

**North Central New York Conference of the UMC
Council Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2007**

Present: Bishop Fisher, Chuck Forbes, Steve Deckard, Gerry Rehkugler, Bill Hinderliter, Bob Sherburne, Louise Matthews, Carl Johnson, Beth Benham, Jeff Childs, Pat Curtin, Alan Kinney, Sharon Fulmer, Thom Fassett, Robyn Hays, Jackie Bellamy, Jeff Losey, Lauren Swanson, Darryl Barrow, Jane Sautter, Brian Ethington, Betty Youmans, David Underwood

Excused: Lee Mount, Leon VanWie, Ruth Dietrich, Kim Snyder, Tom Bement, Russ Hall, John Pierce

Devotions by Louise Matthews

Bishop Fisher reminded that this is the last meeting before Annual Conference, and she asked that we be a community in holy conferencing invoking the spirit of God to be with us, giving respect to each other in honest dialogue. Also that we all struggle as paradigms shift and we move forward.

DCM Updates from Steve Deckard:

It's like an image of a sleeping giant to look at our Annual Conference, parts awoken at different times.

There are many upcoming events to make our ministries stronger:

Watertown training workshop at Watertown Asbury UMC, Saturday, March 31

Annual Conference Ministry Fair

Bishop Neil Irons speaker on Friday at Annual Conference

Election of General Conference delegates

Boundaries Task Force

Ethnic clergy meeting with Mamie Williams on March 27

Dismantling Racism Training in May

Safe Sanctuaries Nov 12 – 16 training, Joy Melton next March

Lombard Center Mediation Training, January 28 – February 1, 2008

Lauren, Darryl, Steve will be doing district Healthy Church trainings

FL April 25-56

NF May 1-2

Chuck Forbes welcomed the newest members of Council: Darryl Barrow, Lauren Swanson, Robyn Hays, Gerry Rehkugler, and Jackie Bellamy.

HIV/AIDS Task Force was mandated by General Conference in 2005 and is under Global Ministries in the Conference. So far there has been \$1872 total giving of which \$468 stays in the conference. Each person in the local church is to give one dollar to meet the giving level. The Task Force will begin next week with Mike Huber and some nurses included as members of the task force. This year's Annual Conference will promote each UM member in the local church giving \$1 towards this cause.

Safe Sanctuaries: There is a concern with mandating volunteer background checks and then long time Sunday School teachers may quit. Concerns should be funneled through Glenda Schuessler.

Corrections to February 3 minutes:

Page 3: Change Libby Hughes to James Buyea

Page 9: Change workshop location from JCC to Watertown:Asbury UMC

Brian Ethington **moved to accept** the minutes as corrected. Louise seconded. **The minutes were approved as corrected.**

Treasurer's Report: Pat Curtin reported. A task force was formed at the last Council meeting to look through the 2008 budget and see if cuts could be made in any areas. The task force met with area leaders to see if they had additional sources of funds for their ministries other than Shared Ministry. As a result of the task force's work, the Finance Team changed their recommendation from 0% to 2.5% increase in 2008. Also the assumption on Shared Ministry receipts was reduced from 80% to 79%. This was based on actual receipts in 2005 and 2006. There is a reserve of \$624,000. The \$40,000 grant from the Board of Pensions was approved. Pat thanked the areas/teams for their help.

Pat Curtin **moved** to increase the 2008 budget 2.5% over 2007. Bob Sherburne seconded. **The motion was approved.**

There is a '07 budget request change for an additional \$2,000 from Lynn Spence to support seminary visitation (outside the conference recruitment) which is mostly travel expenses. Thom Fassett asked to increase by an additional \$1,000. The request to give BOOM an additional \$3,000 for seminary visitation was **approved**. The 2008 budget will include this increase.

At the last Council meeting the Cabinet resolution on use of the Dewitt Settlement Fund was tabled, pending further review by a task force. The Dewitt Settlement Fund Task Force was formed and included Jeff Childs, Beth Benham, Sally Kersting and Pat Curtin. The task force reviewed the background of the source of the Dewitt Settlement Fund, the legal basis for the recommendation, and developed a process for managing the release of the funds. (see attached resolution) Pat pointed out that line 104 on page 3 of the resolution should read Farmington instead of Canandaigua.

