

Council of Guiding Elders – Minutes Video-Conf February 15th, 2023
Edith Rankin Memorial United Church

In Attendance: Bill Spencer, Peter Merkley, Margaret Merkley, Ruth Pettis, Gordon Sinclair, Andrew Robb, Ken Williams, Rev. Michelle Down

Regrets:

Guests:

1. **Call to order:** Bill called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Mission Statement: We seek to be a welcoming community, anchored in God’s love, challenged to sail on the winds of the spirit, sharing the Good News of Christ with each other and the world.

Devotional: Bill reflected on an incident in his personal past wherein he was stopped by the police while in his boat, travelling with two personal friends who happened to be black. Other boaters in the area were not stopped. He wondered how this might reflect white attitudes and how we need to speak out to understand and correct them.

Commendations, Regrets, Prayer Concerns: Bill wanted to particularly thank all the folks who had worked together to develop the Annual Report - “THANK YOU!”.

A number of member’s names were offered up in prayer.

Correspondence: None

2. **Minutes of the Previous Meetings:**

Motion: Moved by Ken Williams, seconded by Gordon Sinclair to accept the minutes of the regular council meeting of January 17th, 2023 by Video conf.

CARRIED

3. **Business Arising:**

4. **New Business:**

1. **Black Month Memory:**

Given this is Black History Month, council felt it important to reflect on our collective pasts. Bill noted his time growing up in Cornwall – a relatively representative municipality of Ontario at the time – when a black recreational co-ordinator was hired and how he and his friends felt.

2. **Stewardship Update:**

At last month's council meeting the idea of creating two stewardship committees – one focused on broad issues of financial programming needs and a second, a "Planned Giving Committee", focused on an individual's current and anticipated growth in annual giving was put forward.

Tonight's discussion focused on how to bring this to the congregation and look for two potential leaders with the needed skills. The thought would be to approach these people directly. The idea of developing a "tag line" to keep people focused was put forward. Also, an agreement that council would like to see more congregants formally agree to keep their PAR givings in line with inflation. To this end an announcement will be made at the AGM and prepared packages ready for handout

3. **Event Co-ordinator:**

Council has supported this idea in the past - that there be an individual identified who would be responsible to monitor events such as rentals to promote good use of the facility and ensure follow-up cleaning etc. This should first be offered to our custodian.

Motion: Moved by Peter Merkley, seconded by Andrew Robb that ERMUC proceed to find an Event Co-Ordinator and that it be offered first to the custodian.

CARRIED

4. **Review/Update Policy & Procedures:**

The Admin Team is looking for council direction for them to undertake a review of the Policy & Procedures Manual. Council felt that, although, no doubt changes have happened and improvements could be made, it will be a big job to do properly and there are other more pressing priorities (ie:

Stewardship). As such, council felt it might be best to pass on a major update at this point.

5. **Grant Applications:**

Jim Leary has been charged with reviewing ERMUC grant applications and has raised a question with respect to ERMUC's position on receiving grants from sources that rely on lotteries. It was noted there had been a precedent regarding a grant for the elevator.

(Note: 10:00am Peter had to leave the meeting.)

6. **Nominating Items:**

Bill noted the Nominating Committee is deep in its work to fill the various vacancies. There had been some question about the role of the Ministry & Personnel Committee and their representation on council. They are an independent committee but may be invited to council.

Also, the Nominating Committee's role is twofold: to find members to fully populate the M&P Committee but also for the remaining Teams, to find leaders who are then charged with finding members for their team.

5. **Reports:**

1. **Treasurers Report:**

Peter met with the Admin Team on Feb 14th. The new format is working well overall. He noted past council discussions on workload and staffing levels. He noted the need/work, identified in Dec, to develop two stewardship committees and for Council to provide leadership to these.

One - a "Stewardship Committee" to focus on broad issues of stewardship and financial programming and a second, a "Planned Giving Committee" focused on an individual's current and anticipated growth in annual giving.

Peter's report (attached) also lays out the discussion regarding "Externally Restricted" funds vs. "Designated" funds and put forward a motion to make all our funds "Externally Restricted". This would follow better accounting practice. The recommendation is to begin Jan 1, 2023.

The following motion was put forward virtually on Feb 6th:

Motion: Moved by Peter Merkley, seconded by Gordon Sinclair:

- That we change all the funds now called “Designated Funds” to be “Externally Restricted” Funds effective December 31 2022.

CARRIED

2. Minister’s Reports:

- Rev. Down wanted to particularly thank a number of people who have stepped forward to organize and deliver various elements of our program including:
 - all those who have stepped forward to help populate the new Welcome Center. It will be an import first impression of ERMUC for those looking for a home community.
 - Peter Merkley for stepping forward to be the Rental Coordinator
 - Chris Sproule and Wanda Kerr for their work organizing and willingness to chair the upcoming AGM
- There will be a three event trial at which alcohol and beer will be served beginning with an “Irish Stew” on March 17th
- ERMUC will be hosting the Tuskegee University Golden Voices Choir for lunch in March.
- The Worship Committee is also in the process of developing the worship schedule and would appreciate some temporary support to cover the summer months.

3. Eastern Canada Ontario Regional Council “CORC”;

Marg Merkley noted her recent appointment to this United Church of Canada (UCC) committee and asked for some thoughts and guidance from council. The item will be placed on all future council agendas for consideration.

Announcements: none

Closing Prayer: Michelle closed with a prayer.

Adjournment; the meeting adjourned at 10:30am

Next Meeting: The next regularly scheduled meeting of council will be virtual, on Wednesday **March 15th, 2023** beginning at 9:00 am.

Bill Spencer, Chair

Ken Williams, Secretary