
**MINUTES OF
THE EXECUTIVE OF BC CONFERENCE
The United Church of Canada
November 6-8, 2014
The Mountain View Room, Burnaby, BC**

- PRESENT** Jacob Black-Lock, Graham Brownmiller, Ian Fraser, Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Murray Gordon, Robyn Green, Judith Hardcastle, Wayne Hughes, Ray Jones, Everest Kao, Jean Macdonald, Kathy MacKean, Carol Martin, Karen Medland (President), Nancy O’Higgins, Keith Simmonds, Cheryl Swedburg, Jim White.
- REGRETS** Alyssa Anderson, Mark Paetkau, Jeff Seaton
- STAFF PRESENT** Katie Purych (Recording Secretary)
- 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 Executive members to the meeting and introduced the new members: Keith Simmonds (President-Elect), Judith Hardcastle (Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery), Wayne Hughes (Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery), Carol Martin (Victoria Presbytery), Kathy MacKean (Vancouver South Presbytery), and Jean Macdonald (General Council Executive Lay Representative). She then acknowledged the absences around the table and, in particular, the absence of Alvin Dixon who passed away in July 2014. She then led in prayer.
- REFLECTION** The President led a reflection on the story of the bridesmaids in Matthew 25: 1-13.
- AGENDA** The President introduced the proposed agenda.
*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Graham Brownmiller)
that the agenda as presented be adopted (Appendix I, page 2014-__).*
- MINUTES** *M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Ray Jones)
that the minutes of the March 13-15, 2014 BC Conference Executive meeting be adopted.*
- CORRESPONDENCE REPORT** *M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Judith Hardcastle)
that the Correspondence Report (Appendix II, page 2014-__) be received and its recommendations adopted.*
- ADJOURNMENT** The meeting adjourned for the night at 7:45 pm.
- FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2014**
- WORSHIP** The President led worship based on Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25. Ray Jones and Jim White spoke about Alvin Dixon’s life and relationship with the United Church. The President led the Executive in prayers of gratitude for Alvin’s life and for God’s peace with all those who grieve his passing.

**MONITORING:
EXECUTIVE
LIMITATIONS** The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations (Appendix III, page 2014-__) was presented and discussed.

DSL - VOLUNTARY Doug reported that he placed J. Richard (Ric) Matthews on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) on May 20, 2014 (no conditions).

Doug reported that he placed Sandra Marie Severs on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) on September 16, 2014 (no conditions).

Doug reported that he placed Ross Avery Lockhart on the Discontinued Service List (Voluntary) on November 6, 2014 (Lockhart is allowed to lead worship and preach in United Church of Canada congregations).

Interim Ministers Doug reported that on June 10, 2014, he redesignated Jay Olson, Peggy Jensen, and Louise Cummings as Interim Ministers (*Manual* 1.1.7).

Administer the Sacraments Doug reported that he granted licenses to administer the sacraments (*Manual* 1.2.4.1) to:

(June 27, 2014) Susan Rodgers, appointed to Pitt Meadows's United Church, Pitt Meadows, BC;

(June 27, 2014) Margaret Elaine Julian, appointed to Cumberland United Church, Cumberland, BC;

(July 24, 2014) Jeraldine Bjornson, appointed to Knox United Church, Parksville, BC;

(September 18, 2014) Wade Lifton, appointed to Okanagan Falls United Church, Okanagan Falls, BC, and to Oliver United Church, Oliver, BC;

(October 30, 2014) Greg Powell, appointed to Castlegar-Kinnaird Pastoral Charge, Castlegar, BC.

M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Robyn Green)

that the "Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations" be accepted.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MONITORING: ENDS

The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends (Appendix IV, page 2014-__) was presented and discussed. The Minutes record only discussion initiated from questions or comments by members or items important to be in the Minutes.

