

**Council of Guiding Elders – Minutes February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024**  
**Edith Rankin Memorial United Church**

**In Attendance:** Bill Spencer, Margaret Merkley, Andrew Robb, Ruth Pettis, Gordon Sinclair, Peter Merkley, 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:** Andrew Robb reflected on the issue of becoming an Affirming Congregation. Affirming Ministries are to be welcoming and inclusive. This could be seen as those on the inside having the power to include which is not Christ’s Church where everyone is already welcome: God’s inclusive love.

**Commendations, Regrets, Prayer Concerns:** Gord Sinclair wanted to especially recognize those on the “Sign Team” – Heinz Becker, Graig Pettis, Brian McCracken, Bill Spencer. We have received a number of positive, complimentary comments since it’s installation.

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

**Correspondence:**

Michael Cooke had written to express his thanks on behalf of the Joint Truth and Reconciliation Action Group (JTRAG) for our participation in the February 13<sup>th</sup> Pancake Supper. Over 200 guests from all three participating, collaborating churches had attended. All the food, supplies and labour had been donated by the sponsoring churches and generous community members. Over \$2,180 for All Our Relations Land Trust was raised which was matched by the City of Kingston and the Kingston Community Credit Union. The funds will be used to install solar panels on the land.

2. **Business Arising from Dec 20<sup>th</sup> Minutes:**  
No particular items were raised.

**Minutes of the Previous Meetings:**

Council reviewed the amended draft minutes of Jan 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Motion:**

Moved by Ken Williams, seconded by Gordon Sinclair to accept the amended minutes of the council meeting of Jan 17th, 2024.

CARRIED

3. **New Business:**

1. **Rental Coordinators Report:**

Peter Merkley had circulated a report prior to the meeting. A couple of items of note include:

- The trial period for the Rental Coordinator is underway. It is too early to draw any conclusions
- Elections Canada has asked us again if they can use Edith Rankin for a polling station. There is no date set but they are doing some advance planning.
- There have been two incidents when tenants have brought larger dogs into the church. The Admin Team discussed this at their last meeting (Feb 14<sup>th</sup>) and agreed that the Rental Coordinator will send an email to the long term tenants as follows:
  - Pets (other than service dogs) are not permitted in Edith Rankin without prior written agreement
  - Any written agreement would require dogs to be on a leash
  - A clause will be added to all future rental agreements to say “No Pets – except Service Dogs”.

**Motion:**

Moved by Peter Merkley, seconded by Gordon Sinclair to accept the February Rental Coordinators Report.

CARRIED

2. **Treasurers Report:**

Again, Peter had circulated his report earlier. Some of the notable items included:

- Annual Salary adjustments have been processed
- Tax Receipts have been mailed out
- Peter’s goal is to have Annual Notice to Reader Financial Statements completed by April 30<sup>th</sup>
- Annual UCC Statistical Report for 2023 is due March 4th

**Motion:**

Moved by Peter Merkley, seconded by Andrew Robb to accept the February Treasures Report.

CARRIED

**3. Minister In Voluntary Association:**

The Nominating Committee has recommended Rev. Dr. Paul Currie as Minister in Voluntary Association.

**Motion:**

Moved by Andrew Robb, seconded by Gordon Sinclair that Rev. Dr. Paul Currie be appointed as Minister in Voluntary Association.

CARRIED

**4. ERMUC Membership Steward:**

The Nominating Committee has recommended Brenda Moyer be appointed Membership Steward for 2024.

**Motion:**

Moved by Ruth Pettis, seconded by Margaret Merkle that Brenda Moyer be appointed Membership Steward for 2024.

CARRIED

**5. 2023 Financial Spreadsheet:**

The finalized 2023 Financial Spreadsheet will be available prior to next Sunday's AGM.

