
MINUTES OF
THE EXECUTIVE OF BC CONFERENCE
The United Church of Canada
March 9-11, 2017
The Mountain View Room, Burnaby, BC

PRESENT	Graham Brownmiller, Cari Copeman-Haynes, Ken Fanning, Doug Goodwin (Executive Secretary), Murray Gordon, Judith Hardcastle, Stephen Hershey, Wayne Hughes, Ray Jones, Everest Kao, Jean Macdonald, Kaylyn Munro, Nancy O’Higgins, Jeff Seaton, Tayana Simpson, Ruth Stebbing, Cheryl Swedburg
REGRETS	Carol Martin, Keith Simmonds (President), Jim White
GUESTS	The Rt. Rev. Jordan Cantwell, Moderator
STAFF PRESENT	Katie Purych (Recording Secretary)
AUTHORITY	In the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of the 2015 General Meeting of BC Conference, the President-Elect, Cari Copeman-Haynes, declared the regular meeting of the BC Conference Executive duly opened for the purpose of conducting the business properly before it. A quorum was present.
WELCOME	Cari Copeman-Haynes noted that the President, Keith Simmonds, could not attend the meeting due to a medical issue. She then welcomed the Moderator, The Rt. Rev. Jordan Cantwell, and new member, Kaylyn Munro.
WORSHIP	Cari led in worship based on Genesis 12:1-4a.
OUTCOMES	The Executive then listed their goals and anticipated outcomes for the meeting.
DINNER	The meeting adjourned for dinner with the Moderator.
AGENDA	The President-Elect introduced the proposed agenda. <i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Ray Jones)</i> <i>that the agenda as presented be adopted (Appendix I, page ____).</i>
MINUTES	<i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Nancy O’Higgins)</i> <i>that the minutes of the November 3-4, 2016 BC Conference Executive meeting be adopted.</i> <i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Cheryl Swedburg)</i> <i>that the minutes of the November 24, 2016 BC Conference Executive meeting be adopted.</i>
CORRESPONDENCE REPORT	Doug Goodwin presented a printed Correspondence Report. <i>M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/Judith Hardcastle)</i> <i>that the Correspondence Report (Appendix II, page ____) be received and its recommendations adopted.</i>

MODERATOR

The Executive engaged in conversation with the Moderator about the life of the United Church in BC, as well as what the Moderator is observing throughout the rest of the church.

The Moderator asked the Executive where they find hope, and what they see the Spirit doing in their communities.

Some common themes in response were: working with Youth and Children and helping them find connection; the new Contemplative Justice work; building community with other congregations, including amalgamations; LeaderShift programming; work with refugees; Truth and Reconciliation; and the present work with property and affordable housing.

The Moderator spoke of some of the common concerns across the country, including: Truth and Reconciliation; refugee sponsorship; the affirming stance of the church toward LGBTQ inclusion; and youth participation in the church. She noted that the present remits do not seem to have consumed too much of the time and energy of the church.

Noting the present controversy about Gretta Vosper, she encouraged the members to continue to see people with differing views as faithful people in a church that holds widely varying perspectives.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned for the night.

FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2017**WORSHIP**

The meeting began with morning worship led by Jeff Seaton.

**PRESBYTERY
CONSULTATION**

Doug Goodwin reported on the second Presbytery Consultation held in January to explore the openness of the Presbyteries to shift responsibilities between the Presbyteries and the Conference. He presented the document “Presbytery Consultation 2 Results” (Appendix III, page ___) which is a summary of the gathering. A number of Conference Executive members participated in the consultation as Presbytery representatives.

Doug made several recommendations:

1. We not proceed in a vigorous manner with the affirmations of the Consultation before the results of the remits are known.
2. In the meantime in areas of general agreement we shift responsibilities, as universally as possible but on a case by case basis, if needed.
3. We encourage and support presbyteries as they continue to discern and implement a vision of their ministry going forward.
4. We continue to hold Presbytery gatherings (“forums” or “consultations”) in the future.

Discussion followed on the merits of each recommendation. It was decided to continue the discussion later in the meeting.

The Moderator was invited to reflect on the previous discussion. She noted that BC is one of the few Conferences taking concrete steps before the present remit results are known. She suggested that in pinpointing the challenges early on, BC Conference might serve as a valuable resource for the wider church, regardless of the outcomes of the remits.

EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONAL REVIEW	<p>The President-Elect led a discussion of the recommendations from the External Organizational Review conducted by Dan Hotchkiss and received at the November 2016 meeting of the Executive.</p>
Goal Setting	<p>The second recommendation, “that the Executive and Executive Secretary collaborate to create each year a Conference Vision of Ministry (VOM) consisting of a short list of one- to three-year goals” was discussed.</p> <p>Members were generally favourable to this recommendation. Discussion focused around: how to ensure goal setting would stay on the level of Ends work rather than devolving into Means work; the appropriate timeline for goals; and how to profitably measure goals.</p> <p>It was generally felt that goals with longer timelines would help ensure they were not management goals. The book by Gil Rendle, <i>Doing the Math of Mission</i>, was also recommended as a helpful resource for determining how to measure goals.</p> <p><i>M/S/C (Bob Fillier/Ruth Stebbing)</i> <i>that the Executive and Executive Secretary collaborate to create each year a Conference Vision of Ministry (VOM) consisting of a short list of three- to five-year goals.</i></p>
Smaller Executive	<p>The Executive then discussed the fifth recommendation, “that the Conference consider shifting to a smaller Executive, composed mostly of at-large members serving three-year terms. The President would also serve a three-year term, or perhaps spend a year as President-Elect, and one as Past President.”</p> <p>Members were generally in favour of this recommendation. Discussion focused around: the appropriate number of Executive members; how to balance the need to “be at the table” with the desire for effectiveness and high capacity; the manner the Executive members would be elected or appointed; whether a Past-President should be a part of an Executive; and the kinds of spiritual and practical gifts such an Executive might need.</p> <p>Richard Bott and Bob Fillier volunteered to prepare a draft of the composition of an Executive based upon the discussion for later consideration.</p>
MODERATOR	<p>Before preparing to leave, the Moderator expressed deep gratitude for having been welcomed into BC Conference and this time of discernment. She thanked the Executive for its care and faithfulness in its work on behalf of the church.</p> <p>The President-Elect thanked the Moderator for her time with the Executive and led in a commissioning prayer for her.</p>
LUNCH	<p>The meeting adjourned for lunch.</p>
PDC DIRECTOR’S MEETING	<p>A meeting of the Property Development Council Directors was held during the lunch break (Appendix III, page __).</p>
PRESIDENT’S REPORT	<p>The President, Keith Simmonds, sent a report on his activities and observations since the last meeting of the Executive (Appendix IV, page __).</p> <p>The report highlighted the recent Evolve youth gathering, the need in northern Presbyteries for support, the establishment of a MultiFaith Council, and the importance of a continued forum for Presbytery consultations. He encouraged the Executive to consider ways to support those who might be appealing a church court</p>

decision and made several recommendations regarding the recommendations of the External Organizational Review by Dan Hotchkiss.

*M/S/C (Bob Fillier/Nancy O'Higgins)
that the President's Report be accepted.*

**ENDS POLICIES:
CHILDREN**

Cari Copeman-Haynes and Richard Bott reported on their meeting with those who requested that children and children's ministry be reflected in the Conference Executive Ends policies.

Cari and Richard brought the following recommendations:

1. Prepare a major Ends 'revisit' and plan for intentional 'Listening' across the Conference in conjunction with the future Presbytery Consultation process.
2. Add "(children, youth and adults of all generations)" into the first sentence of Ends D describing United Church Participants.
3. Consider wording to add children and youth ministry leaders specifically into the Leadership section in Ends C.

Discussion followed on each of the recommendations. It was agreed to review the Ends policies in conjunction with the Presbytery consultations that should be held in the next year. It was further agreed that the third recommendation would be looked at again during the overall review of the Ends policies.

*M/S/C (Richard Bott/Tayana Simpson)
that we add the phrase "(children, youth and adults of all generations)" into the first sentence describing United Church participants (Ends D) so that it reads, "Participants (children, youth and adults of all generations) are informed about matters that allow them to participate fully in the life of the church in the world."*

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MONITORING: LIMITATIONS

The Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations (Appendix V, page _____) was presented and discussed.

Cari suggested the use of a consent agenda in the future, which was met with approval.

Staff Reviews Doug reported that he has contracted with Gaye Sharpe to initiate staff reviews. Since the last meeting three reviews have been completed, one is underway and two more are scheduled for the spring. Doug is confident that this method will ensure staff reviews are kept much more up to date.

