

**IOWA CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**  
**January 30, 2010**

Members Present: Altenbaumer, Douglas, Noer, Love, Nelson, Guffey-Lewis, Howie, Boege, Darmour-Paul, Mears, Sargent, Wohlhuter, Fisher, Stonebraker, Whiteman, Hanon, Vass, Ebensberger

Absent (with prior notice): Lof

Absent (without prior notice): None

Also Present: CM Pleva; ACM's Jensen, Havelka, Stoik; Ronald Eslinger; Ryan Brooks

The Board of Directors met at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ in Des Moines. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair, Bill Howie, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

ACM Stoik gave the opening prayer.

CM Pleva led the Board in a study and discussion of Luke 4:21-30.

**Approval of Minutes**

**BOD 2010-1.** Guffey-Lewis/Whiteman to correct the minutes of the regular meeting of October 24, 2009 to reflect that Mears was absent (with prior notice) and to approve the minutes as corrected. Approved unanimously.

**BOD 2010-2.** Vass/Darmour-Paul to approve the minutes of the special telephonic meeting held on December 21, 2009 as presented. Approved unanimously.

Vice Chair Howie recessed the meeting at 10:00 to allow the Board teams to meet separately.

The meeting reconvened at 11:10.

**Administrative Team**

CM Pleva presented the report of the Administrative Team. It included the following action items, for which the Administrative Team recommended Board Approval:

**1. Amendments to Fund Definitions**

**BOD 2010-3.** To approve the attached amended Definitions of Funds. Approved unanimously.

**2. Appointment of ACM Stoik to Board of LCM**

**BOD 2010-4.** To ratify the nomination of ACM Stoik to serve on the Board of Directors

of Local Church Ministries. Approved unanimously.

### **3. Selection of Auditor**

**BOD 2010-5.** To appoint Jacobsen & Company LLP, West Des Moines, IA, as the auditor of the Iowa Conference for the year ending December 31, 2009 and to approve the letter of engagement for that firm. Approved unanimously.

### **4. Sabbatical Issues**

**BOD 2010-6.** To allocate the proceeds of the sabbatical grant received from the Louisville Institute as follows: One-half to CM Pleva to help defray his sabbatical-related expenses and one-half to the Conference to help defray the cost of securing Conference Minister services during CM Pleva's absence. Approved unanimously.

**BOD 2010-7.** To appoint Ronald Eslinger to serve as acting Conference Minister from March 1 to May 31, 2010. Approved unanimously.

### **Financial Development Team**

ACM Stoik presented the report of the Financial Development Team. No action items were presented.

### **Program and Planning Team**

ACM Havelka presented the report of the Program and Planning Team. No action items were presented.

### **Conference Minister's Report**

CM Pleva presented the Conference Minister's report, a copy of which is attached to these minutes.

CM Pleva also presented the new conference brochure to the Board for its review.

### **Financial Reports**

CM Pleva, with Treasurer Hanon, presented the financial reports for the period ending December 31, 2009. A vigorous and detailed discussion followed.

CM Pleva also reported on the current status of the Inge Carstensen bequest.

### **Employment Review of CM Pleva**

After excusing CM Pleva from the meeting, Guffey-Lewis, as chair of the Evaluation Team, presented the results of his employment review. A copy of the Team's report was

made available to the members of the Board for their review.

### **Other Business**

1. *Outstanding liability accounts.* CM Pleva reported that the outstanding liability accounts have been investigated and all valid accounts have been repaid in full.
2. *Board member OCWM contributions.* It was noted that some Board members make their individual OCWM contributions through their local churches. CM Pleva asked that those Board members who do so notify the Conference when their contributions are made in order to ensure that contributions are properly recorded and attributed.
3. *Covenanted Ministries/National Setting.*
  - a. The national unified governance committee has begun work on a proposal to be brought to the General Synod in 2011. Resistance to the concept of unified governance seems to be easing.
  - b. ACM Havelka reported on her work with youth and young adult ministry at the national level. She has been nominated to be the moderator of a team that is dealing with this matter.
4. *Programming.* CM Pleva presented a description of the SAG program.

### **Next Meeting**

The Vice Chair announced that the next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held at Plymouth Congregational UCC in Des Moines on April 10, 2010 beginning at 9:30 a.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

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Mary Stonebraker, Secretary

## **Definitions of Funds**

Iowa Conference, UCC

Working document for internal use

This document was originally created in late 2007 and was adopted by the Board of Directors in December 2007 as the authorized listing of funds for the Iowa Conference. It has subsequently been amended on dates at the end of the document.

### **Unrestricted Funds**

Unrestricted funds hold moneys the use of which is entirely at the considered discretion of the Board of Directors.

