Board Minutes 10_06_26

Pacific Northwest Conference Board of Directors Minutes October 6, 2026

Board Members Present: Sandy Wisecarver, Moderator; Dawn Koloi, Vice-Moderator; Diana Kutas, Treasurer; Edwin Galeai; Morag Stewart; Ron Patterson, Scribe; Leah Atkinson Bilinski; Amy Johnson; Ryan Lambert; Melanie Childers.

Staff: Acting Conference Minister, Lorraine Ciniceros; Mark Boyd, Executive Director, PNC Outdoor Ministries; Andy Warren, Conference Accountant.

Guests: Cindy Bauleke, Chair, COM West; Tom Miller, Chair, Stewardship Committee and other members of Stewardship who will join us later in the meeting.

Absent: Tevita Fakasiieiki

Excused: Demontrice Bigham

Opening Prayer was offered by Lorraine, who began by reminding us that we are entrusted with the ministry of the Conference. We cannot do this work alone. We are invited to trust one another and then to allow others to carry out their part of the work. Sometimes our first response is about us, rather than about the other. The 'I' can enable us to lose sight of the 'we'! She quoted Paul about the diverse parts of the body and our call to trust. We need to strengthen the whole body. She invites us all to pay attention to the 'I'; asking ourselves what the 'we' needs from me tonight. May that question shape our meeting. She then called upon God to bring us to fuller community and to call us to relationship.

Lorraine deferred the invisible backpack discussion to the upcoming Board retreat.

Sandy asked for the approval of the **minutes of September** as corrected. (Moved, Seconded, Passed).

Camp Reports

Mark called our attention to his written reports and reviewed some of what had been highlighted in them.

Dawn noted that some of the events on the camp schedule conflict with important Samoan church occasions, limiting the possibility of Samoan participation. Dawn agreed to work with Mark on the upcoming calendar.

In the search process for a new director at N-Sid-Sen, five candidates had been interviewed with two selected for further conversation. The job has now been offered to an individual who will accept the position pending a virtual tour of the housing at the camp. The other candidate is on hold.

The Outdoor Ministries Committee will meet next week and the Council of Stewards for both properties are scheduled to meet soon.

He reviewed events at N-Sid-Sen including new bookings. Warrior Path is increasing their usage of both camps. Ultra-Camp has been on the back burner.

ACM Report

Evangeline Weiss will be serving as a process consultant for the upcoming Annual meeting and for the Board Retreat.

Lorraine called our attention to her written report and invited dialogue about her concerns. We agreed to an Executive Session later in the meeting for further discussion.

Lorraine then briefly reviewed the congregations involved in Search and Call.

Financial Reports

Andy pointed out to the Board that the proposed update of our financial policies were posted for our review on Basecamp. These included updates and changes necessitated by the new Bylaws. They are consistent with the policies of the United Church of Christ Board. We agreed to review the posted document and be prepared to vote at our November meeting.

He informed us that he had taken the draw from the Pentecost Fund early this year to simplify the work of the incoming financial officer.

Noting that a fuller report had been posted in Basecamp, he presented this summary:

Fiscal Year ’27 to Date Conference Ministries income was $170,940, expenses were $162,856 for a FYTD profit of $8,084 which reflects the additional income from the Pentecost Fund draw.

Fiscal Year to Date N-Sid-Sen income was $341,961, expenses were $208,361 for a FYTD profit of $133,600. This is more than projected, but we are entering a period of lower income.

Fiscal Year to Date Pilgrim Firs income was $572,843 expenses were $362,685 for a FYTD profit of $210,138. This is above projection.

Andy attended an event by the UCC Pension Boards who are making changes in enrolment procedures. Andy will advise congregations of these changes that may impact their participation in the various plans offered.

Liaison Reports

Edwin reported that COLC had finalized the application form for grants.

Annual Meeting Planning Committee Report

The committee continues in their work. Evangeline Weiss will be our process consultant during the events connected with our annual gathering.

The Board paused to hold our Registrar, Beth Astarte, in prayers as she offers loving care to her mother.

Standing Committee Process

Leah reported that she is still working on how a committee can become a standing committee of the Conference, although the new Bylaws offer other possibilities and define standing committees as those dealing with the organization of the work of the Conference.

