

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

Thursday, December 7, 2023 – 4pm

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5627250899>

Inspiring, Challenging, and Empowering Faith and Justice Communities Across the West

Present: Sarah Linn, moderator; Brent Gundlah, IMA rep; Teresa Campbell, Ass't Treasurer; Mallory Everhart, SEA rep; Laura Gurney; LLL; Erin Gilmore, Acting CM; MaryEllen Beltracchi, Vice Moderator; Peter Sawtell, MDA rep; Allyson Stauffer, CJL; Karen Caton, WA; Ian! Wrisley, AR; Kari Collins, Treasurer; Marta Fioriti, PVA.

Absent: Eleanor Downey, NMM; Adam McCoy, Personnel

Quorum Declared

Opening Reflection – Sarah Linn read the poem “Fire,” by Judy Brown and prayed.

Welcome: PVA Representative Marta Fioriti and introductions

Proposed Response to Doug Wooten

- The Board discussed the draft response to Doug Wooten’s November 30, 2023, request for an additional 18 months’ salary & benefits, plus ~\$17,000 “moving expenses.”
- Sarah Linn will include everyone as a signer unless otherwise instructed.
- **By consensus, the Board authorized** Sarah Linn to finalize the draft and arrange for payment (approved at the November 16, 2023, Board meeting) to Doug for \$10,000.
- **By consensus, the Board authorized** Sarah Linn and one or two other Board members to begin drafting and filing a complaint to/concerning the role played by UCC’s Search and Call office in placing Doug. [Laura Gurney and MaryEllen Beltracchi volunteered.]

Process Discussion:

Sarah Linn reported on her consultation with Diane Wieble (UCC Search & Call):

- Transition models are evolving; ‘don’t get hung up on titles’ but clarify the role/eligibility within call agreements;
- the idea of bringing in interim consultants, rather than a called individual Interim CM while having an Acting CM provide stability and continuity sounded like ‘the best of both worlds’; having different consultants focusing on different areas might allow us to bring ‘the best minds’ together for a more comprehensive process; and
- don’t feel pressured by time constraints; allow the work to unfold/take the time it needs.

Laura Gurney provided background on discussions at the Board retreat in September that clarified the general sense that the RMC needs to explore ways to move toward a de-centralized, collaborative approach to carrying out the work of the Conference.

Erin Gilmore articulated:

- her investment in stabilizing, rebuilding, and reimagining;
- her comfort in liminal spaces;

- willingness to learn, as needed, to develop financial, personnel, and administrative processes; all the nuts and bolts should serve and support the mission of the Conference and nurture our sense of call.
- She believes her social capital across the Conference will help fuel the trust-building necessary to all the work we need to do.
- She recognizes the need for particular interim work to be carried out by person/s outside the RMC system but is eager to help move the Conference toward a dispersed leadership model in consultation with the Board and input from outside.
- For the sake of her family's well-being, she requests from the Board: Clarity on how long we want her to serve as Acting CM and her eligibility to apply for the next role when that is determined (not assuming she would inherit that role or be a good fit, when much of the rebuilding has taken place).

Erin was released from the meeting.

Categories of work to prioritize between now and the 2024 AC:

Financial, administrative, and personnel systems:

- Many broken places; continuing assessment and repair is vital; guiding documents, where they exist, need to reflect practice; where policies are not on paper or followed, they need to be developed, written, and available to those working under them.
- Positioning ourselves closer to a balanced budget in the next FY or two; starting to focus on the revenue side of the budget as we get a handle on internal controls, etc.

Repairing profound disconnection felt across the Conference, among laity and clergy:

- cultivating a sense of mission, sharing a new story/sense of identity;
- building capacity for leadership across the RMC;
- promoting connection within Associations and across the Conference among ministries that share distinctive qualities and/or contexts, regardless of geography;
- relational repair, largely carried out from within, but supported by outside input.

Ensuring the day-to-day work of congregational support is carried out:

- providing guidance for COM functions (support, formation, and accountability);
- search and call; and
- vulnerable congregations/clergy in or approaching crisis;
- putting out fires.

Holding *mission* as the basis and direction for everything mentioned above: moving, as able, beyond immediate repair and toward long-term sustainability in every area.

MOTION:

In light of these priorities, Sarah Linn moved that the Board keep Rev. Erin Gilmore in the role of Acting Conference Minister until at least the 2024 Annual Celebration. Second: Karen Caton.

Motion passed unanimously.

Personnel, the Executive Committee, and Rev. Gilmore will continue ironing out details of a Call Agreement, which will be informed by this evening's discussion and presented by email to the Board for feedback before being signed (preferably in mid-December).

Closing Prayer – Sarah