Administer the Sacraments On February 3, 2017 a temporary License to Administer the Sacraments was granted to Ingrid Brown, Candidate, for the purpose of celebrating the Lord's Supper during a funeral service at Comox United Church on February 4, 2017;

On February 28, 2017 a License to Administer the Sacraments within Comox-Nanaimo Presbytery was granted to Jeraldine Bjornson, Designated Lay Minister, for the duration of her appointment to Ladysmith United Church, Ladysmith, BC.

Policy Monitoring Doug Goodwin reported compliance in all areas of the Financial Condition and Emergency Succession Limitation policies.

*M/S/C (Bob Fillier/Stephen Hershey)
that the "Executive Secretary Monitoring Report: Executive Limitations" be accepted.*

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY MONITORING: ENDS

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

- Presbyteries** The Presbytery Consultations have indicated that the Presbyteries are in favour of the Conference taking on more of the administrative and technical roles that Presbyteries presently are required to do. There are differences between the Presbyteries on exactly what those responsibilities are but it seems clear that the Conference will need to be preparing for additional work and new relationships with the Presbyteries in the near future.
- Non-Congregational Ministries** The Conference has been asked to manage a contribution of \$3.2 million from the sale of St. James Community Centre by Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery and Trinity United Church. This money is to be used to support new ministries within the Conference. Presently the terms of reference and future staffing for this work are being planned.
- Leadership** \$500,000 from the sale of Capilano United Church has been designated to fund a new Children and Families Ministry certificate program for the next five years. A staff person for this work is presently being sought. This work will be done in partnership with the Vancouver School of Theology.
- Cost** Doug reported that good investment returns from 2016 have resulted in a lower operating deficit than budgeted. The actual deficit will be \$221,500, resulting in a 2.5% decrease in the invested assets available for use by the operating budget. While well within the limits allowed by the Executive, Doug noted that we cannot always depend upon such good investment returns.
- Appeal** Doug reported that he has requested the General Council to deal with the second appeal of a Vancouver-Burrard Presbytery decision to allow the sale of the Gibson's United Church property.
- The Centre at Naramata** Doug provided some history of BC Conference's relationship with the Centre at Naramata. He then outlined the details of the confidential report from the Centre's Board that had been earlier presented to the Finance Council, and discussion ensued. Doug suggested that time might be needed at the November meeting of the Executive to consider the Centre's future further, particular its mission and the question "what is the good being provided by the Centre, for whom, at what cost?"
- Affordable Housing** Doug reported on plans to build affordable housing in three congregational locations. The goal of these projects is to build new congregational space as well as provide housing, all funded by BC Housing. Unlike other projects, the goal is to maintain the ownership and operation of the rental properties. This would necessitate the establishment of a new society and, likely, a rental management business.
- St. Andrew's, Port Moody** Doug reported that the Property Development Council met over lunch and approved a proposal to borrow monies from BC Housing for the development work at St. Andrew's United Church, Port Moody.

M/S/C (Bob Fillier/Jeff Seaton)

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

FOSSIL FUELS AND INVESTMENTS

Doug Goodwin reported that the Conference investment policy has been changed to reflect the Executive's desire to remove investments from the "top 200" fossil fuel companies. Conference investments at Connor, Clark & Lunn will be filtered through the Carbon Underground 200 index, in addition to the already existing ethical investment filters. This will increase annual investment fees by approximately \$10,000.

It was decided that since the Carbon Underground 200 encompasses 97% of the world's fossil fuel reserves it would not be practical to take other steps to remove investments from companies that have links to the fossil fuel industry.

It was recommended that information about this disinvestment and the Carbon Underground 200 index should be made known throughout the Conference. Doug will follow up with our investment agent on producing accurate information for Facebook and the Conference web page.

RENEWAL SOCIETY AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Doug Goodwin presented a schematic diagram and further information on plans to build affordable housing. Since the major goal of this venture is to provide renewal for the church, the plan calls for the establishment of a non-profit, charitable society tentatively titled the "Congregational Renewal Council" which would hold the developed rental properties and contract with a newly established rental management company for their operation. The new CRC society would be structured in a similar manner to the present Property Development Council and be wholly controlled by the BC Conference Executive. Presently the Conference is working with three congregations (Brechin, Brighthouse and Como Lake) on development plans using this model.

