

## HIGHLAND HILLS UNIFIED BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

**ATTENDANCE:** Brian Austen, Rebekah Chevalier, Shawn Chevalier, Neil Darby, Erskine Flook, Janet Heffer, Bruce McClennan, Debbie Sherwin, Pat Thornett, Rev. Max Ward, Barbara Walford-Davis, Marybeth Wilson

**Regrets:** Joan Chapple

Rev. Max opened with prayer.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

**Motion:** Erskine Flook/Neil Darby moved and seconded the approval of the agenda as amended with an addition under new business. **Carried.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** of Oct. 4, 2023, Unified Board meeting.

**Motion:** Rebekah Chevalier/ Barbara Walford-Davis moved and seconded acceptance. **Carried.**

### Business Conducted Via Email:

**Motion:** Moved and seconded by Shawn Chevalier/ Bruce McClennan to approve the renewal of the Fee for Service Contract for Shared Ministry with Hope United Church for the six-month period from January 1, 2024 to June 30, 2024. **Carried.**

### BUSINESS ARISING

#### Remit 1 re: Autonomous Indigenous Organization

There was discussion of the history of the Indigenous Church, the impact on the Indigenous Church if we do not pass the remit, the issue of how the Indigenous Church is financed, the need to approve the remit without knowing the structure, and the reasons for the remit.

**Motion:** Barbara Walford-Davis /Debbie Sherwin moved and seconded the approval of Remit 1 regarding the Autonomous Indigenous Organization. **Carried** unanimously.

**Correspondence:** Barbara Millington sent a letter saying she had reviewed the financial records for the pastoral charge and HHUC for the year 2022 and that bill payments and deposits to the bank were complete, well organized and accurate.

### PASTORAL CHARGE

**Chair:** Janet Heffer gave a brief report.

**Clergy:** Rev. Max Ward had sent a report in advance (attached). Shawn Chevalier commended Max on the legwork required to find pulpit supply.

**Pastoral Care:** Marybeth Wilson reported that there are some changes in the callers and things are going well.

**Treasurer and Finance:** Erskine Flook had emailed a report on finances in advance (attached). Regarding HHUC 2023 and 2024, he reported that we are doing better because the arrangement with Hope United was not taken into account. However, a year's worth of contributions from Hope United will be taken into account in the 2024 budget. The 2024 budget also includes payroll increases, and the rest of the numbers are similar to 2023.

There is a small surplus, as Erskine has been working toward ensuring that there will be enough to cover a month's worth of expenses in the bank account.

**Motion:** Erskine Flook/ Shawn Chevalier that the 2024 budget for Highland Hills United Church as presented to the Board be presented to the congregation for approval. **Carried.**

Erskine spoke to the HHUC General Fund actuals to Nov. 30, 2023. Line 4200 includes a \$5,000 bequest from an estate. Fundraising for the general fund is \$0 this year given the focus on fundraising for the lift, but it will be \$5,000 in the 2024 budget. Line 5014 includes \$180 for piano tuning. Erskine also noted that now that we have a lift, we need a service contract. This contract had to be paid in 2023 before they started construction, at a cost of \$2,200. The 2024 budget includes the service contract fee for 2025. He noted that the shortfall for 2023 was covered by a transfer from capital funds.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded by Erskine Flook/ Brian Austen that the 2024 budget for Highland Hills Pastoral Charge as presented to the Board be presented to the congregation for approval. **Carried.**

We have monies in the building fund, storage fund, and lift fund. Erskine said that for the lift, he would like to first use the money that's in the building fund and the storage fund to bring those down to 0 rather than showing a deficit to the general fund. He would like to do the same with the memorial fund, which is under the purview of the trustees. This does not touch the Kirkwood Fund.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded by Erskine Flook/ Neil Darby that the funds for the lift come first out of the building fund and the storage fund and then the lift fund. **Carried.**

There was discussion that the building fund should still continue to be included. A question was asked as to whether the monies raised for the lift fund are tracked separately and whether they can be shown, and the answer is yes.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded by Erskine Flook/ Rebekah Chevalier that HHUC and pastoral charge financial reports be accepted. **Carried.**

**Ministry and Personnel:** Shawn Chevalier had emailed a report in advance (attached).

**Manse:** There was nothing to report.

**Maple Lake Trustees Report and Update:** Rev. Max's clergy report covered this. There is a conditional offer of \$125,000 for residential use. Conditions for parking and rezoning are outstanding but expected to be cleared.

**Worship/Pulpit Supply/CE:** Janet reviewed the services for the rest of the month. She will ensure there is an ad in the newspaper for the Christmas Eve service. Pulpit supply is covered for 2024.

**Outreach:** Pat Thornett had emailed a report in advance (attached).

**Nominations:** Janet and Erskine are still looking for suggestions of people to fill vacancies. It was recommended that if Board members want to make a change in their own commitment to let Erskine and Janet know.