Pat Curtin **moved** the Dewitt Settlement Task Force resolution on behalf of the task force. Jeff Childs seconded.

Discussion evolved and lines 158-161 were ruled out of order and were stricken from the resolution.

Scott DelConte looked at the 2005 motion (lines 109 – 112) and said it was a forward going motion – we can't go back to include the DSF.

Vote on the Dewitt Settlement Fund Task Force resolution: 5 for; 14 against; 2 abstentions. **The resolution was defeated.**

The Cabinet resolution from the last Council meeting was put back on the floor. It is as follows:

“Be it resolved that monies realized from the sale of discontinued churches and contents of these churches and also held from the DeWitt Community Church sale, be held and made available through Congregational Development for missional priorities. This enables new ministries and consultations with changes to enable healthy church priorities.”

A friendly amendment to the original motion was accepted (the change is bolded).

“Be it resolved that monies realized from the sale of discontinued churches and contents of these churches and also held from the DeWitt Community Church sale, be held and made available through Congregational Development **and Annual Conference** missional priorities. This enables new ministries and consultations with changes to enable healthy church priorities.”

Lauren Swanson **moved** to add that the \$22,000 (\$6,000 in the Bishop’s Builder Fund and \$16,000 in individual designated funds) currently designated New Church Start monies remain restricted for use in new church starts. Alan Kinney seconded.

Vote: 11 for; 5 against; the **amendment was accepted**.

The Cabinet motion was adopted.

Robyn Hays **moved**:

“Be it resolved that any motion that requires funding or monies to be dispersed by the Annual Conference come with a plan for funding sources.”

Jeff Child seconded. The **motion passed** by voice vote.

Prison Ministry presentation by Madeline McDonald:

Carl Johnson introduced Madeline McDonald and her husband, Russ. Madeline is a member of the NY Conference and has been involved in prison ministry at Walsh, a maximum security medical facility in Rome, NY, for the last 10 years. This facility is part of the Oneida Hub. She is volunteering under Lamar Claypool, the Protestant state chaplain for the Mohawk facility. Madeline came to energize and focus the Council on this important ministry.

Last October a “Restorative Justice and Beyond” workshop was held in Fayetteville. Restorative Justice is a broad umbrella and touches on every aspect of criminal justice in this country. Our present system is excessively punitive, excessively costly, unjust and racially biased, and family destructive. Faith communities are calling for justice in the prison system. Priorities should be shifted towards prison and judicial reform through restoration justice rather than retribution.

The Bible reminds of our responsibilities to those in prison. In Matthew 25:40 Jesus said: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” In Hebrews 13:3 we are reminded again: “Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them.” Inmates say the chaplains’ presence is a sign of hope.

Madeline presented four challenges:

1. Either under the Conference Board of Church and Society or some other appropriate Committee...continue what was started in October (i.e. Restorative Justice and Beyond) by studying and/or addressing some part of the Restorative Justice Agenda.
2. In every issue of Connections give attention to one or more of the issues of Restorative Justice.

3. Get on board with the major statewide drive planned for later this year to revise or overthrow the present Rockefeller Drug Laws through lobbying of the State Legislature.
4. Encourage volunteerism of many kinds by church members at one of the many Correctional Facilities in the area.

Commission on Futures: Tom Wolfe reported. The Commission will report once a year to the Annual Conference and will meet with Council in September, 2007 to highlight the direction the Conference is going in over the next period of months and years. They will provide guidance and take a look at the Strategic Plan. This is to be positive and affirming. They will look at celebrating ongoing programs and ministries.

Some of their action items:

How are we holding up to the ministry plan

How is the plan going

Where accomplishments are being made and where we are not living into our mission

Update critical issues

Simplify some things

Measure prioritization

Aligning Cabinet, Conference, Council and local churches – if any disconnects then examining how to reconnect

How are we addressing the critical issues

Launching a study to help understand the nature and status of our feeling of connectedness

Finance Team Report: Bob Sherburne reported. There have been two meetings on the Shared Ministry formula. Finance strength rating (FSR) will be based on local church expenses, using a 3 year average with no cap. The no cap part will be phased in. The Finance Team will define what local church expenses are so all will report the same information. They are trying to keep it simple. This also moves NCNY towards the other 3 conferences. They are studying the Wyoming Conference model of defining expenses. Formula and impact to be presented at AC 2007.

Trustees Report: Gerry Rehkugler reported and thanked the Council for asking him to be a member of Council. The Trustees are working on a number of things to best use the resources of the Conference for the maximum benefit. A critical issue is responding to the Casowasco and Aldersgate housing situation. The Aldersgate issue is in limbo with the new structure of a part time director so the housing is adequate for now. Ultimately when they have a full time director the Trustees will have to provide more adequate housing.

At Casowasco they have a mold-infested home and plans for replacement housing are well underway. Plans are under development for new housing on the site. Appropriate funding is needed. The cost is \$194,000 for a 2-story colonial structure. The site will be the current Mt. Tabor parking lot area. A new parking lot for Mt. Tabor will be made. \$56,000 from the Meltzer estate fund, which is an unrestricted bequest to camping ministries, will be used as part of the funding. There is a \$138,000 deficit which needs funding.

Gerry **moved** to authorize expenditure from the Dewitt Settlement Fund for Casowasco housing. Pat Curtin seconded. **The motion was adopted.**

Ministry Area Reports

Congregational Development has no report.

Global Ministries Area: Jeff Childs reported

The Love Offering for AC 2007 goal is \$15,000 and will be divided in thirds as follows:

Global: Africa Conference partners (Nothing but Nets Campaign)

National: Red Bird Mission School

Local: Syracuse Westside Urban Mission and Utica Refugee Resettlement

Carl Johnson expressed appreciation of a grant for the Utica Refugee resettlement.

Jeff Childs encouraged people to come to the Ministry Fair at Annual Conference.

Lay Ministry Area: No action items

Service Ministry Area: No action items

Social Ministry Area: No action items

Carl gave a word of appreciation to Mohawk district lay leader, Brian Ethington, for his work on behalf of the District and Conference.

Old Business:

The additional \$3,000 DCM travel expense request for 2007 was deferred from the February meeting pending review by the Personnel Team. Bob Sherburne reported that the Personnel Team had not met in the interim so the process was not completed.

Alan Kinney **moved** to approve the additional \$3,000 DCM travel expenses for 2007 to come from the Council budget. Jane Sautter seconded. **The motion passed.**

Thom Fassett **moved** the DCM budget is to be reviewed and approved by the Personnel Team, in consultation with the Bishop, before being forwarded to the Finance Team.

Bob Sherburne seconded. **The motion passed.**

Dismantling Racism:

A two day Dismantling Racism event will be held May 10 and 11 at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool. The cost is \$60. To stay overnight it will cost \$160. Clergy must complete this training by the end of 2007. This is the one last best shot to fulfill the requirement so it was asked that BOOM and the Cabinet promote the event. The Personnel Team will deal with staff requirements. At Annual Conference there will be a motion for laity guidelines on the training. Clergy attending the May event are eligible to receive CUE credits; and, laity attending are eligible for Advanced Lay Speaking credit.

The question was raised again whether Native American Sunday receipts could go to Hogansburg – the funds have not been tapped and Alan Kinney said the money is there.

Thom Fassett **moved** to fund an outside auditor up to \$1,500 to provide an accounting of Native American Ministry disbursements from January 1, 2001 to present. Jeff seconded. **The motion passed.**

New Business:

Request for updates on Ministry Plan action items status for Commission on Futures.

2008 Conference-wide training workshop dates are:

April 12, 2008 - the location is being worked on

April 19, 2008 at JCC in Watertown – our reservation is in

Lauren Swanson will do devotions at the September 22 meeting. December 1 is the date of the last Council meeting in 2007.

Bishop Fisher reminded of the adjourned session of Annual Conference on October 6 and that the agenda will be forthcoming.

Celebrations:

Mike Huber is now National President of the CCRM Directors. Lauren Swanson is an NEJ delegate to the Design Team for the National Network of Congregational Developers.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Burnett

Administrative Assistant for Director of Connectional Ministry