

**Conference Council Meeting Minutes**  
**February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006**  
**Conference Offices, Cicero, NY**

**Attendees:**

Sharon Bassett	Brian Ethington	Betty Youmans
Leon VanWie	Pat Curtin	David Underwood
Shirley Verity	Louise Matthews	Bob Sherburne
Diane Deline	Jeff Losey	Thom Fassett
Tom Bement	Carl Johnson	Ed Enstine
Mark Flandreau	John Pierce	Lee Mount
Steve Deckard	Christine Eastwood	Bishop Fisher
Chuck Forbes	Beth Benham	Inell Claypool

**Excused:** Tammie Nipper, Deborah O'Connor-Slater

**Absent:** Amanda Lewindoski, Gina Moore, Tina Haines, Wendy Rhodehamel

**Guests:** Jeff Childs, Lamar Claypool

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1. **Devotions** led by Sharon Bassett with Scripture reading by Christine Eastwood
2. **November 5<sup>th</sup> Minutes:** Page 4: Change Holdenberg to Hogansburg UMC; Change Mary Fisher to Marty Fisher; Page 5: Change ‘...there is a policy for arrearages.’ To ‘...there is a policy for Direct Bill arrearages.’ (9 lines up from bottom); **All in favor as amended, carried.**
3. **Council Membership Update:** Sharon Bassett is stepping down as Council Chair but will remain a member of Council as Conference Lay Leader. Suggested by Sharon Bassett that Chuck be named Chair – effective at end of this meeting. Bob Sherburne moved the suggestion/Jeff Losey seconded; **All in favor, motion carried.**
4. **Future Council Membership:**
  - a. Vice Chair and Secretary: Brian Ethington moved that the Chair and Bishop name a nominating committee who would work to fill positions/changes; Ed Enstine seconded – **all in favor, motion carried.** We can invite volunteers for Secretary (and possibly vice-chair). Q: Do they need to be a member of Council? A: No. We need to address diversity when naming people to the vacancies.
  - b. A member of Race & Religion, by discipline ¶642.5, is a member of Council. We welcome Inell Claypool as the representative for Race & Religion.

**5. Finance Report – Bob Sherburne:**

- a. **2005 Year-end Results:** Shared Ministries' receipts for 2005 is 76% - plus, there was approximately ½ million in special collections (Katrina/Tsunami Relief). The Finance Team is optimistic toward 2006. Pat Curtin shared the Line Item Manager Report: the cover letter indicates an \$18,000 positive balance for the year (due to reduced spending). We are in good shape as we move into 2006.
  
- b. **2006 Budget:**
  - i. Deficit of 2004 is made up in 2006.
  - ii. The Finance Team is pushing for 100% General Church apportionment payments. When we do pay in full, there will be a positive change in attitude.
  
  - iii. The Finance Team recommendation for 2006 is to stay at 82% receipts with the \$25,000 Council monies held in reserve. The Finance Team moves that the reserve \$25,000 not be spent without first consulting with the Finance Team (until we know how the year is going).
    - 1. Leon VanWie against – Congregational Development is asking for some of this money; at the prior Council Meeting (November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005), the money in reserve is to be used for a ministry area that addresses the four critical issues.
    - 2. Brian Ethington against motion due to complexity of who gets to approve spending.
    - 3. Note: there is the \$10,000 bequest available to the Council with no strings attached.
    - 4. Lee Mount in favor of motion: preserve the \$25,000 for new initiatives instead of going back to the teams and telling them to cut 1%.
    - 5. Betty Youmans suggested that we agree to the 82% target and keep the reserve. Instead, earmark the \$10,000 for special requests. When the \$10,000 is spent, Council will decide usage of the \$25,000 reserves.
    - 6. The Finance Team accepts the Betty Youmans' amendment to the motion: all in favor; motion carried.
    - 7. Steve Deckard clarified that the ministry areas' monies in the Line Item Manager Report is what they have to spend in 2006.
  
    - 8. Q: How much money was collected from Miracle Sunday? A: some was designated to UMCOR; some was included in Shared Ministries. There is really no way to track. Pat Curtin noted that historically, 23% of income comes in December – that is what we received in 2005.

