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**MINUTES OF  
THE EXECUTIVE OF BC CONFERENCE  
The United Church of Canada  
November 7-9, 2013  
The Centre at Naramata, Naramata, BC**

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<b>PRESENT</b>	Graham Brownmiller, Jenny Carter (President), Ian Fraser, Robyn Green, Jake Highfield, Everest Kao, Karen Medland, Gordon Murray, Nancy O’Higgins, Mark Paetkau, Jeff Seaton, Phil Spencer, Cheryl Swedburg, Jim White
<b>VIA PHONE</b>	Jay Olson
<b>REGRETS</b>	Alyssa Anderson, Michael Caveney, Alvin Dixon, Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Ray Jones.
<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	Katie Purych (Recording Secretary)
<b>GUESTS</b>	Naramata Board members, Janet McDonald, members of the Evolve planning team
<b>AUTHORITY</b>	In the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the 2012 General Meeting of BC Conference, the President, the Rev. Jenny Carter, declared the regular meeting of the Conference Executive duly opened for the purpose of conducting the business properly before it. A quorum was present.
<b>WELCOME</b>	<p>The President welcomed the Executive members to the meeting and led in prayer. She reminded members that it was meeting at the Centre at Naramata as part of the mandate to “listen to the ownership”, in this case in order to be in touch with youth and young adults who were attending the Evolve event that weekend at the Centre.</p> <p>Members of the Executive checked in. It was noted that the Executive Secretary, Doug Goodwin, was absent because he was working as coopted staff at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, Korea. It was also noted that this was the first Executive meeting in memory to meet without the attendance of the Executive Secretary.</p> <p>Janet McDonald, Executive Director of The Centre at Naramata, welcomed members of the Conference Executive to The Centre. She acknowledged that the Center is on the traditional lands of the Okanagan First Nations.</p>
<b>AGENDA</b>	<p>It was decided that future agendas will not include “Identifying Outcomes.” More time will be spent on “Listening to the Ownership.”</p> <p><i>M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Jake Highfield) that the agenda as presented be adopted (Appendix I, page 2013-__).</i></p>
<b>MINUTES</b>	<i>M/S/C (Robyn Green/ Graham Brownmiller) that the minutes of the September 17, 2013 BC Conference Executive meeting be adopted.</i>
<b>CORRESPONDENCE REPORT</b>	<i>M/S/C (Karen Medland/Murray Gordon) that the Correspondence Report (Appendix II, page 2013-__) be received and its recommendations adopted.</i>

- LISTENING TO THE OWNERSHIP** Executive members reflected on some of the trends they observe in the wider church. Among other observations, it was noted that:
- Several high-profile United Church ministries are avoiding acknowledging their Christian foundations and United Church connections. At best they mention being “spiritual.”
  - The Conference seems to be more involved than previously in Conference ministries in a financial manner but has little role in their governance. This has created some desire in the church to have independent ministries more closely tied to the rest of the life and witness of the church.

**ADJOURNMENT** The meeting adjourned for the night at 7:30 pm. Members of the Executive were invited by the Naramata Board to worship together and then meet for a social hour.

### **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2013**

**WORSHIP** Jenny Carter led worship.

**CORRESPONDING PRIVILEGES** *M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Karen Medland) that corresponding privileges be extended to Jacob Black-Lock, Ana-Luz Coban, Eric Hamlyn, Doris Kizinna, Andrea McLaren and Carla Soutar.*

**WELCOME** Members from the Evolve planning team welcomed the Conference Executive to Evolve and encouraged members to fully participate in the event, not just to observe. They explained that Evolve is an event in which youth can explore their Christianity in a safe and inspirational environment.

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION** The Executive discussed their experiences and observations after participating in the September Truth and Reconciliation event in Vancouver.

The experience of most members was positive, noting the honesty and power of the testimonies heard, the sense of grace and energy present, and the inspiration gained by hearing from several people including our Moderator, Gary Paterson.

Some also felt out of place, not sure what role observers at the event could play and doubtful about how much British Columbians learned from this event.