Camp Fircom Doug Goodwin updated the meeting on issues regarding insurance coverage at Camp Fircom following the fire that destroyed the kitchen and dining hall. Insurance will cover loss and rebuilding of the kitchen and dining hall except for an addition being made to improve the building. Conversation with the insurance company, however, is still ongoing regarding business interruption coverage. At the moment the two sides are very far apart on what this insurance actually covers and how it is to be applied. This will likely be continuing into the new year. Business interruption coverage will be reviewed in other Conference policies once learnings are clear.

The correspondence regarding the apparent lack of Christian spirituality and gospel-based practices at the camp was discussed. It was noted that the question of Christian identity at the camp, as in many other United Church ministries, was in continuing and lively conversation.

- Staffing** Doug reported that Bill Laurie is presently on long-term disability leave. He will return to work when his health permits. In the meantime, Thomas Dennett has been hired on term employment to provide personnel services for Victoria and Comox-Nanaimo Presbyteries. It was noted that the extensive travel needed for this work has meant that some services have not been as available as in the past.
- Oversight and Discipline Commission** Doug reported that an “Oversight and Discipline Commission” is being established. The commission will deal with all formal personnel and pastoral relations oversight and discipline matters where BC Conference or, formerly, the Presbytery, is the court of accountability. It will consist of trained, appointed members who will serve for a term. Decisions of the commission will be reported to the Executive through the Executive Secretary Monitoring report. The commission became necessary with the transfer of responsibility for personnel and pastoral relations to the Conference.
- The use of a commission for this work will not change without the Conference Executive first being informed at a meeting of the Executive.
- Conference Personnel Work** In response to a question, Doug explained that while the Conference Ministers associated with Presbyteries are accountable to the Conference, not the Presbyteries, nevertheless it is expected that they will work closely with the Presbyteries to ensure their work and services are most effective.
- Candidacy Pathway** Doug reported that the Candidacy Pathway program is well underway. Part of the program is providing training for First Nation communities, funded through a soon-to-be-established “Charlotte Sullivan Fund”. Jim White spoke about the need for trained lay leadership in First Nation communities.
- Non-Congregational Ministries** It was noted that Ends policy B.3 mentions “specifically designated strategic ministries” but these have not yet been defined by the Executive. It was felt that time should be spent at a future meeting to consider what these ministries should be.
- Corporations** A request was made that more information be provided regarding the corporations and societies supervised by the Conference and the Conference’s relationship to them.
- M/S/C (Nancy O’Higgins/Cheryl Swedburg)
that the “Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Ends” be accepted.*
- LUNCH** The meeting adjourned for lunch.
- PREVIOUS “ENDS” STATEMENTS** The Executive noted that the previous documents used as Ends documents (Mission and Vision statements) were replaced in November 2013 by new Ends statements. Discussion followed on how to best treat the Mission and Vision statements.
- It was decided that the Executive Secretary would not report against the Mission and Vision statements but would continue to report against the Ends statements.
- It was decided that discussion would continue at the next meeting of the Executive about how to treat the Mission and Vision statements. It was also suggested that perhaps the Mission statement might be revised to better reflect the Ends of the Executive.
- LISTENING TO THE OWNERSHIP** It was noted that the job description for the President-Elect includes the task of helping prepare the Executive for the Listening to the Ownership work at each meeting. As President-Elect, Keith Simmonds led discussion.

In the past few meetings the Executive heard from Presbytery representatives. Members wondered how best to hear from people in the church who were not participants in Presbyteries or the General Meeting of the Conference.

Keith had received direct correspondence regarding three issues within BC Conference: the present situation at The Centre at Naramata; the sinking of a battleship off the shore of Camp Fircom by the Artificial Reef Society; and a proposal from the Justice Advisory Circle calling attention to the environmental issues facing the planet.

Doug Goodwin updated the meeting on the present financial situation of The Centre at Naramata and its ongoing negotiations with its unionized staff for a new contract.

He briefly spoke about the desire of the Artificial Reef Society to sink a battleship and the responses the Conference has taken related to this over the past several years.

Significant discussion was held about how best to respond to requests from within the Conference for the Conference to take a particular stand or action. It was recognized that many of these concerns are significant and important ones but are not areas in which the Conference presently works. It was suggested that the President could write a letter of acknowledgement and response to all correspondence addressed to the Executive.