The Executive gave its approval for the continuation of the planning for this venture, recognizing that it would have to give its legal approvals at key times.

PRESBYTERY CONSULTATION (CONTINUED)

Conversation continued from earlier in the meeting on Doug Goodwin's recommendations regarding the Presbytery Consultations. All four recommendations were adopted.

While not pursuing the changes proposed in the Consultations aggressively the Conference will, nevertheless, be willing to consider requests from Presbyteries that would like the Conference to undertake some of the changes earlier than other Presbyteries.

FUTURE FUNDING

Remit 4 on "Funding a New Model" and its possible ramifications for BC Conference was discussed. Doug Goodwin diagramed how money would flow in the church structures should the remit be adopted. He suggested that if congregations were willing to reduce M&S donations to pay for the General Council allocation (since the allocation would pay for services presently funded by the M&S Fund), then the Presbyteries and Conference could still receive allocations from congregations without congregations paying more to finance the structures of the church.

Recognizing that the suggestion of purposely reducing M&S givings could easily be misunderstood by the church, Doug sought the permission of the Executive to continue to speak publicly about this possibility. The Executive agreed that this perspective should not only be allowed but be more widely known.

GENERAL MEETING 2017

Doug Goodwin gave a report on plans for the General Meeting 2017. The Agenda and Planning committee is chaired by Beth Hayward, and the Theme and Worship chair is

Blair Odney. The theme for this conference will be “How Big is Our Tent?” and will be held at The Nest at the University of British Columbia.

Discussion was held regarding the Executive reporting at the General Meeting and what should be included in it. Some items that arose from this conversation included:

- Presbytery Consultations and the directions arising from those meetings;
- Dan Hotchkiss’ report and his recommendations;
- Information on major and/or new Conference operations (fossil fuel divestment, finance funding model, new Children and Families’ programming, LeaderShift, property, Contemplative Justice).

It was suggested that people with skill in hosting conversations might be invited to lead discussion at the meeting on some of these topics.

Ray Jones volunteered to work with Keith Simmonds and Doug Goodwin on preparing the Conference Executive report.

**GENERAL COUNCIL
EXECUTIVE**

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

The General Council Executive next meets in May 2017. Graham spoke about his work on the Pension Board and promoted a new video, found on the Pension Board site, introducing the Pension Board members.

Jean gave an update on the work of the church in living up to the commitments of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Ray Jones gave an update on the conversations between the various indigenous groups within the church about coordinating their work. Recommendations are expected to be brought to the General Council meeting in 2018.

Ray also reported that a delegation from the Uniting Church of Australia will be visiting Prince Rupert Presbytery. The majority of this delegation will be aboriginal and will be attending the National Aboriginal Spiritual Gathering. A return visit is expected in 2018.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned for the night.

SATURDAY, MARCH 11, 2017

**EXTERNAL
ORGANIZATIONAL
REVIEW
(CONTINUED)**

Bob Fillier and Richard Bott presented a potential model for the composition of a Conference Executive based on the discussion held earlier in the meeting.

They suggested the size of the Executive should be eleven members. The composition of the Executive would either be based entirely upon the gifts and skills the members brought to the Executive or, alternatively, of people with the same gifts but from different Conference constituencies. It was generally felt that some way of ensuring strategic constituencies were “at the table” would remain important for some time. Executive members, though, should be directly accountable to the General Meeting and not to other groups.

There was also discussion about the role and term of the President which might or might not be tied to the length of time between General Meetings. Continuity as well as regular change on the Executive would also be important.

Executive meetings would be held four to six times a year, perhaps using different

ways of meeting (face to face, electronically, etc.) and focusing the work of each meeting on the kinds of work best suited for the method of meeting.

It was decided to establish a clear communication plan regarding the possibility of initiating such changes. Bob and Richard will put together a small discussion paper to be discussed at a future online Executive meeting. This would ensure some time to discuss it further before taking the idea to the General Meeting.

**GENERAL MEETING
(CONTINUED)**

The Executive considered the possibility of using the General Meeting as an opportunity to introduce an “Open Question” for the Conference, as recommended by Dan Hotchkiss. It was felt that such a question should focus on the mission of BC Conference through a period of structural and other change.

