
**MINUTES OF
THE EXECUTIVE OF BC CONFERENCE
The United Church of Canada
March 12-14, 2015
Mountain View Room, Burnaby, BC**

PRESENT	Alyssa Anderson, Graham Brownmiller, Ian Fraser, Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Murray Gordon, Judith Hardcastle, Wayne Hughes, Ray Jones, Everest Kao, Jean Macdonald, Kathy MacKean, Carol Martin, Karen Medland (President), Mark Paetkau, Jeff Seaton, Keith Simmonds, Tayana Simpson, Ruth Stebbing, Cheryl Swedburg, Robert Young.
REGRETS	Nancy O’Higgins, Jim White
STAFF PRESENT	Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Katie Purych
GUESTS	Jay Olson (Chair of Agenda and Planning)
AUTHORITY	In the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the 2014 General Meeting of BC Conference, the President, the Rev. Karen Medland, declared the regular meeting of the Conference Executive duly opened for the purpose of conducting the business properly before it. A quorum was present.
WELCOME	The President welcomed the members to the meeting and, in particular, the new members: Tayana Simpson (Youth and Young Adults), Ruth Stebbing (Westminster Presbytery), and Robert Young (Youth and Young Adults). In small groups stories were shared of moments of joy experienced by the members.
AGENDA	<i>M/S/C (Ray Jones/Judith Hardcastle) that the agenda as presented be adopted (Appendix I, page 2015-__).</i>
MINUTES	<i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/ Ian Fraser) that the minutes of the November 6-8, 2014 BC Conference Executive meeting be adopted.</i> It was requested that Minutes be posted to the web page as soon as possible to allow easy public access.
GOVERNANCE TRAINING	Doug Goodwin explained how delegation and monitoring work in a Policy Governance system.
ADJOURNMENT	The meeting adjourned for the night.
	FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2015
WORSHIP	Karen Medland led worship.
CORRESPONDING PRIVILEGES	<i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Jean Macdonald) that corresponding privileges be extended to Jay Olson, Chair of the Agenda and Planning Committee for the BC Conference General Meeting.</i>
CORRESPONDENCE REPORT	No Conference Executive correspondence has been received since the November meeting of the Executive.

**CONFERENCE
ASSETS AND
OPERATING
BUDGET**

Building upon a brief discussion at the November 2014 meeting of the Executive, a lengthy discussion was held about the use of Conference assets in the operating budget.

Doug Goodwin explained that there is presently little policy guidance or limitations on the use of assets in the operating budget. Presently decisions regarding assets are based primarily on what has seemed acceptable in the past. It would be desirable to have more clarity about how the Conference wishes to treat its assets.

Conference assets have grown significantly over the past few years, due primarily to property sales. This increase is anticipated to continue, although the rate of growth is unknown. An average of approximately \$200,000 of the assets have been used annually to balance the operating budget although \$570,000 has been budgeted for 2015.

Doug explained that he felt the issue the Executive needed to address was how to balance the present need for expenditures with the recognition that if assets were all spent it would mean the permanent loss of the value being realized through property sales.

Discussion focused on the difficulty of deciding between making good expenditures presently in areas of need or desirability while also ensuring significant assets would be available in the future.

After discussion it became clear that the general consensus of the meeting was that finding a good balance was desirable, leaning toward spending presently to do the work deemed important to do.

Doug will prepare a policy proposal for the next meeting of the Executive reflecting this approach.

**GENERAL MEETING
UPDATE**

Jay Olson, Chair of the Agenda and Planning Committee, was welcomed to the meeting. Jay gave an overview of the General Meeting plans being held at the Whistler Convention Centre May 28-31, 2015. The theme of the meeting will be "Leading From the Heart." On-line registration is now on the Conference website.

Jay noted that there seems to be worries that the costs of meeting in Whistler will be high. She noted that most costs should be comparable to other urban settings although special arrangements are being made for transportation to keep costs down. Billeting will also be difficult or non-existent for this meeting. Hotel rates are good and facilities with lower costs are being booked.

Plans are being put in place to recognize the closure of The Centre at Naramata. Significant time will also be spent at the meeting on understanding and discussing the report of the Comprehensive Review Task Group which will be discussed at the General Council meeting in August.

The Executive discussed what needs to go into its report to the meeting. It was generally felt that information should be shared that emphasized our service orientation, the Mission and Ends statements, our financial situation, the ProVision Funds, and LeaderShift. Recognition and participation of Executive members at the meeting may also assist in reducing perceived barriers between the Executive and the rest of the Conference.

