

MINUTES of the Executive of Canadian Shield Regional Council held on April 12-13, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. at Villa Loyola in Sudbury, ON.

PRESENT: Barb Nott (Chair), Nancy Ferguson, John Watson, Helen Smith, Bill Steadman, Stewart Walker, Susan Lindquist, Dave LeGrand, Kathie Smith

STAFF: Peter Hartmans, Susan Whitehead

GUESTS: Nicole Treksler (UCC Legal Counsel), Mardi Mumford, Melody Duncanson-Hales

REGRETS: Mastard Sakala, Jim Jackson, Eun-Joo Park and Joy Galloway

Wednesday, April 12, 2023 – 1:00 p.m.

Chair Barb Nott welcomed everyone to the meeting of Executive and opened with a prayer.

Barb honoured the traditional lands upon which we meet and then read the CSRC safe space statement.

CHECK-IN

Executive took time to do a check-in with each other.

HUNTINGTON UNIVERSITY CONVERSATION – MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT AND CONVERSATION WITH NICOLE TREKSLER, LEGAL COUNCIL FOR UCC)

Barb introduced Nicole to Executive and invited her to open discussions about the Memorandum of Agreement between Huntington University, The United Church of Canada, and the Canadian Shield Regional Council. Nicole shared that this agreement is the third one to cross her desk and the drafted agreement is typical of this kind of relationship. She indicated that the agreement can be rescinded with a 6-month written notice if we decide to terminate the agreement.

Executive had an in-depth discussion with Nicole about the benefits of keeping this agreement as is or changing it.

There was consensus that a meeting with Kevin McCormick and the Executive would be beneficial to make final decisions about the Memorandum of Agreement. Nicole and Peter will set that meeting up and report back to Executive.

OPENING WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION

Stewart led Executive in Opening Worship with Communion.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION by Bill Steadman/John Watson **2023-04-12/13-01**
That the agenda for the meeting be approved, as circulated.
CARRIED

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION by Kathie Smith/Susan Lindquist **2023-04-12/13-02**
That the Minutes of the meetings of the Canadian Shield Regional Council Executive held on February 3, 2023 via Zoom be approved, as circulated.
CARRIED

RECEIVE MINUTES FROM COMMISSIONS

MOTION by Helen Smith/Dave Legrand **2023-04-12/13-03**
That the Minutes of the CSRC Pastoral Relations Commission Minutes from January 25, 2023 be received, for information

MOTION by Bill Steadman/Susan Lindquist **2023-04-12/13-04**
That the Minutes of the CSRC Support to Communities of Faith Commission Minutes from January 24th and February 28th, 2023 be received, for information.
CARRIED

CORRESPONDENCE

- *Remit Email from Adele Halliday, Anti-Racism and Equality*
Peter stated that we will be discussing Remit #1 later on in the agenda and Executive decided to wait to have the discussion.

CS RCM PLANNING TEAM POLICY DRAFT DOCUMENT

Executive reviewed and edited the Canadian Shield Regional Council Meeting Team Draft Policy, which was created from our learnings after our last in-person RCM in Sudbury, as well as our past experiences with conference and regional meetings.

SIGNING AUTHORITIES REVISITED

Peter revisited the changes in staff that has and is occurring in the region and the need to change the signing authorities.

MOTION by John Watson/Nancy Ferguson **2023-04-12/13-05**
That the signing officers for all Bank Accounts at the Bank of Montreal and BMO Nesbitt Burns for the Canadian Shield Regional Council be Susan Whitehead, Janet MacDonald, Kathleen Wolfe and Kathleen Smith, effective June 1, 2023.
CARRIED

NOMINATIONS REPORT

The Chair of Nominations, Kathie Smith, shared the nominations report with Executive. There were several positions posted in January and the team is still working on getting those positions filled. Each Resource Team and Commission are sending in updated job descriptions to Nominations and will be put up on the website as soon as they are received.

Executive discussed the list of terms for this body and Kathie indicated that everyone should now be on a 3-year term, with the end dates being staggered. For those Executive members whose term is up in 2023 (Stewart Walker, Dave LeGrand, Joy Galloway, Helen Smith and Eun-Joo because she is leaving to take a position with the SWRC), they could choose to stay for a second term.

FESTIVAL OF FAITH (FoF) UPDATE

Susan shared that there are currently sitting at 51 registrants and about 4 of those are from Shining Waters RC and that the planning team has a meeting on April 25th, where they will discuss how to increase the promotion of the FoF. The planning team just learned that James Ko's Admission to The United Church of Canada will be at the Sunday service of the FoF. A reminder message will go out to the region with that information.

REMIT #1 VOTE – ESTABLISHING AN AUTONOMOUS NATIONAL INDEIGENOUS ORGANIZATION

Peter indicated that there are two ways the region can move with the remit; the first is to discuss this at the Regional Council Meeting to serve as an education function for communities of faith and then remind the church boards/councils to vote; the second is to have a vote at the Executive level. Executive had a discussion about which way would be most beneficial to communities of faith and it was decided that there will be an educational component at the RCM and that perhaps a Town Hall Meeting will happen within a month of the due date of the vote (February 2024).

