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**MENNONITE CHURCH CANADA**  
**JOINT COUNCIL MEETING**  
**May 15, 2021**  
**Via ZOOM**  
**Session 2 (1:15 pm – 4:00 PM CST)**  
**Meeting Minutes**

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

**Staff Present:** Tim Wiebe Neufeld (MCA), Michael Pahl (MCM), Leah Reesor-Keller (MCEC), Garry Janzen (MCBC), Ryan Siemens (MCSK), Doug Klassen (Executive Minister); Kathy Fast/Susan Reynar (Exec. Assistant)

**Regrets:** Andrea De Avila (MCM)

**Note:** Joint Council continued after adjournment of Joint Council and Joint Executive Committee meeting with MC USA. The minutes of this joint meeting are in a separate document.

Calvin would like to amend the action item for # 8 from discussion to decision.

6) **Executive Minister's Report** (pp. 4-7 of docket):

a) **General Updates:**

- i) Doug acknowledged the work of MC Canada staff in adapting to changing Covid pandemic restrictions and risks.

b) **Directors Report** (pp. 8-24 of docket): Call for comments or questions on the report:

i) CommonWord

- CommonWord and Menno Media: Discussion was held on how CommonWord should move forward, given the inability to get a special rate from Menno Media.
- Curriculum for Sunday School and Adult Ed should be something we look at sourcing within Canada. An example with an Anabaptist perspective was cited.

- ii) The length of director reports was discussed. Some Regional Churches limit reports to one page. Attention to the mandates that each of the directors are operating by was appreciated. Perhaps have an executive summary and more detail could be included in an appendix. Include the mandates that each of the directors are operating by.

**ACTION:** Doug will give guidelines to staff directors for creating future reports.

**LUNCH BREAK**

**SESSION 2**

7) **Facilities:**

a) **MC Canada/MCM Lease agreement** (pp 25-30 of docket)

- i) A formal lease agreement between MC Canada and MC Manitoba was presented, culminating a long conversation since MCM moved down to first floor with MC Canada.

- 48 ii) MCM board has not formally voted on this last version but anticipate it being accepted at  
49 the next board meeting, based on previous discussions.  
50 iii) Lease takes affect retroactively on the first day of January 2021 because MCM year end is  
51 December 31.  
52

53 **CONSENSUS: The lease agreement presented in the docket was accepted.**  
54

55 **8) Finance**

56 a) **Secretary/Treasurer report** (pp 31-34 of docket):

- 57 i) A request was made that all agreements between MC Canada and other parties, that were  
58 reviewed and accepted by Joint Council, are stored in the Joint Council SharePoint site so  
59 that they can be accessible in the future.  
60 ii) Care should be taken that any policy documents stored on the Joint Council SharePoint site  
61 should be correct and include any amendments made by Joint Council.  
62 iii) FPAC and PAC Meetings were held May 14. These include reviewing the benefits and  
63 pension plans overseen by MC Canada for staff, Regional Church staff, member  
64 congregation staff, and related agencies.  
65 iv) FPAC also met with our auditors, KPMG, to receive their Audit Findings Report.  
66 v) FPAC and staff also conducted a brief review of the Auditor performance. After this review it  
67 was recommended by FPAC that we continue to engage KPMG for our next audit.  
68

69 b) **Draft Financial Statements For the Year Ending January 31, 2021** (pp 35-60 of docket, minor  
70 revision e-mailed to Joint Council two days prior to meeting): The audited Financial Statements,  
71 sent to Joint Council members prior to the meeting, were briefly reviewed.  
72

73 **CONSENSUS: That Joint Council recommends the approval of the Financial Statements of Mennonite  
74 Church Canada for the Year ended January 31, 2021, as circulated, and to be presented at the Annual  
75 General Meeting of Mennonite Church Canada.**  
76

77 c) **Draft FYE 2022 Budget** (pp 60-62 of docket) Doug reviewed main points:

- 78 i) Revenue: most Regional Church contributions were set to the percent levels in the proposed  
79 shared revenue agreement. MCM's is lower this year, due to financial challenges with its  
80 camp programs.  
81 ii) It is anticipated that relational funding support will remain strong for this coming year  
82 iii) Mennonite World Conference budgeted amount returned to our pre-COVID level.  
83 iv) The budget includes amounts for travel, anticipating this to pick up in September.  
84 v) A capital budget will be presented to Joint Council in June, as we are looking into replacing  
85 the Conference Building exterior this summer.