LUNCH

The meeting adjourned for lunch in the Mountain View Room.

**ETHICAL
INVESTMENT**

Doug Goodwin presented the printed report “Ethical Investments” (Appendix II, page 2015-__) which outlined the present ethical investment practices of the Conference. He also distributed information on the Sustainalytics research and ethical screening services used by our present investment manager, Connor, Clark & Lunn.

Discussion followed focused on investments in fossil fuel industries. Opinions varied about the value of disinvesting from these industries although most of those speaking favoured moving out of such investments. It was also generally felt that we could increase our renewable energy investments. It was also thought that congregations could be doing more to reduce their own use of fossil fuels.

After some discussion it was decided that the Conference would shift our investment portfolio out of fossil fuels and invest more heavily in renewable energy and other alternative investments. It was recognized this shift might take some time to complete but it was desired that it begin as soon as possible. Doug Goodwin will work with the Finance Council on appropriate language for our Investment Policy that reflects this shift, to be proposed to the Executive at an upcoming meeting. In the meantime, steps will be taken to move in this direction. Doug noted that the present Conference goal is to have 10% of our total portfolio in renewable energy and other alternative social investments.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MONITORING: ENDS

The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends (Appendix III, page 2015-__) was presented by Doug Goodwin and discussed. The meeting was reminded that time would be spent focusing only on areas of question or concern in the report.

- Strategic Ministries** It was noted that the Executive wished to spend time identifying the “specifically designated strategic ministries” mentioned in Ends B.3 at a future meeting.
- Discernment** Doug reported that there are presently 54 people involved in discernment and candidacy processes in the Conference.
- Communication** A focus on improving the Conference’s two-way communication with the church continues by maintaining Jocelyn Wagner on contract for another year. External communications is focused on improving the email lists and the Conference web site.
- Levels of Support** Clarification was given on the difference between “satisfactory” and “superior” levels as written in Ends A. 1 & 2. Doug indicated he interpreted the difference as indicating the relative level of expectation between the two pieces of work.
- Naramata Centre** Doug clarified his role as an *ex officio* corresponding member of the Centre at Naramata’s board. His role was primarily to ensure good communication between the Centre and the Conference, particularly after the loan to the Centre was made. He removed himself from Board deliberations before the decision to close the Centre was made so as to avoid any confusion about his primary responsibility and role.
- LeaderShift** It was noted by a member that most of the LeaderShift events were taking place in the Lower Mainland and Victoria areas. This concern will be passed along to those planning LeaderShift events.
- Property Sales** Doug reported that sales of the Pilgrim United Church and Lake Cowichan United Church properties were completed at the end of 2014. The use of the assets from those sales is being discussed with Victoria Presbytery.

- Camp Fircom** The rebuild of the dining hall and kitchen at Camp Fircom after their destruction by fire is proceeding well. New, additional structures that were built have been in operation since last summer. The new dining hall and kitchen will be open very soon. Negotiations with the insurer, Aviva, continues with approximately \$1 million in dispute. To date the balance of the costs not covered by the insurer has been paid for from the Camping Fund.
- Property Development** Plans for property development at both Oakridge United Church and West Burnaby United Church are going well. A new Conference office is part of the West Burnaby plans. It is scheduled for completion in late 2018 or early 2019.
- Comprehensive Review** Doug noted that in relation to the Comprehensive Review the approach being taken by the Conference is to continue planning and structuring for a long-term future but in a way that leaves options open should major changes occur.
- M/S/C (Mark Paetkau/Cheryl Swedburg)
that the "Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends" be accepted.*

MONITORING REPORT: EXECUTIVE LIMITATIONS

- The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations (Appendix IV, page 2015-__) was presented and discussed.
- DSL - Voluntary** Doug reported that he placed Robert M. (Bob) Crosby on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) with no conditions on January 7, 2015.
- During discussion Doug Goodwin volunteered to bring information about the new processes of discerning whether persons should be placed on the DSL (Voluntary) and DSL (Disciplinary) or not.
- Administer the Sacraments** Doug reported that he granted licenses to administer the sacraments (*Manual* 1.2.4.1):
- (December 1, 2014) Diane Halkett, appointed as Candidate Supply at Webster's Whonnock United Church, Maple Ridge, BC;
- (February 2, 2015) Karen Hollis, appointed as Candidate Supply at the UBC Campus Ministry, to administer the sacraments at the UBC Campus Ministry and University Hill Congregation.
- Financial Condition Policy** Doug reported compliance in all areas of the Financial Condition Limitation Policy. Budgeted staff salaries in 2015 support Conference work in the following manner:
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| Executive Office | 14% |
| Finance | 13% |
| Personnel, Presbytery and Native Ministry Support | 44% |
| Program – Youth/Young Adults, Camping, Archives | 15% |
| Leadership and other | 14% |
- Doug noted that a more fulsome way to report how Conference work is supported would be to include all expenditures and not just staff salaries. He will provide this information in his next Monitoring report.
- Treatment of Beneficiaries** Doug reported compliance in all areas of the Treatment of Beneficiaries Limitation Policy.
- Emergency Succession** Doug reported compliance in all areas of the Emergency Succession Limitation Policy.

