

**Rocky Mountain Conference UCC
Regular Board Meeting via Zoom
September 30, 2020**

Board Members Present: Sue Artt, Judy Baillie, Deborah Barnard, Lee Berg, David Bristow, Shelly Dunham, Mark Dutell, Ken Ingram, Wendy Kidd, Ben Konecny, Mark Long, Andy Nielsen

Others Present: Erin Gilmore, Martha Jones - Board Secretary

Call to Order, Introductions & Prayer

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Rocky Mountain Conference UCC was called to order by Moderator Judy Baillie at 9:20 am on September 30, 2020. The meeting began with approval of the agenda. Lee Berg presented the opening reflection, using the Psalms to draw us to reaffirm our mission of love and commitment to justice, looking to God for strength and hope in these times. Board members checked in.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The minutes of the regular Board meeting on August 12, 2020, were approved.

Conference Minister's Report

Sue updated the Board on several items:

- Mark Dutell has been appointed to the United Church of Christ Board of Directors, and while not “representing” the Conference, this tether to denominational leadership will be of great value to the RMC.
- Sue trained the Board on the use of the shared drive.
- She updated the Board on a situation with one of our churches regarding the covenant between the church and the UCC.
- The issue of the size of our delegation to General Synod has been resolved with Metro Denver offering to nominate one person to General Synod rather than two.
- The Board was updated on real estate matters.
- Sue discussed connections throughout the conference: clergy connect calls, moderator calls, youth ministry. Mark Long spoke about the moderator calls.

Racial Justice Think Tank

Chris Gilmore and Anthony Scott joined the meeting. Following introductions, they, along with Erin, presented the report from the Racial Justice Think Tank.

Erin discussed the “why” of racial justice work: the call of the conference to respond faithfully and to be involved in racial justice work at this time, setting the call into a faith perspective. Reading the UCC statement of faith, Anthony placed anti-racism work solidly within our faith and discussed the ways in which racism in our society is contradictory to that faith statement. He asked that the Board support and financially underwrite the work of anti-racism in our conference as we all do this work. Chris Gilmore said the time to “do what is right” is now.

The Board and the Team discussed the proposal, including the following:

- the types of resources pastors need from the conference to do anti-racism work,
- resources to support clergy who are persons of color,
- provision of a point person who can supply resources when there are tragic events,
- the potential for ecumenical and interfaith partnerships,
- duties in relation to and implications for the conference staffing pattern,
- infusion of racial justice work in the entire work of the conference,
- coordination with current anti-racism programs in place, and
- how the work will get to the lay people in our churches, including resources and training.

Action on the proposal was held until a session later in the day. The Team was thanked for their work in helping clarify steps forward for the Conference.

Finance Report

Shelly shared the budget report and balance sheet. She indicated that the conference is ahead of projections in net income for the end of August of this year. OCWM is running at budget to date, trending higher than this time in 2019.

She informed the Board that the Finance Committee will be reviewing investment funds and also will be arranging for an independent review of the conference financials. The Committee is developing a policy which will come to the Board regarding large infusion of funds, such as from the sale of a church. Additionally, there are no provisions in the bylaws for major adjustments of the approved budget, which needs to be considered in the future. Mark Long is working on how we can tap into new sources of revenue. We have 618 days of cash on hand.

“A New Thing”

A committee consisting of the Executive Committee, Erin, Lee and Pedro Silva, has been meeting to develop a grant-making process for evaluating and funding proposals for new ministries, new church starts and church revitalization. The Board discussed the model being used, some considerations in funding for success, possible timing of a funding cycle and possible name for the fund. The intention is for the first funding cycle to commence in 2021.

Strengths Assessment

Ken reviewed the findings of the subcommittee tasked with identifying a strengths assessment tool for board members. Shelly and Sue spoke to the value of the information each board member would receive and how that information could enhance the work of the board. It was suggested that the assessment could also be valuable to use with staff.