**General Operating Fund (GOF)** – Basic operations of the conference including personnel, office expenses, basic program, support of the national church, etc. Funded from OCWM, other undesignated contributions and other sources.

**Annual Meeting** – Receipts and expenses of the Annual Meeting.

**Conference Minister – Discretionary** -- Moneys from the GOF and other contributions to be used for special needs and projects according to the discretion of the conference minister.

**Conference Operations Endowment (COE)** – Undesignated funds held and invested by the conference, the income of which is used to fund ongoing conference operations. The proceeds from the sale of the conference office building in 2009 are held in this fund. Though not technically restricted, it is current intent that the principal in this fund will not be expended.

**Property Fund** – A non-cash fund which reflects the conference's investment in property and other physical assets and depreciation thereof. The fund balance does not reflect market value, but book value of these assets.

### **Temporarily Restricted Funds**

Temporarily restricted funds hold moneys, the use of which is restricted by donor intent or other device. It is not intended that these funds be permanently held, but that they will be expended by the Board according to the intent for which they were received.

**Center/Learn/Search** – Receipts and expenses of C/L/S

**Pilgrimage** – Receipts and expenses of Pilgrimage

**General Synod – Delegation** – Funded from the GOF and reimbursements. Expenses for GS occur every other year. This fund enables us to budget on an annual basis and thereby set aside money for what is a considerable expense. We also process the costs for family members of delegates who attend and for which we are reimbursed. This fund enables us to handle those receipts and expenses without running them through the GOF.

**Strengthen the Church – Iowa Share** – One half of the STC offering (one of the 4 special UCC-wide offerings) received annually in many of our churches may be retained by the conference for projects related to congregational welfare. This fund contains our half.

**Iowa Conference Thank Offering** – Some churches receive this offering annually. A committee appointed by the Board of Directors makes grants to Iowa entities from these monies on an annual basis.

**Leadership Scholarships** – A fund supported from contributions, proceeds from the Scholarship Fund, and potentially by the GOF budget from which grants and/or loans can be made to students in care, authorized ministers, or other congregational leaders. Grants and loans may be for seminary education or continuing education projects. Administered by staff in conjunction with the Commission on Ministry.

**Global Partnerships** – Intended to receive contributions for the purpose of supporting our partnership with the Dominican Republic Church and other potential partnerships as well as other projects related to global ministry.

**Ministerial Assistance** – Funded by GOF, contributions and reimbursements. Used for emergency assistance for clergy as well as for needs which may arise as a consequence of clergy misconduct and fitness reviews. This fund also pays the premiums for those retired ministers for whom the conference continues to accept partial liability and receives partial reimbursement from those clergy for said costs.

**Disaster Assistance – Iowa** – A Fund into which designated contributions may be received from churches and individuals and then granted for in-state disaster assistance as approved by BOD.

**Special Events – Misc.** – Funds handled on an in and out basis for events which are conference related, but usually non-recurring and sometimes unanticipated.

**Youth/Young Adult Ministry (YYAM)** – Funded by fees, contributions and budgeted funds from the GOF. Used to pay expenses related to youth trips to General Synod, National and Regional Youth Events, and other conference sponsored youth activities and events.

**Outdoor Ministry (ODM)** – Funds to be used for support of outdoor ministry program, whether at Pilgrim Heights or elsewhere.

**New Church Start Fund** – A fund established in 2008 to receive contributions, bequests, and potentially funds from closed churches to be used for the support of newly organizing UCC congregations in the Iowa Conference.

**Staff Sabbatical Fund** – A fund established in 2009 to receive contributions and transfers from the GOF to fund costs associated with staff sabbaticals.

**Special Projects** – A fund established in 2009 to receive contributions and other receipts to be used for unanticipated needs and projects at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

## **Permanently Restricted Funds**

Permanently restricted funds hold moneys which have been donated for specific purposes, and which are intended to be invested indefinitely with the earnings to be used for the specified purpose(s) on an ongoing basis.

**Scholarship Fund** – An endowment, the proceeds of which are deposited into the Leadership Scholarship Fund.

**Carstensen/Blake Fund – Conference Operations** – An endowment, the proceeds of which are unrestricted and to be used at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

**Brooks-Wright/Outdoor Ministry** - An endowment, the proceeds of which are deposited into the Outdoor Ministry Fund.

**Russell/OCWM Fund** - An endowment, the proceeds of which are deposited into the GOF (as OCWM – shared) and shared with the national setting of the church according to the current sharing formula.

**Exira/Thomason Fund for Lay Theological Education** – An endowment, the proceeds of which are deposited in the CLS fund and used to purchase Bibles for new students in the Center/Learn/Search program. The original moneys in this fund were donated from the Exira church upon its closing and in memory of former CLS student, Darla Thomason. This fund was established in 2008.