- Vendor Relations** Doug reported compliance in all areas of the Vendor Relations Limitation Policy.
- Staff** Doug updated the meeting on changes to the staff since the last meeting. In particular he noted that former staff member, Paul Davis, passed away in December 2014.
- M/S/C (Graham Brownmiller/Alyssa Anderson)*
that the “Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations” be accepted.
- APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR** Doug Goodwin reminded the meeting that it annually needs to appoint an auditor for the Conference financial statements. The audit is one of the “external” methods the Executive uses to monitor the work of the Executive Secretary.
- Mark Paetkau informed the meeting that the Finance Council has been pleased with the work of the firm of Rolfe Benson and recommends them to do the 2015 statements audit. This would be the third audit by this company.
- M/S/C (Mark Paetkau/Ray Jones)*
that Rolfe Benson be requested to conduct the audit of the 2015 financial statements.
- MISSION AND VISION STATEMENTS** Discussion continued from the November 2014 meeting of the Executive regarding the Mission and Vision statements. It was noted that with new Ends policies the Mission and Vision statements are not needed for monitoring purposes. They are, however, helpful in pointing to the foundations and directions of the work of the Executive. Ends policies are the focus of the Executive but Mission and Vision can be “owned” by the broader Conference. In particular, the Mission statement is widely known and referred to in the whole Conference.
- It was decided that the small task group of Keith Simmonds and Carol Martin would review the present Mission statement to test its ongoing relevance and make any recommendations how it might be used or improved.
- LISTENING TO THE OWNERSHIP** Members spoke briefly about what they were observing and hearing in their regions.
- In rural areas it was noticed that the strategies that are being used in urban areas to solidify congregational ministries such as amalgamations and land development are not possible.
- It was noted that in at least some Presbyteries there is a sense of grief and loss over the possibility that General Council decisions this summer may eliminate Presbyteries in the future structure of the church. Along with the grief is also a sense of fear.
- The importance of upholding and supporting congregational leadership was also mentioned, especially in this time of potential change.
- Some frustration was expressed about how best to “listen to the owners.” It was suggested that “listening” did not always mean speaking one on one to people but meant paying close attention to the trends and issues being experienced in our church.
- It was also suggested that the Executive could improve its listening by receiving some training in “active listening”, perhaps using an “appreciative inquiry” style. It was generally felt that some training in “listening” at a future meeting would be helpful.
- DINNER** The meeting adjourned for dinner.
- GENERAL COUNCIL** Jean Macdonald and Graham Brownmiller reported on the last General Council

- EXECUTIVE** Executive meeting. A significant amount of time at that meeting was spent discussing the Comprehensive Review Task Group process and findings.
- Discussion was also held on: changes to the group benefit plan; housing costs for ministry personnel; a study of church membership; a possible apology to the LGBTQ community; and how work at the General Council meeting will be organized.
- The next meeting of the GCE will be later in the month, March 21-23, 2015.
- Ray Jones announced that a General Council “Alvin Dixon Memorial Bursary Fund” was being established in honour of Alvin to help support initiatives that focus on education for aboriginal students.
- COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW** Graham Brownmiller introduced the Comprehensive Review Task Group Report and showed video clips produced by the Task Group explaining each of the recommendations being offered.
- The Report has recommendations in six areas:
1. Chasing the Spirit (funds for new ministries)
 2. Aboriginal Ministries
 3. Three Council Model
 4. College of Ministers
 5. Association of Ministers
 6. Funding
- Discussion followed on each of the recommendations to better understand them.
- ADJOURN** The meeting adjourned for the night at 8:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2015

