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MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA
JOINT COUNCIL MEETING
April 15 – via Zoom teleconference
Meeting Minutes

Joint Council Present: Calvin Quan (Moderator), Geraldine Balzer (Assistant Moderator), Allan Hiebert (Secretary/Treasurer), Terry Stefaniuk (Moderator MCSK), Andrea De Avila (MCM), Brenda Tiessen-Wiens (Moderator MCA), Betty Loewen (MCBC), Gerry Grunau (Moderator MCBC), , Gerald Gerbrandt (Moderator MCM), Arli Klassen (Moderator, MCEC), Ly Vang (MCEC), Henry Funk (MCSK), Margaret Kruger Harder (MCA)

Staff Present: Tim Wiebe Neufeld (MCA), Ryan Siemens (MCSK), Ken Warkentin (MCM), David Martin (MCEC), Garry Janzen (MCBC), Doug Klassen (Executive Minister)

Regrets: None

1) **Welcome and Opening Prayer:** Calvin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm CDT and welcomed everyone. A special welcome to Gerry Grunau as the new Moderator for MCBC. Calvin shared a short reflection based on a newsletter from George and Tobia Veith (Witness workers in China).

2) **Financial Update and Discussion (pp 3-9 of docket):** Allan presented the financial reports to March 31 and his Secretary/Treasurer report (e-mailed April 15 morning).

a) **Financial reports to March 31**

- i) A question was raised about the FYE 2021 draft budget contribution amounts from the Regional Churches and how these were determined.
- ii) Travel expenses for flights that did not happen are on hold as credit towards further travel plans.
- iii) Workers have been encouraged to keep spending at a bare bones.
- iv) Next Council meeting will have a more comprehensive discussion of the proposed budget and include last year's budget for comparison and better understanding of effect of COVID crisis.

b) **Current status of bank accounts and Abundance accounts**

- i) Allan reviewed the status of MC Canada's bank accounts and Abundance accounts, as of March 31, 2020, shown in the Secretary/Treasurer report.
- ii) Some of the Abundance accounts are invested in products that have roughly 40% equity and 60% fixed income. These accounts had high returns last fiscal year, but have lost value in the last two month due to market declines.
- iii) These assets are also shown on the new Balance sheet report produced by Sean.

c) **Internally Restricted Fund Consolidation.**

- i) A Plan for implementing the internally restricted fund consolidations approved at the last Joint Council meeting, and to increase transparency between IR funds and Abundance accounts, was outlined in the Secretary/Treasurer report.

40 ii) Question on which restricted funds are open for use was explained, with Co of 1000 being
41 specific for that program, and Endowments can only use interest, also based on specific
42 programs. FPAC recommends maintaining the current strategy of investment strategy and
43 transferring several funds from W0066C leaving it as a fixed income account only. Interest
44 would return into the bequest fund instead of general budget, as per our updated Financial
45 Policies.

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47 **CONSENSUS: That Joint Council approve the recommendations brought forward from FPAC**
48 **(documented in the Secretary/Treasurer report) on how to implement the internally restricted**
49 **fund consolidation process as approved at Joint Council in January.**

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51 d) **Current audit plan** – Allan indicated that the annual audit was slightly delayed due to the
52 current crisis. Due to this delay, the audited Financial Statements may not be ready for the
53 scheduled May 23 Joint Council meeting. An updated schedule will be available in early May.

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55 **3) Naming Priorities (pp 10-11 of docket) :**

56 a) Doug provided a number of options regarding staffing and programs of MC Canada in working
57 through priorities during the current COVID-19 crisis. Mandates have varied across the nation,
58 but in Manitoba needed to close the offices, with only finance staff (Jessica) and Doug present in
59 the offices. Other permanent staff are working from home.

60 b) The concern is if regions are feeling the pinch and unable to forward funds, priorities need to be
61 determined.

62 c) 7 options were presented. Calvin led the discussion.

63 d) **Feedback and Consensus:** As reserve funds are set aside for times of crisis or 'rainy day', this is
64 the time to make use of them, therefore consensus is to go with option of keep paying all staff
65 as normal. If we have significant deficit at year-end, we consider it a loss from our reserves.
66 Caution was expressed that should there be a significant drop in revenue as the year progresses,
67 that we seek government assistance funding. Advised to: a) keep communication open and
68 strong to keep up with evolving nature and needs of congregations b) to work hard at finding
69 ways to continue support for Int'l students who were laid off due to offices closing c) to
70 remember our purpose in serving the larger church body, and to be aware of the congregations.

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72 **4) Building Repair (Roof and HVAC) Update:**

73 a) Calvin updated Joint Council on the hiring of a project manager for the Conference Building
74 repair, and the next steps in the process. As follow up to Council meeting in January, JC
75 Executive Committee interviewed Eric Friesen of Cool Green Solutions Inc. and recommend
76 hiring Eric to project manage the repair process. The next step is for Eric to have engineering
77 design done, prepare a proposal and estimate for the May meetings. Due to his extensive
78 experience in managing similar projects and familiarity of the MC Canada building, Joint Council
79 Executive will not seek proposals with other vendors. Suggestions from the MC Canada
80 Sustainability Committee on some alternatives for the HVAC update to look at were forwarded
81 to Eric.

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- 5) **Updates on Study Conference and other initiatives:** Doug presented some updates.
 - a) **Study Conference** moving from the plan for a large 2 day event in Baden (Oct 23/24), to a combination of pre-recorded materials and remote live presentations and meeting. If restrictions are lifted somewhat, the hope is for small groups or sites in different regions to meet together (following group size restrictions or recommendations). Another planning meeting will be held on Friday to make final decisions and then to begin work with advertising.
 - b) **MDS**—exploring and initiative for releasing some reserve funds for congregations that want to respond to impact of COVID in their communities. They are asking if MC Canada would be willing to assist with grant funding as well as helping roll it out. Currently waiting for the proposal.
 - c) **AMBS** is applying for a grant from the Lilly Foundation for some work around Church Re-vitalization. They were told that we already have some things going in Canada. However AMBS wants to be at ‘our service’. A proposal will come if they receive the grant.
- 6) **Next Meeting: May 23** – Joint Council will meet via ZOOM instead of in-person – with two 2 hours sessions. Noting sensitivity to time zones – 11 am Eastern Time = 8 am West for a start time.
- 7) **Closing Prayer – Doug**
- 8) **In Camera – led by Calvin**
- 9) **Adjournment at 8:45 CDT.**