EXECUTIVE MINISTER'S REPORT

Executive received the Executive Minister Report, for information (*attached as Appendix A*).

Update on UCC Budget

Peter attended a staff leader's meeting on Tuesday afternoon where Erik Mathiesen reported about the budget for The United Church of Canada. The UCC needs to make a cut to their budget of \$6 million. Discussions at the General Council Office have occurred questioning the number of regions in The UCC, if we could decrease some of them and what would that look like.

Conversations About Relationship Between CS and SW

Peter led a discussion with Executive about the relationship between SW and CS to date and how we have been sharing staff, events, budgets, etc. He expressed sadness around the number of pastoral charges they have closed in the last 2-3 years. Peter indicated that this was a preliminary discussion about our relationship and future partnering and for Executive to think about it.

Peter closed the meeting and Executive sang, VU 289 "It Only Takes a Spark."

Thursday, April 13, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.

OPENING PRAYER

Barb opened the meeting and Peter started off by acknowledging Volunteer Appreciation Week and thanked all Executive members for all their hard work they do for the region that is deeply appreciated. Peter led Executive in a brief worship by singing Voices United 356 "Seek Ye First the Kingdom" and then shared a prayer.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH SWRC

Executive reviewed the MOU between SW and CS regional councils. There were minor clerical changes and a larger change to #10. Executive acknowledged that this term in the MOU has not been met and would like to honour it going forward, expressing the need to have both the Executives of SW and CS Regional Councils to meet face-to-face soon. It was determined that the ad hoc committee could be the Chair and Chair Elect of the CS Executive, the President and President Elect of the SW Executive (the Past Chair/President if no Chair/President Elect is present), plus the Executive Minister, his assistant, the Staff Lead from SW and other staff, as needed. The wording for #10 will be rewritten to reflect that this group will jointly decide the dates of the Regional Council Meetings for both regional councils, with input from the Executives.

SEPTEMBER 2023 JOINT EXECUTIVE ZOOM MEETING BETWEEN CS AND SW

Executive discussed the possibility of meeting at Villa Loyola in September 2023 for a joint CS and SW Executive meeting. Executive instructed Peter to ask the SW Executive if this is a possibility for them.

SCoFC PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

The Chair welcomed Mardi Mumford and Melody Duncanson-Hales to the meeting where they shared a presentation on behalf of the Support to Communities of Faith Commission (*Appendix B*).

MOTION by Bill Steadman/Nancy Ferguson **2023-04-12/13-06**
That the Canadian Shield Regional Council Executive support, in principle, the Mustard Seed Strategy proposal of the Support to Communities of Faith Commission and to create policy that reflects that proposal.
CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

David shared that members at St. Andrew's UC in Sudbury had a robust discussion about the Manitou Art Collection and they wondered if there was a digital copy of all the pictures in the collection. The suggestion was to contact the Right Relations Resource Team (RRRT) to inquire if the region can have access to these images (possibly with a CSRC watermark on each image). Susan has some of the images digitized after the Conference Office fire. The request for digital images of the collection will be forwarded to the RRRT for action.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

- May 4, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom, if needed
- June 1, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom

CLOSING

Barb adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m. and Executive ended Executive's time together with singing MV 92 and Peter ended with a prayer.

Appendix A Executive Minister Report March 2023

Happy Spring!!! The planning team for the Festival of Faith is well organized and has made significant progress. Staff visited the venue site. Shining Waters Regional Council has chatted with Canadian Shield Regional Council, through Barb this past month, around a learning event and we will need to begin thinking about partnering for 2025. Both Regional Council Executives seem very excited.

We posted the new full-time admin. position to be shared between the Canadian Shield and Shining Waters Regional Councils. The position was posted in January for two weeks. We also circulated via Regional networks, hiring platforms etc. The General Council supports hiring for Regional Councils through its HR office. They received many applicants and a three-person hiring team was created with myself, Jody Maltby and Joy Galloway. We did interviews in early February. We hired Kathleen Wolfe and she started mid-March. You can reach Kathleen at Email: kwolfe@united-church.ca . Kathleen provides primary administrative support for Shining Waters and Canadian Shield Regional Councils. Rachael retires May 2023, we will be very sad to say goodbye. Susan will move as primary Executive Minister admin. support for both Regional Councils. Presently Susan just supports Canadian Shield Regional Council Executive.

We are currently in the position of hiring a new Congregational Support Minister for SWRC, who's primary work will focus South of the 407 in Shining Waters Regional Council. The successful applicant is Eun-Joo Park! We are delighted for Eun-Joo and SWRC; however, CSRC will deeply miss her leadership and this change will also create a vacancy for CSRC at our Executive.