9. Discussion around deadlines for submitting reports and budget requests: if team leaders are not able to meet the guidelines, then they need to be asked to step aside. Teams need to work within the system; and, Council needs to make the statement (over a million dollars would not be in the 2007 budget if we enforced the deadlines). Timeliness in submitting budget requests; setting goals around critical issues; and, area reports distributed ten days prior to Council Mtg. If there are no goals/objectives but just a budget number – then the request cannot be accepted. We need to stress responsibilities and deadlines – otherwise the ministry area will suffer. Steve Deckard will put together an 06, 07 and 08 calendar of Council deadlines. The message to be delivered is: the Conference will do what we can do educate you (team leaders and Area Coordinators) on the process. It is the obligation of the Team Leader to meet their responsibilities. Recommendation to put this policy in writing – Steve Deckard/Sharon Bassett/Chuck Forbes to draft communication. Thom Fassett noted that we need to develop a means of accountability programmatically; why aren't ministry areas accountable? We need to be proactive and leverage programs.

c. **2007 Recommendation:**

- i. The Council recognizes the work of Pat Curtin for having to deal with many of the teams missing the deadlines for budget submissions.
- ii. The 2007 budget assumes an 82% Shared Ministry collection. This budget does not reflect General Church apportionments which are received by the Conference on February 15<sup>th</sup>.
- iii. The Personnel Committee recommends a 3.2% salary increase.
- iv. The 2007 Budget includes a line for Stewardship/Development Position as called for in the Conference Ministry Plan.
- v. The target set by the Finance Team is a 3.5% increase in the budget (\$79,607): \$49,448 over target.
- vi. Council needs to decide by April 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 what it recommends to AC. Steve Deckard noted that no action has to be done today on the prelims; however, decisions need to be made April 1<sup>st</sup>. If any questions arise, give an opportunity for fund requestors to come to the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting to defend their requests. We need to ask questions today – Area Coordinators would then go back to teams for more detail and, ask their team leaders to attend the April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.
- vii. Dept. 380 New Church Starts – the team understands that conferences are growing due to new church starts; attitude of 'not in my back yard' has hampered new starts; 2006 notion - birthing concept – clusters can

work together to birth a new church; need initial resources to make it happen. Request reflects target of starting three new churches (\$51,000). Goal: Five new churches in ten years; these monies are essential to realize this – team plans to bring in D.B. Owens as resource. Team is looking at six candidates as church planters; with three \$10,000 grants for birthing churches.

- viii. Q: There is a New Church Starts Fund held by the Trustees – would Leon’s team be able to use those funds? There is \$230,000 in fund currently – need to consider that it is an additional source instead of using Shared Ministry Funds. Congregational Development will make a proposal to present to Trustees to access these funds.
- ix. Q: Is there a list of funds that are available and what are the designation statuses? A: Trustees have a task force working on this – they hope to have it organized by June 2006.
- x. Request any information on additional funds be presented at April meeting. There is also the Bishops Builder Fund with monies. Steve Deckard noted there is a list of AC assets in back of journal; most assets are held by local churches; conference owns property – conf. offices and camps (approx \$50,000,000); also an indication of which funds are designated and un-designated.
- xi. Q: Church and Society Area Subtotal - \$11,000 increase, why? Dept. 460 Concerns is mentoring Christian unity – this program is to be offered in the spring of 2007. There is increasing membership in pan-Methodist bodies. Dept. 475 Dismantling Racism Team – increase is due to cost of training the trainers (\$5,000 per person).
- xii. Dept. 692 Equitable Compensation: Leon VanWie reported that there was \$173,000 in requests for 2006 versus \$96,648 available. The committee is calling churches into accountability (being good stewards) – they have prioritized churches in the districts; but there are more churches asking for resources. The committee is working with Cabinet to distinguish between equitable salaries and other issues (EG. Elders receiving minimum wage, get churches to be realistic in what they pay their pastors, etc).
  - 1. Q: Is there a time limit for a church to receive assistance? A: Moving into time constraint of how often it will be offered.
  - 2. Initial Application Process: DS looks at request first – looks at details; agreement is signed – then presented to Leon’s team.
  - 3. Re-application process – DS requests more data. Tightening up in process. Q: Will this number decrease due to the tightening? A: Yes.
  - 4. Also looking at other solutions – mergers, clustering, etc.