## **Liability Accounts**

These accounts include:

**Pass-Through Liability Accounts** – These accounts record income and disbursement of designated contributions for UCC and non-UCC purposes and entitles for which the conference has no responsibility except to act as receiving and disbursing agent.

## **Obsolete Funds**

**Investing in Ministry** – Contributions received for paying down the mortgage on Pilgrim Heights and restoring other conference funds expended for the Pilgrim Heights building projects. This fund ceased to exist at the end of 2008 and moneys remaining in it were transferred to the Conference Operations Endowment.

**Women’s Coordinating Committee** – The committee was de-authorized by the Board in 2009.

Rev: 1-2-2008, 1-2-2009, 4-18-2009, 1-30-2010

Iowa Conference, UCC  
Conference Minister's report to the Board of Directors  
30 January 2010

Some of you know that I attended a seminar on judicatory executive leadership at Duke Seminary last month. The matters we processed were challenging and very important.

There were two questions in particular that demand ongoing consideration in the context of our work as the Board of the Iowa Conference:

1. What are the questions that we as a board need to be asking in order to continue to support relevance and vitality in our churches?
2. How is our environment changing? How does that impact how we invest (and develop) our resources?

These are not questions which lend themselves to simple and black and white answers, but they are fundamentally important because if we do not ask them, we will either mindlessly perpetuate the past (that is, keep doing what we've always done), or else we will thoughtlessly buy into answers offered in other places – answers which do not necessarily fit our churches.

As you know quite well by now, I believe that the support and cultivation of leadership capacity is essential to ongoing relevance for our churches. But even if you embrace that supposition, we are still left to strategically plan for ways to actually cultivate vital, compelling, faithful leaders. It's not an easy task.

The second question is equally challenging. To some extent it's easy to answer. Our environment is changing as the members of our churches get older, the finances available to congregations and the conference diminish, the cultural support for church as a valued institution gradually fades, and strident voices more and more set the tone for societal discourse.

You would probably respond differently to these questions, but I suspect we'd find considerable overlap in our perspectives.

My point is this – our mandate as a board isn't to perpetuate the past – it's to find relevant and effective ways to empower our churches to live out the Gospel mandate as each of them understand themselves to be called to do so. This sounds easy, but it isn't. Across the mainline church, our capacity for adaptation is greatly diminished. Institutions in crisis instinctively cling to the past all the more tenaciously, and unfortunately, it is clinging to the past which accelerates demise.

One of our Board teams carries the title, "Program and Planning." It is particularly in that team that I hope to encourage creative thinking about how our resources can best be employed for congregational revitalization.

Stay tuned! This process of continually evaluating our work and reshaping it for effective relevance is not a process that will ever end. This is the ongoing and perpetual work of a body like ours. It's hard work, to be honest. Thanks for being a part of it!

Just a few words about my upcoming sabbatical, and the plans which have been laid for dealing with my absence:

- Ron Eslinger has agreed to serve as Conference Minister in my absence. He and I haven't talked explicitly about his title, but I'd suggest that he be re-introduced to the Iowa Conference as our "Acting Conference Minister" and that you formally appoint him as such for the period of March 1 through May 31, 2010.
- Now that the Louisville Institute has funded my sabbatical grant proposal, I am suggesting we split that award (\$15,000) in two equal pieces and that I use half for expenses related to the program I described in the proposal and that the conference's half be used to compensate Ron at a rate of \$2500/month for half time service.
- Ron and I have talked about the priorities for his time. We've agreed that he will:
  - Supervise the staff and conduct staff meetings,
  - Staff the Central Association Committee on Ministry,
  - Be responsive to particular needs arising in Central Association congregations,
  - Consult with staff and other persons as time permits,
  - Staff the April meeting of the Board of Directors,
  - Staff the three SAG groups which meet in the Central Association.
- We've also agreed that the following will NOT be high priorities:
  - Staff the Central Association Advisory Council (Nicole Havelka will do this),
  - Be present in Conference churches on Sunday except in case of urgent need or emergency,
  - Attend to wider church responsibilities and ecumenical relationships.

As most of you know, Ron has extensive knowledge of the Iowa Conference from his three plus year stint as an interim ACM and he has knowledge of the role of Conference Minister from his time as conference minister of the Illinois South Conference. I have full confidence in his skills and abilities and am delighted that he is available and willing to serve us in this way.

I am very much looking forward to my time away, and look forward to returning refreshed and hopefully with new ideas for our ongoing work on behalf of our 179 congregations.

Peace,

Rich Pleva  
Iowa Conference Minister