Jim White thanked Doug Goodwin, Alvin Dixon, and Chief Robert Joseph for hosting the Truth and Reconciliation planning meetings for the Vancouver gathering for the three and a half years leading to the event. He also expressed gratitude to the United Church and the Truth and Reconciliation Commissioners for their involvement.

After acknowledging the inspiration she felt at the event, the President observed that how the church decides to follow-up from this listening process would be central to determining whether it was successful or not.

### **EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MONITORING: ENDS**

The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends (Appendix III, page 2013-\_\_) was presented and discussed.

It was explained that two significant motions were coming to the Executive from the report (loan to the Centre at Naramata; permitting alternative investments). Although both were primarily operational in nature, in both cases the actions proposed were beyond the delegated authority of the Executive Secretary to effect.

*M/S/C (Jake Highfield/Robyn Green)*

*that the “Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends” be accepted and its recommendations considered separately.*

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Before beginning the discussion on a possible loan to The Centre at Naramata, Ian Fraser declared a conflict of interest and refrained from voting.

**NARAMATA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

Mark Paetkau presented a PowerPoint presentation to the members of the Executive clarifying the Centre’s current financial situation and the recommendation of management and the Finance Council to provide financial assistance of up to \$4 million to the Centre at Naramata. He noted that the Centre has an indebtedness of \$1.8 million, that it is currently running an approximate \$200,000 annual operating deficit, and that it has over \$9 million of needed capital repairs and improvements. The property value of the Centre is estimated to be \$6 million.

Colliers International was hired by Conference to assess Naramata’s situation. The Colliers report stated that this is a dire situation and an immediate response necessary. They also affirmed that the business plan presently being developed by the Centre management with Conference assistance was a positive one.

Mark reported that the Conference Property Resource Team and the Finance Council have been looking carefully at the situation at the Centre and assessing possible strategies how to respond. Management and the Council decided that the Conference could assist the Centre with a major cash infusion. Such financial support would buy enough time for the Centre to plan and start to implement a new business model that could be sustainable over a long-term future. Monies would be advanced as the Centre met predetermined benchmarks.

Discussion followed to better understand the situation at the Centre, its vision and possible future, the form of the financial assistance, and the long-term cost to the Conference of providing assistance.

When the hour of the day was reached it was decided to continue discussion after having the chance to meet with the Board of the Centre.

**ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS**

Mark Paetkau explained that the Finance Council recommends that some Conference investment monies be invested in “alternative investments.” He then explained the concept of “alternative investments.” The major type of alternative investment being considered is known as public-private partnerships where funds are invested in infrastructure such as schools, bridges, roads and other construction projects. These are more direct investments and not stock or bond holdings. They do not fit the criteria of the present Investment policy of needing to trade in a public market and therefore need Executive approval. The assessment of risk and social/ethical suitability for such investments is done on a case by case basis.

Mark noted that all of the Conference investment funds are managed by the professional management group Connor, Clark, and Lunn, protecting the Conference against arbitrary or unprofessional investment decisions.

*M/S/C (Mark Paetkau/ Nancy O’Higgins)*

*that management be permitted to invest 10% of Conference investment funds in “alternative” investments including but not limited to public-private partnerships in a manner consistent with Investment Executive Limitation policy except for sections 1 a & b.*

**LISTENING TO THE OWNERSHIP**

Karen Medland led the Executive in a discussion about “Listening to the Ownership.” It was noted that attendance at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering in September was a good reminder of who and what the Church is, and what it means to be Christ’s people. It was agreed that the work of reconciliation will need to continue in the life of the Conference beyond the term of the Commission itself.

It was decided that some way to listen to seniors should be found soon since many senior voices are expressing things different from other generations.

It was also recommended that time be set aside to hear from those in intercultural ministries. Efforts to improve the profile throughout the Conference of intercultural and ethnic ministries are also needed.

At each future meeting the Executive would like to have a general conversation about the issues people are facing in congregational life and whether the Conference might have a role in responding to common needs.