86 vi) **Discussion**

- 87 • It was noted that the Regional Church contributions shown in MC Canada's Financial  
88 Statements and in what the Regional Churches financial records indicate were different.  
89 This could be due to different year ends, and the timing of payments. Direct electronic  
90 transfers are possible, and would have a reduced transit times compared to cheques.  
91 • It was noted that the percentage was based on budget from previous year actuals.  
92 Individual donations are on top of the percentage used which would add to the revenue  
93 stream for Canada budget.  
94 • Note regarding need of governance discussion to look at possible additional Executive  
95 help, due to concern for Doug's workload.

96 **CONSENSUS: That Joint Council recommends the budget as presented to the Annual General Meeting**  
97 **for approval.**

98

99 **d) Surplus Policy Allocation Implementation**

- 100 i) We had a surplus of \$144,000 last year because of programs being restricted and relational  
101 funding higher than budgeted. Allan reviewed MC Canada's Surplus Allocation Policy and  
102 made recommendations for implementation in his Secretary/Treasurer report in the docket.  
103 ii) The additions to the General Capital Reserve Fund will likely be used this summer.  
104 • A recently completed engineer report did not find any damage behind the building  
105 exterior. Redoing the exterior requires a building permit and an architect is required  
106 (FT3) will do an exterior design (with possible stucco finish instead of steel/wood due to  
107 increase in raw materials). Then the project will go to a tendering process. It is  
108 anticipated that a capital budget will be presented before AGM.  
109

110 **CONSENSUS: That Joint Council approves the transfer of the FYE 2021 surplus according to our Surplus**  
111 **Allocation Policy, with a transfer of \$8,011 from the operating fund to the General Reserve Fund, a**  
112 **transfer of \$68,173 from the operating fund to the Capital Reserve Fund, a transfer of \$68,174 from**  
113 **the operating fund to the General Reserve Fund, and a distribution of this \$68,174 from the General**  
114 **Reserve Fund to the Regional Churches, proportional to FYE 2021 contributions (MCEC - \$35,126.93,**  
115 **MCM - \$17,037.59, MCSASK - \$7,959.97, MCA - \$4,714.73, MCBC - \$3,333.57).**

116

117 **e) Shared Revenue Agreement update** (pp 63-68 of docket): This draft includes changes discussed  
118 at the April 10 meeting of Moderators, ESG and Executive Committee, along with the  
119 suggestions after a revised draft was circulated to Joint Council. The items requiring more work  
120 are identified within the draft. The intent is to have the SRA in place by the next budget cycle  
121 (early Oct).

122 **i) Discussion**

- 123 • Hope that discussion about individual donations happens in next months, and not  
124 delayed until fall.
- 125 • Point 7a is clearer if stated only as: "General or Undesignated giving received by the  
126 Regional Church." (remove "for core budget programming of the Regional church").
- 127 • Percentage is not based on the budget, but rather on the actual giving in previous year.  
128 Could this also take into account the average of 3 years of giving?
- 129 • Contributions from Regional Churches to MC Canada can be sent in as funds are  
130 available during the year, providing the total that has been committed is sent by year  
131 end. As MC Canada has topped up reserve funds, it has more capability to handle  
132 fluctuations than some Regional Churches. The SRA includes Regional Churches sharing  
133 if they are having financial difficulties. Some Regional Churches are forwarding the  
134 percentages based on actuals as they are received.
- 135 • The handling of bequests is also subject to CRA and other case law.
- 136 • If a Regional Church cannot meet its commitment, they can request help from other  
137 regions or MC Canada reserve funds.
- 138 • The risk assessment is outlined in clause 3 and 4. Risk is dispersed/shared over a long  
139 period of time. If a Regional Church is experiencing a shortfall, they have capacity to do  
140 fundraising (which MC Canada does not have in the new structure).