It was decided that the President would write a letter to the Conference encouraging attention to the environment and decreasing the use of fossil fuels.

It was generally agreed that time needed to be spent at a future meeting to better understand how the Executive might respond to both general and specific requests and complaints from people in the Conference about Conference work.

BUDGET 2015

Doug Goodwin presented the “Budget 2015” report (Appendix V, page 2014-).

Doug reported that the proposed Budget for 2015 does not contravene any of the limitations of the Budget Executive Limitation policy. He pointed out that the proposed budget includes a \$500,000 operating deficit. This large deficit is due to a combination of factors: the loss of income from the loan to The Centre at Naramata which is not yet paying interest (~\$120,000); the reduced grant from the Jardine Fund of the Vancouver Foundation due to the inability to sell the Jardine house and property (~\$200,000) and the usually budgeted deficit (~\$200,000). It is anticipated that this size of deficit is short-term.

He also pointed out that most program budgets have remained consistent with the previous year except for Leadership Development which sees a decrease. Overall budgeted spending in 2015 slightly decreases compared to 2014.

In response to a question about the loan to The Centre at Naramata, Doug reported that if the Centre is able to improve its business results it will begin to pay interest. If the Centre fails and needs to be sold then the loan will be paid back to the Conference from the sale of property at the Centre.

It was noted that the Mobile Counsellor work ends in November 2015. Jim White inquired whether the monies contributed from the Conference to that work might be redirected to other right relations work after the end of the program. Doug responded that the monies come from the Crosby Fund and will be available in the future within the terms of reference of that fund.

Doug reported that the Finance Council is preparing a new long-term financial plan that will replace the existing plan adopted in November 2009. This plan should be available for the November 2015 meeting of the Executive.

Finally, Doug recommended that the Executive consider the question of how much of the Conference assets should be available for use in the operating budgets of the Conference going forward. He noted that the use of assets is often at the heart of many of the larger financial decisions that face the Conference. It was agreed that time would be spent on this at the March 2015 meeting of the Executive. Doug will work with the Finance Council to prepare background materials and, perhaps, options to address this matter.

*M/S/C (Graham Brownmiller/Robyn Green)
that the Budgeting Policy monitoring report be accepted.*

*M/S/C (Ray Jones/Keith Simmonds)
that the budget for 2015 as provided in the Budget 2015 report be adopted.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Carol Martin)
that significant time be spent at the next regular meeting of the Executive to discuss the spending of Conference assets in the operating budget.*

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR *M/S/C (Cheryl Swedberg/Jean Macdonald)
that Rolfe Benson be requested to conduct the audit of the 2014 financial statements.*

APPOINTMENT OF AUDIT COMMITTEE *M/S/C (Jean Macdonald/Judith Hardcastle)
that the Executive Financial Audit Committee (Mark Paetkau, Karen Medland, Ian Fraser) be authorized to review the final audited financial statements 2014 when received in order to accept them on behalf of the Executive or to do otherwise as they deem appropriate.*

GENERAL MEETING UPDATE Karen Medland spoke about the General Meeting in 2015, which will be taking place at the Whistler Conference Centre May 28th-31st, 2015. Costs are comparable to past Conference meetings in Nanaimo and Penticton, although billeting and travel may present some challenges. Solutions are being looked into such as chartering buses and renting space in youth hostels.

The Agenda and Planning Committee consists of Jay Olson (Chair), Karen Medland (President), Karen Millard (Regional Planning), Jim Hannah (Theme and Worship), Graham Brownmiller (Community Development), Allan Buckingham (Environment), Nellie Tang (Finance), Doris Kizinna (Youth at Conference), Katie Purych (Administration) and Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary). The theme for the meeting is "Leading from the Heart."

The Executive discussed its role and reporting requirements at the General Meeting, and agreed to bring suggestions to the March meeting.

DINNER The meeting adjourned for dinner.