New business

The Board retreat will begin on Friday, November 13 with dinner at 6:30 pm. We will gather for worship after dinner and play games and build community. Lorraine will lead us on Saturday morning, November 14, and in the afternoon, we will catch-up on-Board work. All Board members will attend.

Nominations

The Nominating Committee recommends that Lois Farnsworth-Whysong and Susanne Sanderrson be elected to serve on COM East through the Annual Meeting. (Moved, Seconded, Passed)

Pre-Stewardship Conversation

Members of the Stewardship Committee will join us soon, so the Board began a discussion on the purpose of the Conference and the role of the Stewardship Committee. Some of the ideas were:

Purpose of Conference is to unveil the Kingdom of God by all means possible.

To support local churches.

To be transparent in their actions as a Board.

To speak out on social issues.

To resource congregations as we are able.

To be visible.

To build and celebrate the presence of the Spirit.

To recognize that we are stronger together.

To offer mutual support to congregations and their leaders.

To support our camps as a means of strengthening our congregations and their members.

To support the professional development of clergy through resources and programming.

To hold a vision of covenant as we offer God's welcome to all and listen to one another as we bear witness to justice.

To be a place where all are welcome and where we are woven together in one body.

To celebrate and protect God's creation. To be good stewards of the creation.

We noted that people are most willing to give if they are passionate about the cause.

What could a 'big ask' be?

Could we prepare a video in which we proclaimed some of these ideas?

Could a big ask be built around the need to support our congregations in providing reasonable health insurance options to clergy and staff? It was noted that the current UCC plan is out of reach for many of our clergy and staff.

More than ever before we need the voice of the UCC. Recognizing that we are part of a 'big tent' and that as our General Minister and President has said: it is a tent that follows God. Where are we being led? "The UCC at Seventy" will be organizing events about the 70th anniversary of the UCC.

Executive Session

Before we invited members of the Stewardship Committee to join the Board, it was agreed to have a brief Executive Session for the purpose of considering Lorraine's report to the Board.

It was Moved, Seconded and Passed to enter an Executive Session that would include all those present who had received the report.

It was Moved, Seconded, Passed to leave Executive Session

Other members of the Stewardship Committee, in addition to Tom Miller who had been present, joined us at this time. (Rev. Tara Barber, Claudia Farnsworth-Smith, Rev. Bill Maury-Holmes)

Diana, our Treasure, presented a summary of the discussion that Board had earlier in the meeting. It was agreed that building a cohesive statement from the items discussed so far is important, but how to act on these items is another issue. What would our elevator speech look like?

The need for supporting local congregations and their ministries and raising the money to undertake that support is of critical importance.

Are there priorities the Board would like the Stewardship Committee to consider as they plan next year's budget?

How can we best support local congregations who have specific needs that cannot be met in their own budgets? How do we best support and utilize our camps?

The Stewardship committee is asking the Board to recommend some priorities.

Social issues and supporting the vision of the UCC in these times might be one priority and a way to rally local congregations to a shared vision.

Another priority might be finding a way to support an alternative medical plan to help those congregations and those clergy unable to access health insurance.

As the Stewardship Committee is considering how to utilize recently received funds and what their recommendations might be, could investing in health insurance be a possibility? How could these new funding sources empower ministry and vitality?

Are there possibilities to employ a program person to lead creative programming at the camps and in the off season become a catalyst for programming to increase vitality in local congregations?

Tara noted that current Insurance assistance fund has been underutilized. We need to find ways to support this fund and call on people to use it.

Bill hopes for more proactive thinking around finding ways to support HUGS pastors, including ways to pay off student loans or providing housing support. This has downstream implications for the next generation of pastors.

What would funding that provided matching gifts from the Conference for specific items like loan repayment or health insurance, support look like?

How could we best support small rural congregations in our fundraising?

Members of the Stewardship committee expressed appreciation for the time together and the dialogue we began. Board members expressed similar sentiments.

It was noted that the Board plans to revise the new Bylaws to make sure that the Stewardship Committee has a chair other than the Treasurer.

Tom thanked the Board for taking the time to listen to the Stewardship Committee and the Board responded in kind.

Next Board Meeting: Tuesday, November 4, 2026 at 6:30 pm.

Amy offered a closing prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ron Patterson, Scribe