5. Today's situation – there is a surplus number of Elders. By Discipline, Elders have guaranteed appointments. Q: Does the DS determine if an elder is able to lead a local church to health. Recommendation: if they are not able, then remove the elder. A: No process in place to deal with ineffectiveness – also, need to find ways to express appreciation to the leaders of our church who are effective elders. Thom Fassett reported that due to increase in number of ordained or probationary elders, we will see a decline in LLP. We will have to link up parishes by probationers or elders.
  6. Positive side: Congregational Development is looking at different categories of assistance – will help with situation; also, develop positive ministry plans; and determine what is missional, what is restarts, transitional, missional, etc.
- xiii. Stewardship Director Proposal \$40,000: Finance Team realizes that stewardship is a critical issue. The monies would be used for education, marketing and promoting position of our conference
1. Leon VanWie: in favor, but colleagues not in favor when we don't communicate/tell the story.
  2. Lee Mount: need clearly defined results – there must be measurable goals and timelines.
  3. Pat Curtin: Stewardship is listed under Spiritual Leadership – stewardship needs to be a joint venture between Spiritual Development and the Finance Team.
  4. Carl Johnson: We need to make sure the candidate is prepared to go from day one.
  5. Q: Would this be a half-time or full-time position? A: Hasn't been determined yet.
  6. Q: What kind of accountability will be developed to make sure we get the desired results? Where will the accountability reside? Finance Team will have more information available for the April 1<sup>st</sup> Council meeting.
  7. Sharon Bassett: against – we have not given all of our resources a chance; there is no functioning Stewardship Committee. If Darryl and Lauren have effective ministries – stewardship will improve. We need measurable goals and objectives with timelines.
  8. Pat Curtin: We need to look at utilizing Darryl and Lauren – Finance Team will follow up.
  9. Area Coordinators and Team leaders need to make sure that all information be sent to Steve Deckard by February 10<sup>th</sup> 2006. Team leaders will either provide additional information or attend as a presenter. Additional information requested for Congregational Development and Church & Society at April 1<sup>st</sup>

meeting. Need to set schedule and let Leon and Christine know what time the people need to be here.

10. Leon VanWie: Concern with number of people invited to speak at next meeting. Can we make decisions from written responses or verbal responses? Give us the opportunity to read the responses and email questions. Q: Where do we need more info from? Finance Team around stewardship proposal; and, more information on the three workshop training events from Christine Eastwood. Steve Deckard will copy the responses and distribute. By consensus – all agreed.

**6. Update from Thom Fassett:**

- a. The Council of Bishops has asked Bishops to have a conversation on the study of ministries. This is an On-line questionnaire. Thom is requesting that Council respond to the study at the April meeting (approximately 40 minutes in length). Schedule for 2 PM on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006.
- b. Goal of conversation – to provoke a conversation on a shared life together and the challenges of leadership today.
  - i. Louise Matthews: In favor – this will be a new look at how we as individuals are working toward these goals.
  - ii. Q: Will we have consensus on answers? A: No, we will share our insights.

**7. Area Coordinator Reports:**

- a. **Congregational Development (Leon VanWie):**
  - i. October NEJ Training Event – Philadelphia, PA: Congregational Development will facilitate, if asked. Healthy Churches model being used in Philadelphia with a focus on developing spiritual leaders. If areas want to send people – the monies have to come out of their budgets. Costs: \$250, if shared room; \$125 registration. 20 people would cost \$8,000. Proposal – Council fund half and teams make up the rest; and, Congregational Development facilitate. By consensus, all in favor. Plan to be presented in April. Expectations of attendees: bring information back to Conference and share it.
  - ii. Proposing a ‘Vital Church Institute’: eight categories – using one per weekend segment over a two year period – beginning fall 2006. Requesting \$1,000 for 2006 and \$1,000 for 2007 – mostly for advertising. Leon VanWie moved that monies from the \$10,000 bequest be used; and, a new team be formed under Congregational Development. Brian Ethington seconded the motion.

1. Q: Steve Deckard requested that the motion be tabled. Bob Sherburne seconded the table. Make no decision until we see the Council sees the makeup of the team at April Meeting – we need to ensure diversity and accountability to the Conference in the leadership; and, tie in the existing structure of the Conference. Leadership needs to work with Lauren and Darryl – make this a solid conference vision.
  2. Concern was voiced with overlap with Lay Speaking courses – Q: Has the team had any conversations with that team? Will this new team work with the bodies that are in place? A: Yes.
  3. Motion to table vote: all in favor, motion carried.
- iii. Boundaries Task Force: work to be done by task force between now and AC 2006 – vote to merge/combine/work together to be made at 2007 AC. If this is our direction, we have to vote on it at AC 2006.
  - iv. Congregational Development is asking for more than ten minutes at AC. Time allocations are the responsibility of the Sessions Committee. Council we will work with them to make the request happen. Next Session Committee Meeting is March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006.
  - v. Urban Academy finishing up the two year cycle of training. The team wants to continue as Urban Strategy Team. Request to rename – no need to take a vote on a rename, just report it.
    1. Q: What success has come out of this team? A: Won't know long term outcome unless we stay involved with the churches.

