation to families. After May 1, families may attend but their events are scaled down to cut costs.
- As of today, RMC has 29 youth registered and 3 in process. Greeley is sending 15 kids.
- There is some scholarship money for participants, but more youth have more enrolled than planned, so we will need more than what has been set aside for NYE.
- Will need to adjust the budget for 2018.
- Conference Ministers have been asked to attend as it helps the kids feel connected to the UCC.

National/Council of Conference Ministers:

- Sue will be in Cleveland next week. The first three days will be spent meeting with the Council of Conference Ministers, and meeting with the UCC Board at the end of the week.
- The Conference Ministers and the Board of Directors will meet together for the first time. They are starting to understand that the two need to work together and cannot be separated as they have in past.
- John Dorhauer’s installation will take place this April in NYC, Chicago and Seattle. Rebecca and Sue will attend the service in Seattle. Sue will have a three-minute presentation at the installation. Each service will be live-streamed, and access information will be sent out when it gets closer.

2017 CLERGY COMPENSATION GUIDELINES:

Tamara presented the draft Clergy Compensation Guidelines for 2017.

- The cost of living (consumer price index) for our region is now 2.6% which is lower than in the past.
- National COLA for Social Security is 0 because the national CPI-U is .2%, so there was no increase.
- Most churches use this as the basis for salary increases for their clergy.
- If we use the same number as last year, the increase would be .7%, or we can choose to do something else. Need to determine what number should be recommended to the churches for COLA.

- Many Churches do look at the guidelines initially, and do their own thing based on what they can afford to do.
- Every year tables are changed based on COLA. 2017 COLA for Social Security is done in the fall. It would be less confusing if we look at this toward the end of the year instead of the beginning.
- Tamara will rework this document and insert live links in order to get the current information, and to clarify what is included in the numbers and what they represent at that moment in time.
- After detailed discussions, it was determined Tamara will use .7 for this graph at this time.

The meeting broke for lunch at 11:38, and reconvened at 11:50 a.m.

ANNUAL MEETING:

Draft Grand Agenda:

- The Board of Directors will meet on Thursday from 5-5:45 p.m.
- Housekeeping tasks such as appointing the parliamentarian, etc. will be done at the May Board meeting, so a big Thursday night meeting will not be necessary.
- The lunch schedule has been increased all around due to the need to walk up the hill to the cafeteria. There is a van that will shuttle people around campus, but that will take more time too. The increased time will also allow time for relaxing and connecting.

Worship Services:

- Intermountain is preparing all worship services. The Worship Team will determine the schedule.
- Gayle Engel will be there and will be asked to preach at one of the services.
- Isaiah 35 will be our scripture text.
- Worship will be in three places:
 - Friday will be in the meeting space.
 - Saturday's worship will be outside in a natural amphitheater space.
 - Sunday will be at the University chapel.
- The Worship Team will prepare a "Sermon in a Box" based on what we are doing at Annual Meeting. It will be sent out a month in advance of the Annual Meeting. This will be done through a direct mailing, and posted on the RMC website and Facebook.

Boundary Training:

- Boundary training this year will be a little different, as Tracey Dawson has a case setting she'd like to use. Tracy believes she can cover all four parts in this one section.
- The training will be a four-hour block from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. (not the two-part format used in the past).
- Tamara sent a notice to association leaders regarding what kind of credit they will give for this.
- Association Registrars track boundary training, but we need to clarify the different format in our notices.
- Clergy should check with Registrars regarding what they need.