The President suggested formulating a plan to listen to the ownership and to clarify desirable outcomes related to different constituencies. The President Elect, Karen Medland, will take responsibility for developing the plan, including first listening from those involved in intercultural ministries, then listening to seniors.

**NARAMATA FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (CONTINUED)**

Members of the Board of The Centre at Naramata – Janet McDonald (Executive Director), Michael Barr (Chair) and Vicky McPhee – arrived to answer questions from the Executive regarding the potential financial assistance.

Janet gave a presentation on the history of The Center at Naramata and its present mission as a spiritual centre which could attract both church and non-Christian people. She explained that the Centre does not try to hide its Christian grounding but is also open to other faiths. The Center’s main goals are to become a preeminent learning center, a retreat center, and an intentional community of faith.

Discussion followed focusing on the relationship of the Centre to the church and, in particular, its public witness as a Christian ministry. All agreed that a closer relationship between the Conference and the Centre would be desirable.

Ian Fraser abstained from the vote and absented himself from the room.

*M/S/C (Graham Brownmiller/Karen Medland)  
that management be authorized to loan the Naramata Center up to \$4 million from BC Conference assets, with appropriate interest and security as negotiated by management.*

The Executive asked that clear, concise information on this decision be made to the Conference. Mark Paetkau volunteered to write a draft announcement in collaboration with the Executive Secretary, for distribution as soon as possible.

**ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW 2013**

The four recommendations of the Organizational Review 2013 were considered.

It was noted that Recommendation 1 regarding the Personnel Executive Limitations policy was addressed in the Executive Secretary’s Monitoring report.

Recommendation 2 regarding developing better metrics to measure Ends policy compliance was discussed. It was generally recognized that more effort would have to be made to develop measurable or observable outcomes when developing Ends policies.

Recommendation 3 regarding improving the ability of the Executive to listen to the ownership has been dealt with elsewhere in the meeting.

Recommendation 4 regarding developing a communication plan was discussed. It was noted that the Executive Secretary Monitoring report addressed this recommendation. It was also noted that despite a great deal of information going out from the Conference office that there appears to be a lack of engaged conversation about Conference work. It was felt that the communication consultant could prove helpful in improving Conference communication practices.

**ENDS POLICY  
DEVELOPMENT**

The President reported that Alyssa Anderson had prepared a report with suggestions for developing the “Lay Leadership” section of the Church Leadership Ends policy but was not able to attend this meeting of the Executive. The President will distribute her report to members for discussion at the next Executive meeting.

**FUNDS FOR NATIVE  
LAY LEADERSHIP**

Jim White raised a concern regarding Lay Leadership Training funds for Native Ministries. He noted that funds contributed to the Conference in 2007 for native leadership training in BC by the General Council had been returned to the General Council. The Executive asked that the Executive Secretary work with Jim on this issue and report back to the Executive.

**BUDGET 2014**

Mark Paetkau presented the Budget 2014 report (*Appendix IV, page 2013-\_\_*) and reviewed it with the Executive.

Mark pointed out that the new Leadership Development work will be covered by income from the Jardine Bequest.

He also noted that the monies just authorized for the Centre at Naramata have not been budgeted and are not reflected in the present report.

Mark also pointed out that the rate for total Presbytery allocations (Operating, General Meeting and Campus Ministry) is 3% of Line 40 of the statistical reports (Expended for Operation of Pastoral Charge). Presbyteries will be billed based upon accurate statistical figures when they are received from the General Council later in November, not upon the budget amount in the report.

*M/S/C (Linda Gunn/Cheryl Swedburg)  
that the Budgeting Policy monitoring report be accepted.*

*M/S/C (Robyn Green/Linda Gunn)  
that the budget for 2014 as provided in the Budget 2014 report be adopted.*

**GENERAL MEETING  
2014**

Graham Brownmiller, chair of Agenda and Planning, gave an update on plans for the BC Conference General Meeting 2014.

The meeting will take place at the Vancouver Island Convention Center in Nanaimo from May 22-25, 2014. Graham noted that convention centres now seem better suited for General Meetings because of the increased levels of service they provide over sports halls, ice rinks or similar spaces. The costs of meeting in conference centres, though, is greater than in some other venues, due to higher food costs.