**b. Service Ministry Area (Lee Mount):**

- i. BOPHB recommendation to eliminate retiree health-care premiums for those retirees prior to 2002 – to be presented at AC 2006.
- ii. Motion by Lee Mount - Area Coordinator becomes ex-officio member of the team in their purview. Understanding is that they don't have to attend all the meetings. Seconded by Jeff Losey. All in favor, motion carried.
- iii. Mileage reimbursement: issue – signing up for reimbursement when others don't. Recommend different process that isn't so public. Leon VanWie sends email to team members – then submits replies to Conference Office. Pat Curtin recommends continuing with current process until task force makes their recommendation.

**c. Lay Ministry Area (Chuck Forbes)**

- i. Carol Jubenville, Older Adult Ministries, will provide a report to AC 2006 on her involvement with the White House Conference on Aging.

- ii. 4WORD06 will be held April 28-30, 2006 at the Liverpool Holiday Inn.
- iii. Chuck Forbes will be attending the Association of Annual Conference Lay Leaders in Oklahoma City, February 9-13, 2006.
- iv. Pre-conference Briefings – invitations will be sent to lay and clergy; attendance will be taken. Need to set a meeting for presenters.

May 16, 2006 at 6:30 P.M.	New Hartford and Clifton Springs UMCs
May 18, 2006 at 6:30 P.M.	Potsdam and Liverpool UMCs
May 21, 2006 at 3:00 P.M.	Cortland First, Horseheads, and Watertown:Asbury UMCs

- v. March Conference-wide Training Events: March 11<sup>th</sup> at JCC, Watertown, NY and March 25<sup>th</sup> at Auburn Middle School East, Auburn, NY. Request to look at video taping workshops - Jeff Childs will provide list of names of video tapers. Registration form and workshop information in Connections.
- vi. Month of Miracles update by Mark Flandreau

**d. Global Ministries (Jeff Losey):**

- i. No action items.
- ii. ½ million dollars sent to Katrina and Tsunami relief. FEMA using UMCOR to distribute \$66 Million for Katrina Relief. 100 people trained for VIM.
- iii. Jeff Childs: request to form a partnership with an African Annual Conference: WNY partnering with the Democratic Congo. Bishop Fisher wants to have a conversation with Global Ministries Team around the following: Do a separate partnership or share a partnership? Needs to be brought to AC – requires a vote. Council requests plan be brought back to Council in April. Bishop Fisher requests Jeff Childs see Christine and look in the journals for existing partnerships. Q: Can we pledge to be in partnership with United Methodists in Africa and not focus on one country? A: Need to know mission and goals. Need to determine how can we, with our pool of money, really make a difference? Subject needs more ground work – refer back to team.

**e. Church & Society (Christine Eastwood):**

- i. 50 United Methodists traveled to Palestine on a mission trip in January. First hand experience with the segregation of Palestinians and Jews. Need to encourage divestment of American funds (\$50,000,000 to Israel – none to Palestinians). Team may tie in with Illinois Conference resolution. Will present resolution at Annual Conference.

**f. Spiritual Development (Tammie Nipper):**

- i. No action items.

**8. Cabinet Update:**

- a. Rome: Calvary merger with Rome First: service of decommissioning Jan 7<sup>th</sup> at Calvary. Proceeds to go to Rome First. Merger effective date is: January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006. All in favor, request accepted.
- b. Sheds UMC – Church Conference held Jan 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006: motion for discontinuance accepted by local church. Motion to Council to accept: After paying Shared Ministries, remaining assets to go to Conference Camping Ministries. Conference Trustees have responsibility to liquidate assets. Carl to talk to Jim Allen, Corporate Counsel about handling/disposition of assets. Vote: 17 For, One opposed. Motion carried.

**9. New Business:**

- a. Sundays with General Church Offerings: accept list of dates provided by Jeff Childs, including VIM Sunday on March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006. All in favor, carried.

Next meeting: Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006 at the Conference Offices, Cicero, NY.

Meeting adjourned at 2:47 PM

Respectfully submitted by Chuck Forbes, 02.04.2006.