Recently at our Executive Minister Management Meeting, Erik Matheson, CFO for the United Church shared that the General Council (GC) needs to cut our GC operating budget by 6 million dollars over two years. He also feels that communities of faith do not have the capacity to increase General Council assessments. One of the acute challenges at this time for General Council is both the challenge of inflation and at the same time, receiving smaller returns on investment. While the Regional Council operating grant will remain the same until 2025, M&S Grants to the Regional Council will likely be cut in 2024/25, which could have an impact on our operating income. The cut will also have an impact on granting.

In the near future, we have pre-planned some room for cuts to our income. However, my sense is in the future, we will face cuts to our operating budget, while at the same time our expenses will increase. Part of the way we are addressing this future challenge is by partnering more and more with Shining Waters around staffing and budgeting related to staffing. However, my suggestion to both Regional Councils is to start talking about how we can partner more as two Regional Councils. Erik Matheson at our recent meeting, raised the delicate point that he has concerns around the economic sustainability of 16 Regional Councils. Frankly for many, it went over like a lead balloon. For me, I am mindful that he has the challenging task of being the messenger and not the author of our economic challenge.

My sense is we could approach this future challenge in two ways. One we could wait and deal with the challenge when we need to face it head-on, which is a legitimate strategy, since the Regional Council would likely be more accepting facing a budget challenge in real time. The second option would be to intentionally reach out to Shining Waters Regional Council about partnering more beyond staff. Perhaps experiment with ways we could consolidate our administrative work as a Regional Council. Consider how we could partner around Regional Council Meetings and at the very least, consider how we are **distinctive** as a Regional Council and consider what work we are we doing that is essentially the same? I am aware the Canadian

Shield Regional Council is new and folks are new to each other. My sense, after discussing this with Chair Barb, is that we need to proceed carefully and thoughtfully as we work toward creating a strong community in CSRC. However, as our Regional Council policy already has a mechanism for partnering, I am recommending that we work towards planning a joint Executive Meeting with CSRC and SWRC in the fall to brain storm how we can strengthen our partnership and perhaps consider how we can work together. If we can figure out a path forward together, perhaps we can offer leadership to the entire church, as we face our future challenges together. We could also provide leadership to our communities of faith as they face similar challenges and conversations with neighbouring United Churches.

Appendix B
The Mustard Seed Strategy
Submitted by the Support to Communities of Faith Commission

“...for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.” ~Matthew 17:20

“I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” ~Isaiah 43:19

Canadian Shield is a Regional Council that has faith that moves mountains. In the face of decline – in membership, financial and human resources, and aging church buildings – members of Canadian Shield are working together to creatively discern and respond to God’s will for the church in this time. And while we, with deep regret, as a Commission of the Regional Council disband communities of faith with regularity, we also live in trust that the small seeds our congregations have planted will take deep root and become a resting place for fresh expressions of the Holy Spirit at work in Northern Ontario.

We are blessed with abundance in Canadian Shield! We have access to funds that allow us to support educational initiatives, ministry with youth, community outreach, outdoor ministries, and much more. It is a privilege we do not take lightly to be able to share these monies with communities of faith and individuals who are doing and being church in innovative ways.

We have also found that restricted funds, and funds with very specific foci, have kept us from responding in a timely and nimble way when communities of faith recognize a need, or discern a call, and wish for the Regional Council to partner in doing a new thing.

To this end, we are proposing the adoption of the Mustard Seed Strategy. Our vision is that the \$100 000 communities of faith support fund established by CSRC Executive motion 2022-12-01-12 (MOTION by John Watson/Jim Jackson That the CSRC Executive, after receiving the motion from the Finance Resource Team, it was decided to put \$100,000 in a fund designated for communities of faith support. CARRIED) will be administered by the Support to Communities of Faith Commission and renewed in perpetuity, seeded from property sales and redevelopment to a maximum of \$25 000 per year. Of the \$25 000 per annum, we would like to see \$5 000 designated for the work of the Support to Communities of Faith Commission – travel for an in-person meeting if appropriate, facilitation or a retreat opportunity to enable us to do our work more faithfully, or supplies we may need. The remaining \$20 000 we would like to be able to grant to communities of faith to facilitate growth. Examples may include, but not be limited to, purchasing technology (such as that made available through Rural Connect) to enable collaboration, organizing community hubs, and providing hospitality.

We live in hope that we might soon see an end to the need to disband communities of faith. As congregations turn to one another in collaboration and amalgamation, we would invite members of the Executive into a time of discernment with the Support to Communities of Faith Commission. It has been our practice, in Canadian Shield, not to declare surplus property when communities of faith amalgamate. In order that we might better support all congregations in the Regional Council, we would like to discuss the possibility of revisiting this policy. We would welcome the opportunity for a joint Executive and Support to Communities of Faith Commission Zoom call where we might build community, pray together, and discern how we can partner together to witness the new things God is up to in our Regional Council.

In gratitude and respect,
Jim Jackson, Chair - Support to Communities of Faith Commission