The Agenda and Planning Committee consists of Doris Kizinna (Youth at Conference), Taryn Hunter (Children at Conference), Doug Goodwin, Nellie Tang and Katie Purych (Administration), Ken Fanning (Local Arrangements), LeAnn Blackert (Theme and Worship), and the President, Jenny Cater.

The theme of the meeting will be “Just who is my neighbor?” Both the theme and plans for business will be built around the concept adopted by the Conference Executive of “connexion.” Effort will be made to ensure individuals and different constituencies will be able to meet, hear from, and understand one another better.

During discussion, members of Executive determined that leaving the Conference with a sense of encouragement and accomplishment is the main goal of the General Meeting. Good table group conversations with enough time to allow conversations to develop are appreciated. The Executive also liked the idea of hearing from a large group of people on work being undertaken in the Conference, perhaps in “Open Space” or other formats. Spending time hearing from beneficiaries, as was done at the General Meeting in 2012, was also appreciated. Hearing from participants at the Greenbelt event this past summer was also suggested.

It was recommended that more information about the Property Development Council and the present work being undertaken by the Property Resource Team could be reported to the General Meeting.

Executive members expressed frustration with debate at meetings on Proposals, especially those that come late to a meeting. It was suggested that the Executive would be open to finding ways to deal in more imaginative ways with Proposals, perhaps by using Open Space in conjunction with Proposals, or by managing which Proposals could come to the floor.

#### **DINNER**

The meeting adjourned for dinner and the evening.

#### **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2013**

#### **EVOLVE**

During the morning the Executive members took part in the Evolve workshops.

#### **REFLECTION ON LISTENING**

When they gathered after lunch, the President asked Executive members what they heard from the ownership during their participation in the Evolve events.

Members were inspired by the energy and joy that the youth and their leaders brought to the singing, worship, proclamations of their faith and their relationships with each other. The playfulness that was present didn't lessen the work that was being done but indicated a healthy, comfortable relationship. The leadership of this event models the idea of reaching out and connecting well.

It was noted that many who attended Evolve do not attend regular congregational worship services. Instead, they find their belonging to the church at special events like Evolve. The experience of youth in congregational life is not always positive, with few programs directed to youth and the strong sense that youth are only present to take the place of others when they retire, leave or die. Youth particularly need good role models from older church members who do not always act with integrity.

At the same time the faith life of many youth is deep and their enthusiasm for a church in which they find a home is strong. Special attention to those 20-45 years old might be helpful in the life of the United Church at this time.

#### **EVALUATION**

The members reflected on their experience of working on the Executive.

There was a general desire to spend less time reviewing the Executive Secretary Monitoring reports. It would be important for members to have read the reports and prepared questions and comments in advance of each meeting.

More time needs to be spent on having “conversations that matter.” Conversations that are interesting but do not have a clear purpose in the work of the Executive should be minimized.

Some members wondered whether it would be valuable meeting as the Executive more than twice a year.

The Executive needs to continue to make progress on developing the Ends policies, particularly around Lay Leadership and how to support Conference participants in their work of public witness.

More disciplined focus on “Listening to the Ownership” was also determined to be valuable.

**MARCH MEETING** Members were asked to bring ideas for the Executive report to the General Meeting to the March 2014 meeting of the Executive, including a list of the three most important pieces of work done by the Executive this past year.

It was felt that it would be helpful to have more clarity and some discussion about the financial and other resources available for mission within the polity of The United Church of Canada.

Members would also appreciate more information about the new Leadership Development work and how it is taking shape in the Conference.

**ADJOURNMENT** *M/S/C (Karen Medland/Robyn Green)  
that the meeting adjourn.*

**NEXT MEETINGS** March 13-15, 2014 (Executive – Burnaby)  
May 22-25, 2014 (General Meeting – Nanaimo)  
November 6-8, 2014 (Executive – Burnaby)



## BC Conference Executive

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Rev. Jenny Carter, President

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Rev. G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary