

Pacific Northwest Conference Board of Directors Meeting Minutes, February 4, 2025

Board Members Present: Indigo Brown, Moderator; Esther Sanders, Vice Moderator; Sandy Wisecarver; Ron Patterson, Scribe; Amy Johnson; Leah Atkinson Bilinski; Wendy Blight; Diana Kutas, Treasurer. Tevita_Fakasiieike.

Staff: Designated Conference Minister Phil Hodson; Conference Accountant, Andy Warren; Brian Wallace, Interim Director Camp N-Sid-Sen.

Excused: Talaalemotu “ Leilani” Alaelau; Deborah Tyler; Dawn Koloj; Mark Boyd, Camp Director, Pilgrim Firs, (on sabbatical).

Indigo called us to order and invited Phil to open our meeting with prayer.

At Indigo’s invitation, we checked in with something that brought joy into our lives. Testimony that brought hope followed.

Phil introduced and welcomed Brian Wallace, the new interim director of camp N-Sid-Sen.

Financial Report

Andy shared his screen and walked through the financial summary as it appears in his written report in Basecamp. He explained the colors he had used to highlight the summary report. Conference Ministries are ahead of budget thanks to the OCWM support of our congregations. Some expenses, especially travel, are higher than budget, which was expected. In summary, Conference Ministries is projected to have a \$40,000 deficit for the current fiscal year, Pilgrim Firs, a \$87,000 surplus, and N-Sid-Sen a \$90,000 loss.

Questions were asked, including ideas he might have about how to achieve alignment between income and expenses. He noted that income for fiscal’ 26 is an unknown. He noted that recovery at N-Sid-Sen will be a multi-year process and that we need to be supportive of the activities of the Taskforce that we approved at our last meeting. This taskforce is being formed.

Andy was asked about the Unity Fund. We have spent \$38,159 in the current year. What should be budgeted in the coming year? We are at a sensitive point in time and must ask how we do what we need to do in a racist society. The fund is being stewarded by the clergy of color. The total addition to the fund was \$40,000 this year.

Phil was asked about PNC joining the national UCC in potential litigation. At present, he answered, the suit is closed but he will learn more about was national plans. He expects multi-denominational efforts in the coming days and he will keep us informed.

Indigo spoke about the clergy of color retreat at the Franklinton Center. Both she and Phil testified to the power of this event and the impact it had on participants.

Indigo brought up the possibility of sunseting the Unity Fund. This is not a ‘DEI’ fund. This fund has been questioned and scrutinized in ways that have caused pain, and the Board needs to be intentional and sensitive about what is being said and heard. Indigo will lead further reflection on

this question, pointing out that we, as a Conference, need to do a great deal more than give money. Money does not do the work that needs to be done. There are other things we can do and the fund is not a substitute for the necessary work. How do we celebrate and participate in the work without micromanaging?

Wendy led a discussion of the history of the Unity Fund. She remembered that the fund began in 2021 with \$52,000 budgeted, \$50,000 was budgeted for the next two years, and \$40,000 in the past year's budget. She recalled that we did not pass a budget in 2022. We need to be clear on these amounts are we discuss what needs to be done at the coming meeting.

Phil reported, inviting us to review his written report. He will be sharing some thoughts on diversity, equity and inclusion in the coming days. A welcoming and inclusive index will be introduced to local congregations. **The Constitution and Bylaws rewrite** is well under way under Cameron Sharp's leadership. With a few others, he will be working through Cameron's draft in preparation for bringing it to the whole Board.

Wendy noted that the **Personnel Committee** will be reviewing Phil's job goals and present these to the Board.

Brian reported on N-Sid-Sen inviting us to review his written report in Basecamp. He introduced himself more fully sharing some of his outstanding background in camp leadership. The camp site is currently being reviewed by him as he seeks awareness about potential and needs. He has discovered a few flaws in the electrical system that must be addressed soon. He is reviewing safety equipment and conducting inspections. Several new groups have contacted him. Esther wondered if volunteers might be able to fix some of the items in need of repair.

Committee Liaison Reports

Amy reported on the cooperative work of Justice Witness Ministries and the Dismantling Racism Taskforce.

Ron reported that the East and West Chairs of COM will attend the anti-racism training with the Board. This is a first step in their process to require this training for all conference clergy.

Sandy reported that the MRC will be seeking nominees who are equipped with skills around anti-racism.

Leah reported that the Outdoor Ministry taskforce is looking for camp directors.

Phil noted that after polling, the **Board Retreat will be May 23-25 at N-Sid-Sen**. Ron will once again rent a van which will leave Tacoma and Seattle.

Staff members, Andy and Brian, were excused.

Outdoor Ministries

At their November retreat, they worked on a charter for their activities going forward. While they have no status in the current by-laws, they have a clear sense of purpose. The charter they worked on was brought to the Board for review and approval:

OUTDOOR MINISTRIES COMMITTEE CHARTER

WHAT IS OUR PURPOSE?

To partner with the congregations, children, youth, adults, and clergy of the Pacific Northwest Conference of the United Church of Christ for engagement with our camps in furtherance of our ongoing faith journeys. To develop programs and recruit leadership to live out that call in response to the needs of the moment.

WHAT IS OUR PLAN?

To collaborate with the Camp Managing Directors regarding the PNC conference-wide retreats, camps and other faith formation events at N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs. This includes the planning, promotion, coordination, implementation and evaluation of a yearly calendar and curriculum.

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

To develop and provide quality programs that support and enhance the work of our local churches.

To gather analytical information through surveys, evaluations and other feedback.

To conduct on-going discernment of our programs in order to:

** celebrate and enhance successes.*

** consider changes to program elements that no longer meet the needs of the conference or are no longer feasible.*

** partner with other PNC and outside groups to forward opportunities and maximize the successes.*

To assist Camp Managing Directors in identification of health and safety concerns affecting campers and volunteer program leaders.

To develop a trusted, vetted and diverse pool of volunteers to serve as camp program leaders.

(Footnote 1) Management, maintenance or oversight of camp property, staff, or finances is the operational responsibility of conference staff and PNC Board of Directors.

(Footnote 2) N-Sid-Sen and Pilgrim Firs Managing directors are members of the Outdoor Ministries Committee. They attend meetings and provide input to the OMC work and receive support from the OMC as noted above.

After discussion, it was Moved, Seconded, Passed that we accept this report.

The minutes of the meeting of January 5, 2025 were approved. (Moved, Seconded, Passed)

The letter from JWM

We began a lengthy discussion of a letter that had been received from the JWM. While our initial response had been to raise some questions about this letter, it was agreed that Amy would draft a response for our review. Phil, Indigo and Esther will consult on this and we all will review and discuss Amy's draft in the coming days.

General Synod Delegates

Indigo reported that we need two more General Synod Delegates and that the names would be forthcoming from MRC. She will poll the board in the next few days for approval of those nominated.

Next Meeting

Indigo will also poll the Board about time possibilities, but the next likely date seems to be

Tuesday, March 4, 2024 at 6:30 pm.

Another viable option is to begin a schedule of quarterly meetings held on Saturday for several hours. We need to reflect on this idea!

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Patterson, Scribe