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- Suggest an introductory paragraph that outlines and acknowledges the work done thus far, and the process of how it is moving forward, and who/how when it will be approved.
  - Document should be dated and watermarked as DRAFT.
  - Executive Ministers and Moderators need to have full understanding and be on the same page as to how this is interpreted. There may be some regional differences (for historical reasons) in how this is done but the end result will be agreed upon and full transparency so that we know how it is handled.

150 **CONSENSUS: To present an updated draft Shared Revenue Agreement (to be sent out by Allan),**  
151 **taking it to the Regional Church boards for questions/affirmations and return with responses to**  
152 **individual giving and bequest questions by Sept 13 at the latest. Plan to bring forward for finalizing**  
153 **discussion and decisions for the early October meeting.**

154

155 **9) AGM and Joint Council Meeting**

156 a) **AGM Meeting Update:** MC Canada's AGM is scheduled on June 19 1:00-2:30 pm EST, with Joint  
157 Council meeting an hour prior to the AGM. MC Canada's Bylaws requires 2 representatives from  
158 each region. These will be assumed to be the Moderator and Additional Regional Church  
159 Representatives unless the MC Canada Moderator is informed otherwise. Required motions for  
160 AGM include Financial Statements, Budget, and appointment of Auditors.

161

162 b) **AGM Additions:** Based on feedback from previous AGMs, there is Interest in seeing AGM's being  
163 more substantial. Zoom is being a way of engaging and forming community. The planned AGM  
164 includes worship (song and devotion), reports from MC Canada staff, and time for questions.  
165 Docket to include audited statement, budget, motions.

166 c) **Discussion:**

167 i) Consensus that it is OK to have an enhanced AGM with the following suggestions:

168 ii) Suggest a short video from each of the regions as to what they are doing and then from MC  
169 Canada how they are supporting the regions.

170 iii) Report from MC Canada staff - there may be existing videos to draw from. Or, provide links  
171 on the MC Canada website registration for people to see the videos that exist.

172 iv) Appreciate hearing what MC Directors anticipate as a critical agenda that they are facing in  
173 the future.

174 v) Registrations will start next week.

175

176 d) **Joint Council – Governance Review – update**

177 The Governance Review report will be coming out shortly. Betty Pries will be meeting with Joint  
178 Council Executive Committee to review the report, with the possibility of meeting with the full  
179 Joint Council regarding the recommendations that will be included, before or after the AGM,  
180 based on her availability and time. Observation that this is a typical research process in how  
181 findings are shared. Doug and Betty will outline a process that will be communicated.

182

183 **10) Regional Church Moderator Reports**

184 a) **MCBC - Gerry Grunau**

185 i) Covid restrictions still a reality that do not permit in-person services though outdoor  
186 services are allowed.

- 187 ii) Camp Squeah – overnight camping program still not allowed. Alternative ideas will  
188 accommodate restrictions and attempt to stay relevant.
- 189 iii) Gary and pastors are brainstorming strategies for church after the pandemic regarding how  
190 to stay connected with congregations.
- 191 iv) Church engagement minister and Jeanette are planning an “International Road Trip” with  
192 service workers in China, Philippines and Korea.
- 193 v) Zoom session with Cantonese churches in the Cantonese language with Tobia and George  
194 Veith -- happening today.
- 195 **b) MCA – Brenda Tiessen-Wiens**
- 196 i) Donna Entz (staff of MCA’s North Edmonton program) is retiring at the end of June. Interim  
197 plans for a volunteer to maintain Donna’s many contacts from this program.
- 198 ii) Preparing to hire a ½ time church engagement minister – putting together job description.
- 199 iii) Camp Valaqua – not sure if 50% capacity overnight camps will happen or day camps or pop-  
200 up camps.
- 201 iv) New contact for Palestine Israel Network (Suzanne Gross, Edmonton).
- 202 v) Faith study event happened with Gerald Gerbrandt, keeping pastoral care in front of us.
- 203 vi) At MCA’s AGM, the delegate sessions business happened, but the meeting also incorporated  
204 worship again! The Calgary Chin church shared singing, and new building, blessings in video  
205 for Chin church. A Joint worship service was held on Sunday morning (via Zoom) with all  
206 MCA congregations. It felt like a celebration with older folks lingering longer to reconnect.
- 207
- 208 **c) MCKS – Terry Stefaniuk**
- 209 i) A few churches closed and pastors retiring.
- 210 ii) Camps – 2<sup>nd</sup> summer impacted by COVID restrictions.
- 211 iii) Covenant for MC SK Council being developed, along with testing a Civil Disobedience Policy.
- 212 iv) Planning for an event - Songfest in October, and also starting the 2022 Annual Delegate  
213 Session planning.
- 214 v) Justin Neufeld will be leading a pastor's event on Medical Assistance In Dying in June.
- 215 vi) A resource for churches that are considering closing is being prepared by Ryan.
- 216 vii) Meghan Good will present an on-line course for SK: “21st Century Preaching” Nov. 15-19  
217
- 218 **d) MCM – Gerald Gerbrandt**
- 219 i) Middle of 3<sup>rd</sup> wave –severe restrictions affecting the church.
- 220 ii) Reviewing what can be done with the camp program. Working at a fundraising campaign  
221 for capital projects, with anticipation that there will need to be a larger campaign for camp  
222 development.
- 223 iii) Looking for ½ time church engagement person to help with fundraising.
- 224 iv) Hosting a zoom conversation around LGBTQ.
- 225
- 226 **e) MCEC – Arli Klassen**
- 227 i) MCEC’s AGM, held in April, will be reported in this next Canadian Mennonite. Highlights  
228 include a Kimchi making workshop used as a way to teach about diversity in the church.  
229 Reports were available on-line prior to AGM. It was found that a constant conversation on  
230 chat happening simultaneously with the sessions.
- 231 ii) 2 staff on the Executive team are on extended medical leave, putting extra pressure on Leah
- 232 iii) Working at “Courageous Imagination” strategic planning process through podcasts and on-  
233 line engagement