Bus to Salt Lake City:

Cory is investigating the possibility of renting a bus from Denver to Salt Lake City, with a pickup in Grand Junction:

- Cory has obtained several quotes for buses. The best appears to be USA Bus Charters:
 - A deluxe coach bus seats 61 people, and would cost about \$96.00/person (including gratuity), maybe a little less for those boarding in Grand Junction.
 - It is a luxury bus with TV's etc. Wi-Fi is available for an extra \$250.00 each direction.
 - We would not need lodging for the driver, unless we need to use the bus during the meeting.
 - Cory will go see one of the buses on Monday.
 - Total cost is approximately \$5,300.
 - The tentative schedule for the bus would be to leave from Denver very early Thursday morning, although this could be rearranged. It will take 10-12 hours to get to Salt Lake City, with a stop in Grand Junction, and will return to Denver after worship on Sunday.
- Need to determine if the Associations are actually having meetings on Thursday, which affects the bus schedule.
- The Board needs to decide today if we should continue to pursue the bus.
- If the bus is not filled, we would be on the hook for entire payment.
- Cory will send out a survey explaining the benefits of taking the bus, possible schedules and approximate cost, to determine if there is enough interest to pursue this.

Miscellaneous:

- Will need to determine how to count quorums for voting.
- Need to make sure churches understand their delegate representation (clergy and two delegates). Sue will draft a letter explaining the delegate representation and the importance of the Friday activities around voting for the Conference Minister.
- The Search Committee has not been active since their last meeting in January. They need to be part of Friday morning's construction. Jane Anne Ferguson is coordinating this, so the members have been advised.
- Chris and Erin Gilmore are preparing a second puppet show.
- The vision expression is yet to be designed, but is coming together nicely. The groups are starting to articulate the vision.
- We need to explain some items on the schedule, such as "worship movement," so attendees can determine whether they need to attend or want to attend.
- The lyrics to all songs will be available either in print or displayed on a screen.
- Gayle Engel has a workshop he is willing to provide. Sue will work with the Design Team to see if this is possible. At the very least, we need to hear from him during the meeting regarding his part in Conference Minister search process.

- Intermountain is working on getting discounted tickets to local attractions such as the gardens and history museum.
- Intermountain would also like to have an active mission component. They are working on what that would be, the logistics, etc. It may be scheduled Saturday morning or during one of the vision expression workshops.

NOMINATING REPORT:

John presented an update regarding the Nominating Committee.

- John sent out information to the Association Leaders last fall regarding the upcoming positions to be filled.
- There are two kinds of positions that are not Association-specific:
 - Courtney and Max came to our Board through an invitation by Sue. Sue is encouraged to find other participants at NYE, or reach out to youth in other ways.
 - The Moderator-elect (vice moderator) position will be open. This could be clergy or a lay person, although we are probably looking for a clergy person. It's a two-year elected position to serve.
 - The option of a lay person or clergy was instituted so that it is not all clergy running things. Alternating is a tradition, not a bylaw.
 - With respect to the issues of transparency and not doing everything in-house, how is a person added to the list of nominees for election? Should we be sending a broader message to Conference members about these openings?
 - The next open moderator and youth positions need to have a broader appeal.
- Someone brand new to the Board of Directors will need some training. It takes about a year to really come up to speed.
- John will send a list of open positions to the Board. We will need to start promoting this now and explain how a person can express interest in an open position.
- Nominations can be accepted almost up to the last minute before the meeting, but not during the meeting.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

There is a lot of good work happening around the Strategic Objectives. Reports were given with respect to each Ministry Plan.

Ministry Plan 1: Healing Conference Minister History:

- Karen and Gage have spent some time on the phone with Gayle Engel regarding the response to the news of Sue's nomination. They put out a call for input but didn't hear anything negative. There were associated comments but not particular to Sue.
- Gayle spent a lot of time talking about Association gatherings and engaging at the Association level, and focusing on the bigger picture than just the Conference Minister piece.

