

**THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA
TORONTO CONFERENCE**

**Minutes of the meeting of
the Executive of Toronto Conference
Wednesday, September 9, 2009**

The Executive of Toronto Conference met at the Conference office on Wednesday, September 9, 2009. The meeting began at 4:02 p.m. A quorum was present.

Members present

Carol Gierak (president), David Allen (executive secretary), Marg Walker (president elect), Linda Thompson (Northern Waters), Paget Blazet (Toronto Southeast), Ron Coughlin (South West), Carol McKinley (Living Waters), Linda Parsons (Living Waters), Tom Clarke (Toronto Southeast), Ralph Schmidt (Northern Waters), Brian Goodings (Northern Waters)

Regrets

Kevin Logie (Living Waters), Karen Williams (South West)

To be appointed

one from South West; one from Toronto Southeast

Worship, community building and introduction to policy governance

Welcome, introductions and regrets

The president constituted the meeting in the name of Jesus Christ to conduct such business as should properly be brought before it. Everyone introduced themselves, identifying their terms on the Executive.

Ralph Schmidt – 1 year
Linda Parsons - 3 years
Tom Clarke – 1 year
Carol McKinley – 1 year
Ron Coughlin – 1 year
Paget Blazet – 2 years
Linda Thompson – 3 years
Brian Goodings – 2 years

Regrets were noted.

Worship

The president led worship beginning with the singing of #299 – “Teach Me God to Wonder” in *Voices United*. The scripture readings were found in the theological section of the new *Toronto Conference Executive Handbook*. The Executive divided into three groups to discuss how they make connections between the passages and what we are doing in our policy governance documents. The groups reported back.

Genesis 1

- this scripture describes how order came out of chaos
- God became incarnate in the Word and in Jesus
- pictures are easy to visualize
- how are we going to paint the words and make those words work as part of the journey?
- we’re male and female; there’s balance
- what spiritual impact will we have on the Conference?
- how are we the architects and stonemasons in the policies we have in the *Handbook*?

Exodus 18

- the passage is about sharing the work and sharing power
- how do we share the work? there’s always a danger of one person being the authority
- we all have leadership roles; how do we then consult with others?
- everyone does not need to do everything

Romans 12

- trust is essential; all the parts have to function together
- this Executive needs to spend as much time as possible in trust-building exercises
- we bring a lot of gifts to the table
- we need to go back to the Presbyteries reporting on what we’re mandated and called to do

There was discussion about the need to work on a communication strategy which will be useful to the church with an emphasis on giving information that people need rather than just sending out volumes of information.

The Executive read together a portion of a “Song of Faith” found in the *Handbook*.

Introduction to policy governance

Marg Walker walked the group through the document “Policy Governance in Toronto Conference” found in the *Handbook*.

She emphasized the mission/ends policy of the Conference Executive. There was discussion about how oversight will take place in the new structure. How will we

exercise oversight as an Executive? What processes will we use? There are many questions in these early days.

If we're sending people out to do oversight visits, we should be sending people out in at least twos, not individually. We need to look at a variety of ways in which we can build trust. Community building will be part of every Executive meeting.

Marg helped the group to look at the "Policy Governance Principles". She focused on the role of the Executive and the executive secretary, monitoring what the executive secretary does, questions to ask about policies, talking with the "ownership", the role of the Executive, values, and speaking with one voice.

There was concern about the term "ownership"; the Executive will struggle with this at a future time.

Tom agreed to send some web links so people can understand a bit more about the Carver model of governance.

It was suggested that Parker Palmer's writings may offer a way of helping the Executive to work on development of policies or dealing with difficult issues.

Members noted that we as an Executive are not an intercultural group. Future meetings of the Executive could include other people who would represent a wider diversity.

Dinner

The Executive broke for dinner at approximately 6:00 p.m. and resumed at 6:42 p.m. Grace was sung.

Introduction to policy governance (cont'd)

The Executive returned to some of the foundational documents. Marg discussed the kind of reports that will be made by the executive secretary.