ACTION: By motion and second, the Board unanimously approved purchase of the CliftonStrengths Assessment 34 for all board members and staff of the RMC and schedule a half-day session with the Board to review and process the results of the assessment.

Wendy will assist Melissa in setting up the tool for the Board.

Association Reports

Deborah has convened the association representatives and asked the following questions of them:

- What are your responsibilities to your association?
- Do you sit on the board of your association?
- How do you get information to your association?
- How do your association bylaws describe your position?

There was variety, and some lack of clarity, about association expectations of their representatives, the ways each representative provided feedback to their associations, and the expectations in the associations' bylaws. Deborah discussed the benefits and liabilities of the lack of specificity in job descriptions of each representative.

Sue discussed a project she had to assess each association's bylaws as we were evaluating moving to a common church and ministry committee. She said there is great variability in association bylaws. She acknowledged fine lines between meddling and coordination for the benefit of all. She suggested association reps go back to their association to evaluate whether it's time to review their bylaws.

In the interest of working toward better transparency and improved communication between the board and the associations, Judy indicated that this item will continue to be on the agenda for future discussion and work.

Lunch Break

Team Building

The Board participated in a team building exercise based on a prior request from Judy to send her a picture of "something in your home or that you own that is very meaningful to you . . . anything (almost) – funny, beautiful, not so beautiful, makes you laugh, makes you cry. No people, pets, cute grandkids or singing cats." Stories, laughter, tears and affirmations were shared as each person told the story of their chosen picture.

Setting Priorities

Sue shared and the Board discussed and affirmed the following as current conference priorities.

- Leading through Church Shift---supporting lay and clergy leaders
- Integrating Racial Justice Platform into staff and the work of the Conference
- Overseeing Real Estate possibilities, impacts, and potentials for financial streams
- Funding for Wider Church ministries: Conference and National
- Upgrading Conference technology platforms with eye toward deployed workforce
- Record Management---sorting the old, archiving, shredding, scanning, relocation
- Building redeployment—helping churches sustain by deploying their buildings for community improvement
- Ongoing Sacred Conversations---with congregations and clergy about their future and their possibilities
- Transition for Cross-Conference Committee on Ministry
- Plus all the usual work of the conference: search and call; clergy counseling, staff

management, bills, OCWM assessment, La Foret, other Boards, CCM. Etc.

Note was made that the list is not prioritized by importance.

Racial Justice Proposal

The Board entered breakout rooms to evaluate the racial justice proposal from the Racial Justice Think Tank. Given that the Board agrees that this is important and meets the mission and vision of the Conference, each group discussion was guided by the following questions:

1. How urgent is it?
2. Which part(s) of the proposal are most important and why? Re: Additional staff?
3. What current staff will be impacted by this proposal? In what way?
4. What kinds of resources will be needed to make this program successful?
5. How will we measure success?
6. Where do you envision this position being housed?

Following the breakouts and reports from each group, the board discussed the timeliness of the need for a new position to address racial justice, parameters around adding a new staff position, the source of moneys to fund the position, an assessment timeline of 18 months, whether carrying the racial justice agenda should be embedded in the work of all conference staff, and the feasibility of sharing the position with other conferences or entities at this time.

ACTION: Upon a motion and second, the board unanimously approved adding a new full-time Associate Conference Minister and directed Erin and Sue to begin work on developing a job description for the new position, as well as adjusting the job description and accountabilities of Sue, Erin and the new position to all include objectives on anti-racism as part of their 2020-2021 responsibilities.

The Board commits to reviewing the additional proposed support pieces at its next meeting.

Meeting Schedule

November 18, 2020, 9:00 – 3:00

December 2, 2020, tentative hold for a retreat, 9:00 – 12:00

February 24, 2021, 9:00 – 3:00

April 28, 2021, 9:00 – 3:00

Adjournment

The meeting ended with Ben sharing a reflection from enfleshed.com. The Board adjourned at 3:33 p.m. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 18, 9:00-3:00 via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,
Martha Jones, Scribe