- Gayle suggested we invite people to share what is going well and what is not working at the Associations' meetings in the fall.
- Gayle also suggested we look closely at what is sent out and what is accessed. We can send the finest email but it is meaningless if it is not opened and passed along. We are full of good intent and presume people are accessing information sent out by the Conference and Associations, but it is not being processed.
- Each congregation should have a point person as a communication ambassador to promote the conference and its communications.
- Karen suggested the possibility of forming a task force to work with Cory regarding how to disseminate communications to everyone. Perhaps we could bring in Kristina Lizardy-Hajbi from National to help create and analyze a conference-wide survey to address this.
- With respect to how we are doing, Sue feels the issues surrounding the Conference Minister search and the work the Board did with Gayle and John Dorhauer have helped improve the health of the Conference.
- Sue has not heard anything negative regarding the announcement of her candidacy. The day it was actually announced there was a tremendous landslide of thanks and congratulatory comments.
- At end of every event, Gayle suggests having a "powwowhow," reviewing the high point, low point, and how God fits into the mix.
- Sue feels that energy around the Associations is low and it is hard to get volunteers. She would like to discuss cluster conversations again this fall. All Associations are preparing for their spring meetings. As a Board, we should be doing something around the search process and to help remind people where we are currently and what we are doing, and remind them to come to Annual Meeting to vote.
- The Associations need to vote on 2017 Synod delegates. We are held to a standard by Synod on how to seat a delegation, so it cannot always be done at the Association level. To move forward, we need a commitment to meeting with the Associations in the coming academic year. The communications assessment can wait until after Annual Meeting.
- The board is Committed to doing some kind of cluster meeting(s) in the fall.

Ministry Plan II: Vision Implementation:

- This group has met several times. They are focused on how to distribute information to the 13,000+ members of the Conference, not just those who attend Annual Meeting, read RoMoCo, etc.
- If we can get enough followers online, the culture will begin to change..
- Need a campaign to get more people following all forms of communication from the Conference.
- This group wants to take the Vivid Description and create a list of three to five things that they really need to start with (i.e., what are the core ideas in our future and the first steps to take).
- Sue will start a new practice of writing a once a month bulletin insert to start unraveling the vision.

Ministry Plan III: Conference Minister Expectations:

- Both MP-1 and MP-II tie into what this group is doing. Their task was to bring clarity and realism to the positions of Conference Minister and Acting Conference Minister, in the context of where we need to be in the Conference and what needs to be done.
- This group started by understanding the way our leadership office is working, what is being done, how the people feel about it, and what is happening out there. They will need to define the new Vision, and where the Conference currently stands.
- They are going through the Vision paragraph by paragraph looking at specific wording. When they are done, they want to develop an accountability plan to make good decisions.
- Churches are taking care of each other, but we need to find a way to get to people's hearts regarding why they care about the church and Conference. If we can do that, they will open our emails and communications.

Sue is working on all three Ministry Plans and needs feedback from everyone with respect to the monthly bulletin inserts

MISSION SEEDS

John read Erin's report in her absence.

- The Mission Seeds have not sprouted as envisioned, but a prayer group has sprouted.
- The Mission Seeds ideas from last year's Annual Meeting were created because we were decommissioning the ministry teams. Our Bylaws tell us how to shape this.
- Mission Seeds was an experiment that did not come to full fruition. Our intention was to see what could live on its own to find the energy. They also came from the work with Tennison Wolf.
- There was a lot of energy at Annual Meeting – a seminar high – but then life gets in the way and diminishes to the background. The hope was to spur up new teams that would self-generate without pushing, but they have not self generated as hoped.
- Erin has tried really hard but may need to look at creating a team to drive this forward. The Board also needs to do more to help promote the Mission Seeds.
- Leaders fell off, so nothing has been done. Need someone to lead each group.
- There is a desire to create an RMC Leadership Institute as a premier training institute of the west for clergy and lay leadership.
- We need to:
 - Be responsive to what was started the previous year.
 - Provide a way for things to bubble up and become ministries. If they didn't take root that's okay.
 - Be connected and open. If something does spring forward, we need to have a container to put it in, and help nurture and grow it.
- Perhaps the Leadership Group could provide help and training to a group that does not have a leader.

- Need to add a block of time at the Annual Meeting to work on mission seeds. Some have grown, some are gone.
- Sue will take this to the Design Team.

MEETING SCHEDULE:

May 7, 2016, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Conference Office.

June 9, 2016, 5:00 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. in Salt Lake City

ASSIGNMENTS FOR MAY 7:

Opening prayer: Gage

Timekeeper: Nate

Executive Committee Scribe: Karen

Closing prayer: Rebecca

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Callahan
RMC Office Administrator