- POLICY REVIEW** Policies are reviewed on a scheduled basis to ensure they accurately reflect the values of the Executive. A large number of policies were scheduled for this meeting or left over for review from November 2014.
- PRACTICES** It was noted that the Practices Policy is not really an Ends policy but should be a Governance Process policy (ie. not a policy directed to the Executive Secretary about what to accomplish but a policy for the Executive about how it is to work).
- M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Jeff Seaton)*
that the Practices Policy (Goldenrod 10) become a Governance Process policy.
- It was suggested that the Executive ought to hold itself accountable to its Governance Process policies. The policies could also provide a good framework for the self-evaluation of the Executive.
- Ian Fraser offered to develop an Executive accountability process for future meetings. Ruth Stebbing and Keith Simmonds volunteered to assist in this task.
- ACCOUNTABILITY** Doug Goodwin noted that the Accountability policy is the policy that identifies the “owners” (in Policy Governance terms) of the Conference Executive work.
- No changes were suggested to the policy at this time. It was generally felt, however, that it was important to use this policy to assess our present Executive practices. Doug also suggested that the reference to the “General Council” might better be a reference to the “United Church of Canada.”

- BUDGETING** No changes were suggested to this policy at this time.
- FINANCIAL CONDITION** No changes were suggested to this policy at this time.
- PROTECTION OF ASSETS** No changes were suggested to this policy at this time.
Doug Goodwin noted that there is no single document where all of the assets of the Conference are listed. He will check to see if there is an advantage to do so.
- GRANTS AND LOANS** This policy was amended at the November 2014 meeting of the Executive and does not need further change at this time.
- BEQUESTS & UNSOLICITED DONATIONS** It was noted that the present policy would not allow the Executive Secretary to turn down a donation in kind such as a piece of furniture or other item. It was also noted that there may be bequests or other donations that should be turned down because they do not adhere to the values and mission of the Conference.
M/S/C (Jean MacDonald/Keith Simmonds) that the bequests & unsolicited donations policy be changed to read “no bequest or unsolicited donation shall be received whose terms are not in alignment with the Conference mission without having the terms broadened or refocused in a Conference mission area.”
- INVESTMENTS** It was noted that decisions made earlier in the meeting will likely lead to some proposed changes to this policy at the November meeting of the Executive.
- EMERGENCY SUCCESSION** No changes were suggested to this policy at this time.
It was noted that the Conference office does not have an Emergency Business Continuity Plan in place. After discussion it was decided that the Executive did not wish at this time to establish a policy about the need for such a plan. Carol Martin offered to send information to the Executive and to the Executive Secretary about what such a plan might look like should one be adopted as a “best practice” by the Conference office.
- NEXT MEETINGS** *M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Judith Hardcastle) that the Spring 2016 meeting of the Conference Executive be March 10-12, 2016.*
Doug Goodwin noted that there will be no General Meeting of the Conference in 2016. Traditionally the Executive has held an additional meeting in a non-General Meeting year which coincides with the Celebration of Ministry worship service. The Executive agreed to hold an additional meeting in 2016, date to be determined.
It was also noted that the Executive has, in the past, met outside the Conference office site for one meeting in a non-General Meeting year. It was decided that the President would consult with Presbytery chairs to determine a good location for the March or November 2016 meeting of the Conference Executive.
- NOVEMBER MEETING** The Executive listed the following as items for the November 2015 meeting:
- the clearer identification of the “specifically designated strategic ministries” in Ends Policy B3;
 - clarity about the present process of placing ministry personnel on the Discontinued Service Lists;
 - the initiation of a process of self-evaluation and accountability of the Executive;

- clarity about the place and role of the Mission and Vision statements and discussion about possible amendments to the Mission Statement;
- a proposal regarding the disinvestment in fossil fuels.

EVALUATION The members reflected on their experience of working on the Executive at this meeting. Discussion focused on the desire to be able to “listen” better to the Conference. It was felt that the training as discussed earlier would prove to be beneficial.

APPRECIATIONS The Executive expressed its thanks to Karen Medland, Mark Paetkau, and Alyssa Anderson for their work on the BC Conference Executive. This is the last meeting for each of these members.

ADJOURNMENT *M/S/C (Ray Jones/Keith Simmonds)
that the meeting adjourn.*

PDC GENERAL MEETING Following adjournment the Executive met as the Property Development Council Annual General Meeting.

WORSHIP Karen Medland and Keith Simmonds led a closing Eucharistic worship.

NEXT MEETINGS May 28-31, 2015 (General Meeting – Whistler)
November 12-14, 2015 (Executive – Burnaby)
March 10-12, 2016 (Executive – Burnaby)



BC Conference Executive

Rev. Karen Medland, President

Rev. G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary