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**MMSUCC Conference Council Minutes**

**April 11, 2015**

**TOPIC: Conference Council Meeting**

**Members present : Joyce Bathke, Wes Hurt, Allen Fluent, Donna Smith-Pupillo, David Rauch, Jeff Fulk, Jeremy Force, Bill Seymour, Laura Dierberg-Ayers, Laura Mignerone, Carl Philips, Steve Bucholz, Cindy Nuelle, Ken Ulmer, Les Kemp, Mark Ferbet, Chase Peeples (conference call)**

**Guest: Leah Bilinsky**

**Members Absent: Gus Elia, Alan Gatewood, Cheryl Howard, David Mehl, Cindy Moeller, Judi Privitt, Rick Riedel, Rhonda Stockglausner, Sue Wagener**

**Agenda**

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| **When** | April 11, 2015 – 10 a.m. |
| **Location** | Columbia UCC-Columbia, MO |
| **What to Bring** | Minutes/Updated documents on Conference Council Web Page/Consent Agenda /Your Lunch |

**Each Ministries Committee Chair should come prepared to report on the covenanted ministries assigned to them.**

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| **Topic** | **Presenter** |
| Opening Devotional | Dale |
| Consent Agenda/Minutes for Approval | Linda |
| Vision Team Report | Joyce |
| CPR/New Beginnings | Allen |
| CAG | Joyce/Dale |
| General Synod Resolutions/Meeting Updates | Allen/Joyce/Dale |
| Conference Minister Search Team Update | David |
| Conference Minister Update | Allen |
| Mo-Val Covenanted Ministry Proposed Revision | Jeremy/Rocky |
| Shannondale Report | Jeff |
| Local Church Ministries Report | Donna |
| Wider Church Ministries Report | Cindy |
| Leadership Development Report | Laura |
| Finance & Administration Report | Carl/Wes/Mike |
| New Business | All |
| Closing Prayer | Allen |

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| **Next Step/Action** | **Who is Responsible?** | **Deadline?** |

Minutes of the Meeting

Joyce called the meeting to order with a song, “Do Something” and Allen added insights and prayer to the message in the song.

Steve/Cindy moved to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

Joyce announced that the Vision Team has created the video to explain the vision to be shown at each Association meeting and CAG. Dick Hamm will be at the CAG and will utilize the feedback form from the meetings to present our future vision and stress the importance of the Conference Annual Planning Event which is tentatively scheduled for October. Feedback to the plan currently posted on the web page--Ken suggested that we include potential Centers of Excellence along with “Affinity Groups” Laura suggested addition of a glossary of terms.

Allen updated the CC on CPR/New Beginnings. The Covenanted Ministry for Church Vitality is moving forward. They will need $10,500 from Strength the Church fund. The CC will need to approve their document at the next meeting. Doug Padgitt will talk about CPR. David Schoen will talk about New Beginning at CAG.

Joyce reported that the CAG theme will be Rebuild, Restore, Renew. The tentative agenda is available on line. CPR and New Beginning will be Thursday morning, workshops in the afternoon, Dick Hamm will be at the opening banquet to share next steps from the Vision Team. An Opening Worship will be held at Columbia UCC in the evening. Chase reported that the Sacred Conversations on Race will be on Friday. Planning is not complete due to illness of one of the planning team members. There will be a World Café at lunch, with workshops in the afternoon. Saturday will be Renewing our covenant as a conference. There will be business sessions on Friday and Saturday. The next Council meeting be on Thursday morning (June 4) prior to the 10 a.m. New Beginnings session of CAG. There was some discussion on the possibly of having scholarship money available for hardship cases. The conversation included the need for clarification on CAG expectations for Council for Health and Human Service Ministries (CHHISM) and Council for Higher Ed.

Allen and Joyce discussed the meeting with General Synod delegates. It was a chance for delegates to get to know each other and become familiar with the Resolutions. The meeting on May 9th will be with Illinois South to discuss the resolutions. The delegates make decisions on resolutions through discernment with discussion and modifications during the Synod. MMSUCC needs a process for resolutions. Resolutions to come before the General Synod are on the UCC website. It is our hope that this process will be developed by the Social Justice Covenanted Ministry and presented to the Conference Council for review and approval.

Laura reported for the Conference Minister Search Committee. They have held several interviews using “Go to Meeting” but will probably not have a Conference Minister selected by the time of CAG. David will post a message on eCourier explaining where they are in the process.

Allen gave an update on Church Vitality. Josh Gibson, our intern, has been working with this group. There are about 20 people being trained in Sacred Conversation on Race by Leon Sharp. There is a cost involved in this training and St. Louis Association would like some help from the Conference to defray costs. Search and Call Consultants program is on hold until the new CM comes on board. Staffing Search and Call needs to be discussed. More Conference Deacons need to be recruited. Clergy Learning Groups are in the planning stage with funding available through the Lilly Foundation (Clergy Excellence Group). 2014 has been a very good year. The budget is balanced because churches are giving more. Allen stated that CC is to be congratulated for making some tough decisions. The office staff has been increased to include a receptionist/administrative assistant to cover the front desk and telephone as well as assist Renee Cordes.

