

Bridgewater Church of the Brethren
Council Meeting
Draft Minutes
November 1, 2020

Moderator Steve Longenecker called the Bridgewater Church of the Brethren (BWCOB) Council meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. Moderator Longenecker opened the meeting with prayer. He reviewed housekeeping items and safety protocols. He also thanked Associate Pastor Chris Zepp for his 14 years of service and leadership.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the February 9, 2020 BWCOB Council meeting were approved with one correction.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Phil Flory reported for the period January 1, 2020 through September 30, 2020. Total income toward the budget was \$433,648.71; this is \$39,000.00 under budget. Total budgeted expenses were \$399,586.50; this is \$73,000.00 under budget. Net operating total for the period was \$34,062.21. Due to the pandemic, the church building was closed to outside groups, which reduced user fees, and not meeting in person reduced the amount received in loose offering. Expenses were also down considerably. Treasurer Flory extended thanks to everyone who has continued to give during these unprecedented times.

Board of Administration (BOA) Report

Board of Administration Chair Ted Flory reported the following:

- The Mission and Service and Witness and Nurture Commissions brought a recommendation to the Board that the congregation becomes the 25th Covenant Congregation in the Faith in Action group in Harrisonburg/Rockingham community. The cost to join is \$500 for 2021 and will be shared between the two commissions in the 2021 proposed budget. Future dues for 2022 and beyond will be between \$500 and \$1,500. **The Board of Administration recommends to Council that the congregation joins the Faith in Action group. The recommendation was approved.**
- The BOA reviewed the proposed 2021 Budget prepared by the Finance Commission. The 2021 proposed budget is a challenge budget for several reasons:
 - The leadership is in transition. Staffing needs will not be known for some months.

- The Church is striving to increase its commitment to the Mission and Ministry Partners. In 2018 the partner commitment was over \$66,000. That amount dropped sharply over the next two years to \$28,484 this year. With the 2021 proposed budget, it is hoped that the support from the Church will move in a positive direction with an increase to \$33,600.
- Budgeting anything in this time of separation is a challenge. Income items like loose offering and church usage fees are naturally constrained.
- Estimates of giving are still being received.

The Board of Administration recommends to Council approval of the 2021 proposed budget. The recommendation was approved.

One couple said they appreciated the challenge budget that provided more giving to mission partners and would increase their commitment to the church budget by ten percent. They challenged others to do the same.

- Working with Anita Beckman, Claire Martindale, and Kathy Zimmerman, the Mission and Service Commission brought a recommendation that BWCOB join a coalition of churches for a duplex to be built on Virginia Avenue in Harrisonburg sponsored by Central Valley Habitat for Humanity. The commitment is \$10,000, of which a little over \$6,000 is held in a reserved fund. This recommendation does not have budget implications because the group feels they will be able to raise the remaining \$4,000 through contributions.
The Board of Administration recommends to Council that the congregation participates in this Habitat for Humanity project. The recommendation was approved.
- The Transition Team was formed in January 2020 and began meeting in February 2020. One of the responsibilities of the Team was to look at the leadership staffing of the Church. The Team was given a year to accomplish its work. The BOA anticipates receiving the report and recommendation in January 2021. The BOA will consider the Team's report. The goal is to bring a recommendation to the February Council meeting. Following Council's approval, the Board will form a Search Committee to begin searching for our future leaders. Those with suggestions for members of the Search Committee should contact Chair Flory.

Transition Team Report

Transition Team Chair Erin Dalrymple reported the following: Members of the Transition Team were chosen to represent a cross-section of the congregation. The members are Melanie Bair, Anita Beckman, Erin Dalrymple, Mike Fike, John Hipps, Terry Houff, Andrew Kreps, and Fred Swartz. Interim Pastor Christy Dowdy is working with the Team. The Team was called to bring

the congregation to the best health, unity, and readiness to move forward under the leadership of a new pastor. The Team was tasked to listen and process the visions of church members for the Church as well as interpret and use what was learned to envision a staff model for future ministry. Several major themes emerged:

- To become a more welcoming, caring, and loving community.
- To continue providing worship experiences that offer variety, are creative, and involve many people while using technology effectively.
- To continue to strengthen our service and outreach to the community (and beyond) and publicize it widely as a “Light on the Hill.”
- To develop a ministry leadership/staff model that will provide new vision for leading and engaging the congregation toward the achievement of the above themes while retaining existing important ministry functions.

The Transition Team is expected to conclude its work by January and offer a recommendation to the Congregation.

Open Discussion and Questions on Pastoral Transition

No comments were made.

Gifts Discernment Committee Report

Members of the Gifts Discernment Committee are Doris Harsh, Elaine Huffman, Sharon Kiracofe, Rod Miller, Brad Neher, and Joyce Wampler. **Chair Sharon Kiracofe moved to accept the list of persons presented to serve the Church beginning in 2021. The motion passed.** A copy of the report is filed with the minutes.

Childcare Initiative Report

Childcare Initiative Chair Leanne Kreps reported the following: There is a need for childcare in this community. The Childcare Initiative Committee has envisioned using the BWCOB to meet the needs of children and families in the Bridgewater area. Young families are faced with difficult decisions due to the lack of quality, reliable, and affordable childcare.

Currently, the Bridgewater Child Care Center operates in the Church building. It serves children before and after school. This is a program run by the Church. In addition, for many years, the Bridgewater Preschool was housed in the Church and provided part-time preschool programming for 2-3 hours a few days a week to local families. The program closed this year.

Proposed by the Child Care Initiative, the new program would be a joint venture with the current Child Care Center run by the Church. It would provide full day care for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers as well as the programming for school aged children currently served. It is the

hope of the group that the Church bless this initiative to continue to develop the program proposal so that the group can continue working on the congregation's behalf to seek community partners and create a fully developed proposal that would be brought back to the congregation for a vote of affirmation.

To understand more about this project, everyone is encouraged to view a video that has been put together with more information about this endeavor. In addition, three sessions will be available to participate in using Zoom. This information will also be publicized to residents in the Bridgewater Retirement Community on WellZesta.

Foundation Board Report

Foundation Board Chair Jim Replogle reported that after the February Council meeting, the amount the Foundation distributes to the Church will be based on a 4% five-year rolling average of the accounts under management. Using that formula, \$38,047 will be distributed: \$33,770 to the Congregation and \$4,277 toward the Deacon Fund. This represents approximately \$8,000 more than 2019. Several factors need to be considered regarding the distribution. The proposed distribution is not included in the budget. The Foundation does not stipulate the use of the distribution. There is a growing concern that the distribution is used to offset annual expenses. While foundation funds can also be used to cover a temporary budget shortfall, funds from the Foundation should assist with facility improvements and assist with those ministries that lead to an improved future for our congregation.

Interim Pastor Report

Pastor Dowdy briefly reflected on her 13 months serving as the Interim pastor, with 8 of those months being during the Pandemic, which brought about the virtual worship experience and planning. She noted appreciation for all those who have been willing to be part of the services and the importance of the new AudioVisual system installed in the sanctuary. Phase 3 would add screens to the sanctuary and be a great addition to worship possibilities for the future when worship returns to the building. The transition team has been a primary focus through the months, as well as the goal of staff reviews. Reading from Colossians 3, Interim Pastor Dowdy closed the meeting in prayer.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally Jane Conner
Church Clerk