## **ACCEPTANCE OF HHPC REPORTS**

**Motion:** Barbara Walford-Davis/ Marybeth Wilson moved and seconded the acceptance of all committee reports. **Carried.**

### **HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS**

**ECORC:** Debbie Sherwin said ECORC has been putting on a number of workshops. She attended one on anti-racism. The Council's strategic plan is evolving. The Flourishing workshop was very inspiring.

**Trustees:** Bruce McClennan reported that there are two accounts within Canaccord, one of which is the Kirkwood Fund, which is invested in GICs. The other account is also invested in low-risk investments primarily. The income from these accounts will increase over the next year. Ross McMullen, Bruce and Erskine met with our Canaccord financial advisor. It was agreed to set aside \$30,000 in a money market account that can be accessed quickly for the lift expenses. Our insurance provider, HUB, has not been responding to inquiries. Bruce will continue to pursue this. Bruce noted that there was the need to add another trustee, particularly to help in dealings with Canaccord. He was pleased to report that Erskine Flook has agreed to become a trustee.

**Property:** Neil Darby said that for nominations, Zoltan Barabas has agreed to come on the property committee for 2024.

**Stewardship/Fundraising:** This will be addressed under Lift Fundraising.

**UCW:** Pat Thornett had emailed a report in advance (attached). Concern was raised regarding the level of cleaning being done by the caretaker and questions were asked about the caretaker's responsibilities. Neil has raised this with the caretaker previously and will bring this matter to the attention of the caretaker again.

### **ACCEPTANCE OF HIGHLAND HILLS UNITED CHURCH REPORTS**

**Motion:** Rebekah Chevalier/ Neil Darby moved and seconded acceptance of the reports. **Carried.**

### **NEW CHARGE BUSINESS**

**Lift Financing and Fundraising:** Erskine reported that to date we have received over \$7,000 in receipted gifts and \$1,300 through the CanadaHelps website. Our fundraising activities have resulted in \$7,186. There are only a few cookbooks left. \$15,664 has been raised to date.

**Manse Proposal:** Rev. Max and Amanda Austin had recently presented a proposal to Janet that they buy the manse. Janet, Erskine, Brian, Shawn, and Bruce had an initial discussion, and a number of questions arose. Bruce contacted ECORC and reported that The United Church of Canada is encouraging congregations to sell their manses and instead pay a housing allowance. There is a protocol for selling the manse. During his conversation with his contact at ECORC he also learned of new investment opportunities. The five who met are seeking approval in principle to investigate this matter more thoroughly.

It was noted that the proposal made it clear that Rev. Max and Amanda plan to continue to stay in the community long term. There were comments noting the difficulties that arise if clergy or others who are provided with housing are not able to contemplate buying a home until they retire.

**Motion:** Erskine Flook/ Barbara Walford-Davis moved and seconded that the group of five be tasked with investigating this matter, including financials, and preparing a recommendation on the sale of the manse to come back to the Board. **Carried.**

**Flourishing workshop report:** Marybeth reported on the workshop attended by five from our pastoral charged. The Moderator, the Right Rev. Dr. Carmen Lansdowne, has been hosting these workshops across the country. She said she appreciated the chance to get a sense of the wider church. Participants were invited as individuals, churches and the wider community to delve into flourishing. They did work there and took tasks back with them. The tone was one of optimism. Discussion included living “above the line” (being open) and “below the line” (being closed). Highland Hills has an above the line optimism. Participants were asked to consider whether they think over the next 10 years that things will mostly stay the same or be dramatically different. They envisioned what it means to flourish, thinking on a grand scale. Marybeth shared two quotes and invited us as a Board and as a congregation to hold them in our minds and our spirits: “Hope is productive.” “If better is possible, then good is not good enough.”

**Dee Wruth’s laptop:** Erskine noted that Dee has a laptop computer at home that is her own, but she often does church business on it. One of the software programs is not working, and the reason may be an expired subscription to Microsoft Office. If that is the case, the suggestion is to cover the subscription for her laptop at a cost of about \$100 a year.

**Motion:** Moved and seconded by Erskine Flook/ Barbara Walford-Davis that we cover the cost of the Microsoft subscription. **Carried.**

**Lift update:** Neil reported that we have to put in a separate phone line to the lift. We have to go to Bell to get them to put in a separate line and a different phone. NFTC, the church’s current phone provider, does not cover this technology. Neil will be following up on this.

**Next meetings:** The date of the Annual General Meeting date was set for Sunday, Feb. 11, 2024. The next Board meeting was set for Wednesday, Jan. 24, at 1:30 p.m.

As an addendum it was noted there is now a new sign for a designated parking spot for Melissa.

Rev. Max closed the meeting with a prayer. Marybeth moved adjournment.

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Chair, Janet Heffer

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Secretary, Rebekah Chevalier