Jeff reported on Shannondale and thanked the conference for the loan for the “new” van which cost $20,000. Basket making is in process this weekend. Shannondale will become a Red Cross disaster shelter. The tree farm will require reverification before the sale of carbon credits can occur. Men’s Retreat will be held May1-3 and they will be working on special projects. Web page will be updated. There will be a celebration of the 20th anniversary of service to Shannondale for Jeff and his wife. Shannondale Carbon, LLC Covenanted Ministry has been formed with Danny Burke, Wes Hurt and Tom Redick as members.

Jeremy gave the update on Mo-Val. Rate increases have been made to more closely match other camps. The fireside room is being renovated with new bathrooms, carpeting, etc. MO-VAL has recruited an individual to serve as Program Director. Summer camp staff is in place. There are still some leadership positions open. The MoVal Covenanted Ministry is focusing on increasing alumni giving. Leah Balinsky presented the revised Camp MoVal Covenanted Ministry Charter to guide their leadership of MoVal. Leah explained that the covenanted ministry was asking to be empowered to take on more responsibility. The review of the proposed charter resulted in several suggestions that would make clearer the role of the Covenanted Ministry. The charter will be revised and brought back for review. Ken asked that we acknowledge the hard work of the covenanted ministry which has strengthened the ministry at MoVal.

Laura reported on Leadership Development. Laura moved to have Bruce Moeller fill Rick Riedel’s unexpired term. Motion carried. Laura moved to approve the following slate of officers.

Jeff Weyrauch, 1st term Eastern

Rev. Laura Mignerone, 2nd term, Eastern

Rhonda Stockglauser, 2nd term, Eastern

Laura Dierberg-Ayers, 2nd term, St. Louis

Rev. Ken Ulmer, 2nd term, St. Louis

Rev. Nokuphiwa Langeni 1st term, St. Louis

Rev. Alan Gatewood, 2nd term, Western

Linda Stenger, 2nd term, Western

The motion passed.

Susan Wagner had to resign her position on the Council. An individual to replace her will be presented at the next meeting.

Donna made the report for Local Church Standing Committee. The standing committee members have been assigned to Covenanted Ministries that are under the auspices of the LCM standing Committee.

Bill Seymour was appointed to be the liaison to MO-VAL covenanted ministry from the Wider Church Standing Committee.

Finance and Administration

Carl and Ken reported that the transfer of the invested assets to the Beyond Fossil Fuels Balanced Fund that the CC approved at the January 10, 2015 meeting has been accomplished. Relatedly, the F&A Committee is requesting a change in the withdrawal rate applied to the earnings withdrawn from invested assets. The current withdrawal rate is 3.5% of the average market value. The recommendation is to increase the rate to 4% of the average market value. After discussion the following motion was made.

Motion: The Conference Council authorizes the Treasurer to increase the earnings withdrawal rate on invested assets from 3.5% to 4.0% of the 16-quarter rolling average. The effective date for this increase is March 31, 2015. The motion passed.

Conference Minister Compensation. The Conference Minister Search Committee requested the development of a range for salary and housing for use by the committee in negotiating the salary for the selected candidate. The F&A committee moved to adopt a range for the salary and housing for the new Conference Minister for 2015. Motion carried.

Investment in UCC Cornerstone Fund (UCCCF). The F&A Committee was alerted to the opportunity available through UCC Cornerstone Fund for interest rebates to MMSC member churches which borrow from the UCC Cornerstone Fund. One percent rebates on UCCCF loans are available up to the amount of investments in UCCCF by the Conference and the specific church. After discussion the F&A made the following motion.

The Conference Council authorizes the Treasurer to purchase a $100,000 Cornerstone Fund CD in April 2015 and a second $100,000 CD in October 2015. The motion passed.

2016 Proposed Budget. Carl and Ken presented the proposed 2016 budget for all Conference endeavors. This assumes a 3.5% increase in OCWM gifts over 2015 budget amount. 2016 will be the first year that monies from Carbon Credit sales are included in the revenue assumptions. There is a projected 2% increase in salaries with the exception of Jeff Fulk due to a change in responsibilities with the inauguration of carbon credit sales. Funds for communication enhancement are included in the budget. After discussion the CC moved to recommend the proposed 2016 Budget for MMSC with the revenue assumption of $1,388,786 for adoption by CAG. Motion carried.

New Business- Ken encouraged communication about the stories of successful and fun ministries that are happening in our churches. One aspect would be to develop press releases for actions such as announcement of a new conference minister, our large investment in a socially responsible fund, and our positive financial results for 2013 and 2014. He reported that the OCWM Covenanted Ministry is seeking reporters from churches to funnel stories of successful and fun ministry events.

The meeting was adjourned with a prayer from Allen.