Some concern was expressed that there might not be enough time or focus at the meeting to adequately discuss such a significant question. It was suggested that the President might be able to raise it during his Presidential address.

The posing of an Open Question or not will be left to the team from the Executive planning the Executive report.

POLICY REVIEW

The Executive reviewed the suggested policy changes from its November 2016 meeting.

**Changes from
November 2016**

*M/S/C (Doug Goodwin, Graham Brownmiller)
that the following Governance Policies changes be made:*

“Conference Executive Job Description” – in section 1 the words “will actively be the link” be changed to “will be the active link”; and in section 2 the words “will produce written governing policies” be changed to “will produce, monitor and review written governing policies”; and in section 3 the words “The Conference Executive will produce assurance of Executive Secretary performance against Ends and Executive Secretary Limitations policies” be changed to “The Conference Executive will monitor and hold to account the Executive Secretary in complying with Ends and Executive Secretary Limitation policies.”

“Conference Executive Governing Style” – that the numbering system in the opening section be changed from numbers to letters.

“Conference Executive President’s Role” – that section 2.a add reference to the Perpetual Calendar so that it would read “The President plans and proposes Executive meeting agenda in consultation with the Executive Secretary and with reference to the Perpetual Calendar, and the General Meeting agenda with the Agenda and Planning Committee.”

“Conference Executive Diversity and One Voice” – that section 2.d be simplified to read “Executive members as individuals will not direct staff.”

“Conference Executive Financial Audit Committee” – that section 5.b become a separate section 6; that section 5 be changed to read “The Committee shall consult with the Executive Secretary and auditors, and may consult with at least two other persons with expertise in financial and accounting matters who are not directly or indirectly involved in any decision-making on BC Conference financial matters.”

**Members’ Code of
Conduct**

Bob Fillier made a proposal to add a perception of personal bias clause to the Members’ Code of Conduct policy.

In discussion it was noted that much of the proposal outlined best practices which might be better suited in the Practice and Procedures section of the policies rather than in the policy itself.

It was also agreed that the phrase “critically examine any tendency towards conservation” should read “critically examine any tendency towards conservation or novelty.”

M/S/C (Bob Fillier/Cheryl Swedburg)

that a fifth phrase be added to the Members’ Code of Conduct policy as paragraph 5: “In its decision making the Executive of BC Conference endeavors to limit the impact of personal bias in its discernment and decisions.” Reference would then be made to a best practices document in the Practices and Procedures section of the policies.

President-Elect Role The task named in the President-Elect Role policy for the President-Elect to “be responsible for ‘Listening to the Owners’ planning and leadership for each regular meeting of the Conference Executive” was discussed. It was decided not to change this policy at this time.

Scheduled Policies The Executive reviewed the General Executive Secretary Constraint policy and made no changes.

The Personnel policy was reviewed. Doug reported that Gaye Sharp has been contracted to initiate performance reviews but achieving them annually would still be a challenge. It was suggested that the policy be changed to be every two years.

M/S/C (Jean Macdonald/Mike McAuley)

that Personnel Policy 1h. be changed to read “neglect regular (every two years) written and verbal performance reviews with personnel.”

Bob Fillier, who is married to a BC Conference staff member, abstained from the vote.

The Executive reviewed the Emergency Succession policy and made no changes.

SPRING 2018 MEETING

M/S/C (Doug Goodwin/ Ray Jones)
that the Executive meet March 8-10, 2018.

NEXT MEETING PRIORITIES

The Executive named priorities for its next meeting in November:

- Governance training for new members
- Planning for the education, decision-making and implementation of a restructured Executive
- Conversation around how the ownership will be engaged, including the 3-5 year vision of ministry
- Discussion about the consequences of the remit decisions
- The Budget 2018 will need to be reviewed and adopted
- Cari will prepare a consent agenda for testing
- The future of Naramata Centre

ADJOURNMENT

M/S/C (Doug Goodwin)
that the meeting adjourn following Eucharistic Worship.

WORSHIP

The President-Elect led in Eucharistic worship.

NEXT MEETINGS

General Meeting – May 25-28, 2017
November 2-4, 2017
March 8-10, 2018
General Meeting (Penticton) – May 31-June 3, 2018



BC Conference Executive

Cari Copeman-Haynes, President-Elect

Rev. G. Douglas Goodwin, Executive Secretary