Suggestion: A cover page will keep track of where the changes are being made in the policies. This would sit in the front of the *Handbook*. The policies should be numbered and the page numbers would relate to the policies.

The group turned to the document on "duties of Executive members", and Marg walked the members through this policy. There was agreement that the wording about speaking with one voice could be improved by using wording that was found in an earlier document in the *Handbook*. We need to talk about whether we in fact plan to work by consensus.

Under the new structure, there will be no sub-Executive; however, the polity of the church would permit a sub-Executive to be named.

Listening to a variety of voices/connecting with the ownership

Appointments to other bodies

One of the unfinished restructuring tasks is an evaluation of the appointments made by the Conference to other bodies. The Executive reviewed the policy on appointments to other bodies.

The mandates of all the groups and positions to be evaluated will be sent out in advance of the next meeting, and an action plan will be developed for how to learn more about and from the representatives who have been appointed in the past.

The policy on appointments should be re-titled to eliminate the reference to General Council.

Listening to the ownership

The Executive engaged in a lively discussion on the policy found at p. 70 of the *Handbook* regarding how to listen to the “ownership”, a term which will be reviewed at subsequent meetings. Who do we need to meet with? How? When? Where?

In the discussion, the following points or ideas were made:

- we need to make sure we listen to more than the examples given in the policy
- is this the right policy? how do we broaden the voices we listen to? how do we listen both broadly and specifically?
- who benefits from the existence of the United Church in Toronto Conference?
- we desire to express inclusive both in perception and how we live things out
- how do we hear those muted voices?
- when we listen to people, to what purpose?
- sometimes we'll invite people to be present for specific purposes, sometimes more broadly
- how does our listening affect our policy making?
- the Executive is representing the entire Conference, not just the specific parts.

Development of policies

The executive secretary identified a number of topics which will need to be developed into policy. These include some unfinished restructuring matters, e.g. property, assets and funding, communication. The Executive will need to discuss how it exercises effective oversight as per the mission statement found in the *Handbook*.

Monitoring and compliance with policies

Future reports from executive secretary

The executive secretary described the kind of reports he will be making to the Executive in the future.

Schedule of policy review

The Executive looked over the schedule for reviewing all policies over the next three years.

Policy on signing officers

The executive secretary pointed out a practical weakness of the current policy on signing officers. All the signers are named by virtue of office, and during the General Council meeting in August, all but one of the signers was in Kelowna, so cheques could not be signed during that period. He reported that the signing officers had not been changed over the summer, so the former chair of the finance and extra appeals committee had been brought in to sign cheques which needed to be sent. In this sense the Conference was not in compliance with its policy. The executive secretary offered a suggestion for an improvement to the policy.

MOTION by Linda Thompson/Carol McKinley that a program staff person be added as an additional cheque signer, to be named by the executive secretary.

MOTION CARRIED.

Business matters to be considered by the Executive

Minutes

MOTION by David Allen/Linda Parsons that the minutes of the Executive meeting of June 10, 2009 and the sub-Executive minutes of June 23, 2009 be approved with a correction on p. 08/09-650; the word “upspent” should be “unspent”.

MOTION CARRIED.

In business arising from the minutes, it was noted that lay members of the Executive who did not receive the ministry personnel memo should receive it.

Correspondence

Following the new policy on correspondence, there was very little to report. The Executive AGREED to receive the list of correspondence (Appendix A) for information.

Omnibus motion

The executive secretary presented the omnibus and explained a number of items which were included. Two requests were made:

- if the Executive is going to be asked to approve by-laws of Incorporated Ministries, it should receive the by-laws in advance for review
- the Executive would like to see in writing a statement from the general secretary indicating that the Executive is covered by the church's insurance policy.

The Ina Grafton Gage Home had received support from the former Toronto Don Valley Presbytery to conduct an extra appeal. The executive secretary will be in touch with the Home to outline the process that needs to be followed. There have been some financial challenges for the Home during their construction period.