GENERAL COUNCIL Jean Macdonald and Graham Brownmiller reported on the work of the General Council Executive.

They noted that the One Order of Ministry report was distributed in May 2014, seeking feedback before another draft will be prepared for the General Council Executive and, perhaps, the General Council in August 2015.

The Comprehensive Task Group is presenting a draft report to the General Council Executive later in November. At this point the GCE representatives are not privy to any information that has not already been made public.

New salary guidelines which include new housing allowances are presently being put in place. Presbyteries and congregations are encouraged to look at these guidelines in order to implement them by summer 2015. It was noted that future guidelines might include some recognition of cost of living differences across the country other than housing.

**MEMBERS OF
GENERAL MEETING**

Doug Goodwin reminded the meeting that the Executive has the right to name additional members to the General Meeting of BC Conference (*The Manual D.1*). This has been usual practice for the past number of years.

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Judith Hardcastle)
that BC Conference Executive include in the membership of the BC Conference 2015 General Meeting the two Youth and Young Adult members of the Conference Executive in accordance with Section D.1.2.e of The Manual.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Judith Hardcastle)
that BC Conference Executive include in the membership of the BC Conference 2015 General Meeting the Chair of the BC Conference Finance Council in accordance with Section D.1.3 of The Manual.*

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Judith Hardcastle)
that BC Conference Executive include in the membership of the BC Conference 2015 General Meeting the President of the Women of the United Church (BC) in accordance with Section D.1.3 of The Manual.*

POLICY REVISION

Doug Goodwin reminded the members that policies are scheduled for review on a regular basis. However, any member can request that any policy be reviewed at any time. When it is noted that a policy needs revision, it can be done immediately or after research is done and a proposal prepared. Three policies were identified at earlier meetings as needing revision.

Grants and Loans

Doug Goodwin presented a proposal for a revised Grants and Loans Policy that had been developed in conversation with the Finance Council. The new policy proposal adds more restrictions to how grants are made. It also removes the ability of the Executive Secretary to provide loans except under strictly defined conditions.

*M/S/C (Ian Fraser/Graham Brownmiller)
that the Grants and Loans Executive Limitations policy be amended so that it would now read:*

The Executive Secretary may not enter into any grant or loan arrangement that fails to emphasize primarily the Ends adopted by the Conference Executive.

Accordingly, the Executive Secretary shall not:

- 1. Fail to adequately inform potential applicants of the Ends to be achieved.*
- 2. Fail to assess and consider an applicant's capacity to produce appropriately targeted, effective results.*
- 3. Fail to annually assess the effectiveness of grant and loan policies against the accomplishment of Conference Executive ends.*

Grants

No grants will be given except those mandated by Administered Funds.

- 1. Administered Funds will not fail to be recorded in the chart of accounts;*
- 2. Administered Funds will not be without clear terms of reference;*
- 3. Grants from Administered Funds will not deviate from the purpose and procedures outlined in the terms of reference of the appropriate Fund.*

Loans

The Executive Secretary will not make loans except for short term bridge financing with assured repayment.

Investment Policy Doug Goodwin presented a proposal for a revised Investment Policy that had been developed in conversation with the Finance Council. The new policy proposal makes it possible to invest in alternative investments that are commonly made by other public organizations. It also provides clearer language regarding the standards to be used for ethical investments. Finally, it removes the phrase which formerly had provided an exception which allowed loans to be made to congregations and other ministries. This is no longer needed since the Grants and Loans policy just adopted eliminated almost all loans.

A question was raised whether the socially responsible phrase of the policy is adequate enough to cover all of the concerns of the Executive, particularly related to investment in fossil fuels and mining. It was decided to discuss this at the next meeting of the Executive after researching our present practices.

M/S/C (Wayne Hughes/Judith Hardcastle)

that the Investment Executive Limitation Policy be amended so that it would now read:

The Executive Secretary will not allow the investment of Conference funds in any non-productive or insecure instruments or in a manner that does not meet the “prudent investor” standard.