**6. 2024 Annual Report:**

Several members commented on the new on-line version of the Annual Report noting the significant savings in printing and mailing plus improvements such as ability to include photographs. A hard copy will be kept in the library and at the Welcome Center. It was noted how much is going on. The need for an Edith Rankin Archivist was discussed and will be pursued.

**7. AGM Feb 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024:**

The Annual Congregational AGM will be held this coming Sunday (Feb 25<sup>th</sup>) after service. Chris Sproule will lead as Chair of the Congregation. It will be a good opportunity to explore the vision for our future.

**8. New Church Sign:**

Bill noted his pleasure with the outcome and how it is raising awareness of what is happening at ERMUC. The sign development team deserve much thanks.

**9. Mission Statement:**

Gordon Sinclair, having reviewed some mission statements of other churches, wondered if we shouldn't look at ours with a view to coming up with something more current and inspirational. Council agreed but thought it might be best to complete the Affirming Process before undertaking the exercise. Something with more feeling of belonging would be helpful.

10. **Income Tax Statements:**

Gordon Sinclair felt it would be a good time to “go digital” with our Income Tax Statements. The subject is on the Admin Team’s agenda but it would take time to test the church system. Some accommodation would also have to be developed for those who do not have access to a computer or ability to print. The Admin Team will come back to Council once these issues have been resolved.

11. **Affirming Process:**

Council wants to maintain steady progress of this committee. Michelle again noted that the goal to submit the final documents has slipped (This includes the Mission Statement and Plan of Action) but this shouldn’t greatly affect the longer-term objective to submit to the UCC for their review and approval. Michelle continues to monitor the progress.

12. **Spectrum Voices Choir:**

There is a new choir being organized in Kingston, “Spectrum Voices”. This is the first 2SLGBTQ+ choir in Kingston. Bill thought it would be a good idea to invite this choir to sing at the Edith Rankin Affirming Celebration Church Service when we reach that point. Council agreed it would be a good idea.

13. **Thanks to Retiring Members:**

Council wanted to recognize Andrew Robb’s many years of service on Council. He has been a valuable member of the committee for many years. THANK YOU Andrew!!

14. **Human Resource Issues:**

Regarding a few issues that have arising over time, Council felt it would be a good idea to document/clarify practices in place regarding sick time restorative pay, salary to cover temporary replacements, etc. In effect the directly affected Team should be notified and M&P should consider any additional documentation/policy.

15. **Statutory Holidays:**

During the Jan 17<sup>th</sup> meeting, council had agreed that it was one of Council’s roles to establish which Statutory Holiday should be recognized. In addition to those established by senior levels of government, ERMUC has, for some years now, recognized September 30<sup>th</sup> as “Truth and Reconciliation Day”. The attached list outlines the Statutory Holidays recognized by ERMUC for which Staff will be given the day off with pay.

**Motion:**

Moved by Andrew Robb, seconded by Gordon Sinclair that the attached list of Statutory Holidays be recognized for ERMUC staff for which staff will be given the day off with pay.

CARRIED

**16. Other Items:**

- Ruth Pettis reminded Council that there will be an Easter morning breakfast – Sunday March 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Marg Merkley noted the East Central Ontario Regional Council was inviting us to participate in an Online Educational Event, Saturday March 2<sup>nd</sup> from 8:30am to 1:00pm to consider ways for us to strengthen our capacity to welcome others.
- Bill reminded us of the photo album sign up procedure. The initiative is on track for photos in April but it may be needed to remind folks to get signed up.
- The Kitchen renewal is also on track. We have been dealing with SWISH who are very capable in delivery to standards.

**Reports:**

**1. Treasurers Report:**

See item #1 & #2.

**2. Minister's Reports:**

**Announcements:** none

**Closing Prayer:** Michelle closed with a prayer.

**Adjournment:** the meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.

**Next Meeting:** The next regularly scheduled meeting of council will be – Wednesday March 20<sup>th</sup>. Again, the meeting will be held in person at the church beginning at 9:00am.

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Bill Spencer, Chair

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Ken Williams, Secretary