- 234 iv) Continue to deal with misconduct cases. A public notice is coming at the end of May for  
235 another one. Anticipate that it will generate a lot of conversation. Request to talk with Arli  
236 or Leah on how to manage this conversation in your church.  
237 v) Covid restrictions with only 10 people allowed in church. 2 churches (not MC) have been  
238 closed because of resistance to restrictions.  
239 vi) Story of police dept in Kitchener-Waterloo embarking on diversity project with police cars  
240 painted in different ethnic themes. There was a general push back from the community to  
241 BE diverse. One of the cars was for Amish theme. Leah sent a letter to protest. Project  
242 closed next day.  
243

#### 244 **11) Upcoming Agenda**

##### 245 **a) New items to consider for future meetings?**

- 246 i) Dissolution of churches – There is interest in finding and sharing resources across the  
247 country. No resources in this area were found on CommonWord.

##### 248 **b) Items for Regional Church boards to process for next Joint Council meeting**

- 249 i) Shared Revenue agreement, responding to stated questions at the end of the draft.  
250 Feedback is welcomed sooner than later - send to Allan and Doug and they will collate  
251 feedback from regions.  
252 ii) Re June 19 AGM, If anyone other than moderator or regional church rep are coming as a  
253 rep, please let Doug/Calvin know.  
254

#### 255 **12) Next Meeting**

##### 256 **a) June 19, 2021, JC and AGM, Zoom**

- 257 **b) October 2-3, 2021, Fall meeting, Winnipeg:** Not yet confirmed for in-person. Update TBA for  
258 travel plans.

##### 259 **c) January 29-30, 2021, Saskatoon**

##### 260 **d) April 9-10, 2022, Winnipeg**

- 261 **e) July 2022 – Delegate Gathering, Alberta:** Possibility of starting on Thursday and finishing on  
262 Monday. Final Dates are not yet set, as need to secure a venue first.

##### 263 **f) October 1-2, 2022, Winnipeg**

264

#### 265 **13) Closing**

- 266 **a)** Calvin acknowledges that this is Kathy's last meeting as Executive Assistant. Significant  
267 gratefulness expressed by all for Kathy's work over the past two years!

- 268 **b)** Margaret Kruger Harder shared a closing reflection, reading a poem by Bob Janzen (member at  
269 Foothills MC) "Claw the Christian Cat". The flow of love from God's Spirit moves beyond  
270 definition or boundary reaching to all creation. May we see God's love in all creation and in  
271 ourselves.  
272

#### 273 **14) In Camera**

274  
275 **Adjourned at 4:00 pm CDT.**