MOTION by David Allen/Tom Clarke that the Toronto Conference Executive take the following actions:

a) Central King Seniors Residence

... approve Central King Seniors Residence 2009-2010 Board of Directors:

Mary Louise Ashbourne
 Alex Gribben
 Ella Jackson
 Joyce Klamer
 Jon Lee
 Lang Moffat
 Bob Putnam
 Harry Skelton
 Joyce Skelton
 Don Thompson

b) Kingsway-Lambton Homes For Seniors, Inc.

... approve Kingsway-Lambton Homes For Seniors, Inc. 2009-2010 Board of Directors

John Gorham (UCC)
 Avalon Neale (UCC)
 James T. Paradine (UCC)
 Margaret Robb (UCC)
 Michael V. Spence (UCC)
 Ross Wemp (UCC)
 Bob Wood (UCC)

c) Simcoe Presbytery Non-Profit Housing Corporation

... approve Simcoe Presbytery Non-Profit Housing Corporation Board of Directors:

Charles Drury (UCC)
Linda Gray (UCC)
Ann Harbridge (UCC)
Colin MacDonald (UCC)
Linda Mitchell (UCC)
Andrea Wheaton (UCC)

d) Toronto Tri-Presbytery Corporation

... approve Toronto Tri-Presbytery Corporation 2009-2010 Board of Directors:

Dorothy Amos (UCC)
Stan Bradley (UCC)
Murray Campbell (UCC)
Murray Cutler (UCC)
John M. Metson (UCC)
Jasper Miller (UCC)
Nick Walker (UCC)

e) United Non-Profit Homes of York

... approve United Non-Profit Homes of York Board of Directors:

Cora Brodie (UCC)
Elizabeth Darby (UCC)
Tim Dayfoot (UCC)
David Estey (UCC)
Chris Farhner (UCC)
Catherine Hions (UCC)
Bill Hurdman (UCC)
Sandra Kirby (UCC)
Elaine Lush (UCC)
Rick McKinley (UCC)
Ted Meyers (UCC)
Harry Ramsaran (UCC)
Bruce Roffey (UCC)
Lorraine Scarlett (UCC)
Bill Stevens (UCC)

f) Grace Place Community Resource Centre

...having received assurance that documentation had been reviewed by the executive secretary and General Council legal counsel, and upon recommendation from the executive secretary and General Council legal counsel, approve the Articles of Incorporation and By-Law Number 1 of the Incorporated Ministry known as Grace Place Community Resource Centre.

g) dissolution of Incorporated Ministries

...receive for information the dissolution of two Incorporated Ministries – Simcoe Presbytery Non-Profit Housing Corporation and United Non-Profit Homes of York.

MOTION

CARRIED.

Convenor of mission support

The Executive AGREED that the president and executive secretary will secure a convenor of the mission support consultation.

Date of November Executive

The Executive discussed the timing and location of the next Executive meeting to be held November 11. The Executive AGREED to stick with the 11th; Ralph gave regrets because of chaplaincy commitments. The initial decision is that the meeting will be held at the South West Presbytery office.

Directions

The executive secretary named a number of items which have been given to the Executive from the previous structure. Those include a long-range plan for the WoodGreen property at 875 Queen Street East, Toronto; setting up a Commission on the use of surplus funds; and development of a funders and service providers list. A question was asked whether the Conference has a role in the priority-setting to be done by the Presbyteries?

Annual meeting

The president and executive secretary asked for guidance from the Executive with regard to the annual meeting. In discussion the Executive AGREED to request that the four Presbyteries have some intentional discussion about youth programming. How can it be done? Will it be done? Who would organize it? Any program that is developed must be self-funding. Presbytery representatives will report back to the November Executive meeting.

The president suggested that the values for planning the annual meeting be sent out to the Executive; this will go to the Executive by e-mail and the Executive will give feedback on the values.

Evaluation and closing

The meeting had run to the end of its allotted time without doing an evaluation covering the following questions:

- What did we do well?
- What did we accomplish?
- What could we have done better?

Members committed themselves to send their comments by e-mail by the beginning of the next week.

Adjournment

The business of the meeting completed, the president declared the meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Carol Gierak
President

David Allen
Executive Secretary

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