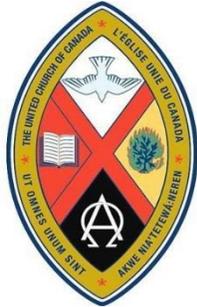
- 1. No investments will be made that:

 - a. are not marketable;*
 - b. fail to maximize the rate of return based on prudent judgment and subject to other provisions of this policy;*
 - c. do not take into consideration the impact of inflation;*
 - d. do not achieve a prudent level of diversification with respect to asset classes, market sectors, and term of interest bearing securities;*
 - e. are incongruent in all available asset classes with a socially responsible approach to investing, ie. have not been subject to an environmental, social and governance (ESG) evaluation such as provided by Sustainalytics;*
 - f. do not anticipate enough liquidity to assure the daily cash requirements of the Conference;*
 - g. fail to consider acceptable levels of fluctuation in the investment portfolio.*
 - h. have a risk profile that is greater than normally accepted government and other public investment portfolios.**
- 2. The Executive Secretary shall not fail to have an investment policy, reviewed regularly, that outlines the purpose, performance objectives, level of risk, and asset allocation range of the investment portfolio.*

Ends: Pastoral Relations	<p>A previous meeting had noted that under the new Effective Leadership model of pastoral relations, Presbyteries no longer had Manual responsibilities for personnel and that such references in our policies needed to change.</p> <p><i>M/S/C (Keith Simmonds/Ian Fraser)</i> <i>that Ends Policy A.2 be amended to read “Presbyteries support relationships among ministry personnel at a superior level.”</i></p>
POLICY REVIEW	<p>It was noted that the Executive had already discussed two of the scheduled policies for review – Mission Statement and Vision Statements. The President will work with Keith Simmonds on some questions to send out to the constituency that might help the Executive better decide if these statements are still helpful and what to do with them.</p>
PRESBYTERY BOUNDARIES	<p>Doug Goodwin reported that he had received official notification from Webster’s Whonnock Pastoral Charge, Westminster Presbytery, and Fraser Presbytery that they are in agreement that Webster’s Whonnock Pastoral Charge should be moved from Fraser Presbytery into Westminster Presbytery.</p> <p><i>M/S/C (Jean Macdonald/Graham Brownmiller)</i> <i>that the boundary between Fraser Presbytery and Westminster Presbytery be changed so as to include Webster’s Whonnock Pastoral Charge within the bounds of Westminster Presbytery.</i></p>
MEETING DATE	<p><i>M/S/C (Carol Martin/Jim White)</i> <i>that the Executive meet November 12-14, 2015.</i></p>
NEXT MEETING PRIORITIES	<p>The Executive discussed what it wanted to ensure is on the agenda for its March 2015 meeting and where it wished to spend the most time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the policies that were postponed (Practices; Accountability); • open a discussion about investments in fossil fuels and mining (Doug will research present Conference practice); • a discussion and, perhaps, decision regarding the use of present and future Conference assets (how much, if any, of assets gained from property sales will be used for Conference work?); Doug will bring ideas and perhaps a proposal forward to the March meeting; • update regarding The Centre at Naramata; • General Meeting accountability report – members will bring to the next meeting their choices for highlights that the Executive has done this past year.
EVALUATION OF MEETING	<p>The members reflected on the meeting.</p> <p>It was noted that the meeting was very efficiently run.</p> <p>Better orientation for new members would be appreciated regarding the work and practices of the Executive as well as more information about how best to work within a Policy Governance system. More communication between meetings might also be helpful, as well as more education at the meetings themselves.</p> <p>In particular, the Executive is uncomfortable with how best to “listen to the ownership” so the voices of all are heard and not just those of a few with special interests or from specific constituencies.</p> <p>The group also expressed its appreciation of having a theological reflector in the past and wondered whether having one should not be a common practice.</p>

ADJOURNMENT *M/S/C (Nancy O'Higgins)*
that the meeting adjourn following worship.

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



BC Conference Executive

Rev. Karen Medland, President

Rev. G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary