

NCNY Conference
Council Meeting
April 9, 2005

Attendance: Sharon Bassett, Bishop Violet Fisher, Thom White Wolf Fassett, Lyndsey Seeley, Brian Ethington, Louise Matthews, Carl Johnson, Robyn Wernham, Chris Eastwood, Mark Flandreau, David Underwood, Chuck Forbes, Ed Enstine, Leon VanWie, Tammie Nipper, Diane Deline, Deborah O'Connor-Slater, Shirley Verity, Bob Sherburne, Pat Curtin, Thomas Bement and Jeff Childs

Absent: Beth Benham, Jason Moore, Tina Haines, Steve Deckard and Betty Youmans

Visitor: Rosemary Johnson

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Sharon Bassett.

Ed Enstine led us in a devotion focusing on the story of the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua being called by God to go and possess the land. What is the implication for us as a council and a conference as we possess a ministry plan and a new way of doing ministry? Possess the uncomfortable as we leave comfort zones behind. He noted how we needed to wake up each morning looking for God first thing, like many of us wake and automatically reach for our glasses, we should reach for God.

Minutes of the February 5, 2005 meeting were approved with the correction that Diane Deline was present.

Sharon shared announcements of changes of the alignments of some teams in our ministry areas:

School of Christian Missions is under Global Ministries

Palestinian Taskforce is under Church and Society

Urban Academy is under Congregational Development

A question was raised as to where might Marriage Enrichment be best connected?

The changes in the team alignments should be shown on the flow chart of the ministry plan and the web site listing.

Sharon then reviewed the list of upcoming district events including the Healthflex meetings to explain the proposed new health care plan, Church Mutual Insurance gatherings, District Conferences and pre-conference meetings.

Chuck Forbes gave an overview of the Stewardship Summits with Phyllis Bowers. He was looking for a large enough space in the southern part of the conference and Bob Sherburne offered the Horseheads UMC for the event scheduled for Saturday, October 15, 2005.

Watertown, Asbury UMC will host the event in the north on Saturday, October 29, 2005.

He shared that there was a possibility of having a major stewardship summit for 800 people for all conferences in NY in 2006 similar to an event some of our conference first went to in PA, but he was concerned about the \$30,000 cost for such an event. The bishop suggested moving it up to the jurisdictional level. The bishop said she does not want us to stop the stewardship work we have begun. Chuck will connect with the NEJ Vision Table and NEJ Leadership. The NEJ Strategic Plan calls for stewardship training during this quadrenium. Chuck will also institute a dialogue with Bishop Morrison

(similar to conversations with WNY). A question was raised about what our Frontier Foundation can provide in assistance to local churches? Bob Sherburne shared that a couple members of the conference finance team and the Board of Trustees will be meeting with the Foundation to find out. David Underwood reminded us that several years ago he and others were trained as Stewardship Specialists to assist congregations. Bishop Fisher tasked the conference finance team and the stewardship team to take the lead on and develop a Stewardship Ministry Plan.

Finance Team and Stewardship Team are to bring to the council a strategic plan to move ahead in the area of stewardship including a process to increase the payments of general church apportionments.

Thom Fassett shared an update on conference personnel pursuant to the ministry plan and our discussions and prioritizations at the last council meeting. The position of the Director of Congregational Development has been posted with several applicants. The position will begin on July 1, 2005. The position of the Director for Spiritual Leadership will be posted soon with the anticipated starting date of January 1, 2006. He noted that at the last meeting we prioritized hiring an administrative assistant for the Director of Connectional Ministries. However, the personnel team is looking at ways to redeploy the current support staff to provide that assistance, based on the staffing analysis done in the past year.

Pat Curtin shared a four page document on the 2006 Budget including a process, some assumptions, the finance team recommendation and a worksheet. Sharon Bassett offered an additional sheet showing the budget requests from the teams and ministry areas. When all was boiled down, the askings were \$121,000 higher than the anticipated receipts.

A new budgetary process is being used for 2006, the conference budget will be set based on expected shared ministry revenue. The council was asked to reduce the requests to what might actually be needed to be spent by each area or team. One by one the line items were offered for reconsideration. The process was slow and at times difficult.

Deborah O'Conner Slater moved that a formula be developed to adjust the budget requests to make the necessary reductions. It was seconded but after some discussion the motion was withdrawn. More adjustments were made in a couple more items and Pat then thought we were close to a balance that she could work with.

Jeff Childs moved that appreciation be expressed to all teams for submitting their ministry proposals and budget requests on time, that the council approve the reductions shared in the various line items, and that any final reductions be done by the Conference Treasurer, Pat Curtin, in time to be submitted to the *Connections* for the pre-conference briefings. It was seconded and approved.

Leon VanWie moved that the area coordinators be given the flexibility to adjust the line item spending among the teams in their areas. It was seconded and approved. Pat noted that the proposed budget for the annual conference would not show team line items, only the area totals.

It was noted that there other ways to search for funding. As Director of Connectional Ministries it is part of Steve Deckard's job to assist people in finding ways of applying for grants or other jurisdictional or general church support.

The Ministry Area Coordinators were asked to share highlights.

Christine Eastwood – Church and Society shared about Native American Ministries Sunday is this weekend and encouraged participation. Her congregation would end their worship early in order to go to the service at the Onondaga Hill UMC.

She had received some information from Steve Deckard about the various national ethnic minority programs and plans of the UMC and was reminded that her area was to come to the council with a strategic plan of how to incorporate them into our ministry plan.

Leon VanWie shared that the Congregational Development Area has updated its policies and procedures. That raised questions from Sharon and the bishop about who sets policies the council or the areas? And how are the areas accountable to the council? Thom offered that the council is the annual conference in the interim and that it is the annual conference that sets policies and that the areas may then set certain procedures that align with those policies.

Sharon set up a task force of Leon, Diane and Thom to revisit the wording of page 8 of the ministry plan to clarify the meaning pursuant to policies and procedures.

It was moved that if the council members get the Congregational Development procedures by email and can comment back to Leon, and then they can be implemented. It was seconded and carried.

Robyn shared information on Healthflex and the changes and benefits it will offer for healthcare and wellness coverage.

Jeff shared various mission highlights including the total offering for tsunami relief is nearly \$150,000 from our conference and over 15 million dollars for the UMC as a whole. A new booklet listing the missionaries and conference advance specials will be coming out and that there will be a new deaconess from our conference commissioned this month – Beverly Welch. The speaker for the global ministries breakfast at annual conference has been announced it will be Paul Dirdak the head of UMCOR. More health kits and flood buckets are being sent on their way from our conference.

Sharon and Chuck shared that Dan Dick would be coming to annual conference to offer leadership on discovering spiritual gifts.

Shirley Verity shared that Dr. Janice Love would be speaking at the UMW annual meeting in October.

The meeting was adjourned with a song and a prayer.

Action Items:

The changes in the team alignments should be shown on the flow chart of the ministry plan and the web site listing.

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