

Illinois Mennonite Conference
Annual Business Meeting Minutes
February 15, 2020. 9:45 am
Menno Haven Camp and Retreat Center

I. Gathering and Opening

- a. Gathering singing was led by Phil Kaufmann.
- b. David Miller was introduced as IMC's acting Conference Minister – serving since September 2019. David shared several things regarding his lifelong ministry in the Mennonite Church and his new role serving with IMC. Darrel Miler, as moderator, noted that IMC is breaking somewhat new ground by engaging a conference minister on a part time basis and someone from outside its pool of IMC pastors.
- c. Darrel highlighted a few experiences across the conference over the past year. Most recent and dramatic was an accident on I-80 involving the van carrying youth from Living Water on their way to the high school retreat at Menno Haven 4 weeks earlier.
- d. David Miller led in prayers of thanksgiving for no serious injuries to the young people from Living Water, for the Spirit working among IMC churches, and a prayer for the Lord to guide and direct our meeting that day.

II. Budget Discussion

- a. Congregational giving for the last year (\$114,000) was up slightly while expenses (\$57,000) were \$42,000 lower. The large drop in expenses was due to not having a conference minister for 3 months after Steve Slagel ended his tenure as interim, and then moving to a part time conference minister model. Ending IMC's relationship with Summit accounting also saved a few thousand dollars.
- b. With Bethany (administrative assistant) able to use Quick Books and by not using Summit's system, it is easier for IMC to use the First Fruits system and "pass through" congregations' giving to Mennonite agencies.
- c. The proposed spending plan would be considered after lunch.

III. Credentialing Discussion

- a. Darrel Miller reviewed the history of the 2017 IMC leadership statement of credentialing practices in relation to same sex marriage and churches' responses to that statement.
- b. Jacob Landis and David Miller offered guidance for how delegates might engage each other in sharing viewpoints. David prayed for our discussions.
- c. Darrel presented a credentialing proposal from the MLT which was a restatement of the 2017 practices. Curt Fenton presented an alternate credentialing proposal from the CLT. Darrel responded to the CLT proposal.
- d. David led an exercise of delegates talking together about the proposals in pairs and then in groups of two pairs.

Lunch Break

IV. Spending Plan Proposal

A motion was approved to add \$3,000 to the budget under a new line item, "IMC Connecting and Discerning", to facilitate inter-congregational dialogue.

ACTION I: approved the 2020-21 spending plan as revised.

V. Slate of Leadership Nominations

Current MLT, CLT, and GDC members were recognized. Nominated members were introduced: MLT – Lyle Bohnert - Lombard, Patty Yordy – North Suburban, Eric Nafziger -Hopedale
CLT - Anne Munley - North Suburban, Curt Fenton – Hopedale, Jolene Miller - Roanoke
Action II: approved the slate of leadership candidates presented.

VI. Reports

- a. Michael Danner, representing MCUSA, informed the delegates of several discussions and directions at MCUSA.
- b. Associate Conference Minister, Martin Navarro, reported on issues affecting Hispanic congregations. Of course, federal actions regarding individuals' immigration status is a huge issue. It is even a considerable risk for Hispanic church members to simply travel to a meeting like ours today because they risk being stopped and detained for various immigration reasons. IMC helped 2 Hispanic pastors qualify for Lily grants over the past year.
- c. Speaking for Roanoke Mennonite, Jolene Miller asked congregations to talk with sister congregations if they know of anyone in that congregation who they know to have abused individuals in their past. Lyle Miller, representing Everence, informed us that Everence supports churches in protecting children, teens and vulnerable adults from harm with their Safe Church Grant. This grant provides assistance for costs they incur to keep people in their care safe from sexual or other forms of abuse. It's not a matching grant, so churches can be reimbursed for up to the \$350 spent in the last 12 months. The grant can be used to develop policies, train people, or implement programs within their church ministries. More information is at <https://www.everence.com/living-the-values/grants-and-scholarships-and-awards>.

VII Resumed Discussions of Credentialing Proposals

- a. David Miller resumed directing discussions of the credentialing proposals. Each congregation was invited to make a brief statement regarding the proposals. Then individuals were invited to share 4 minutes statements.
- b. Well into this time of speaking and listening, some delegates asked that the stated rules of order for the meeting be suspended so options other than the two prepared credentialing proposals could be considered. David made a motion to suspend the rules of order.

ACTION III: motion to suspend rules of order for the meeting approved by show of hands.

- c. Some delegates said they were not ready for a vote on these proposals at this meeting. A show of hands regarding whether to proceed with a vote on the proposals was inconclusive.
- d. There was a motion that the moderator, Darrel Miller, be replaced by a person to be chosen by the Gifts Discernment Team. David stepped down from leading the discussion and Darrel resumed chairing the meeting.

ACTION IV: motion to replace moderator failed (13 affirmed, 34 opposed, 9 abstained)

- e. Delegates decided to table the MLT proposal and vote on the CLT proposal. (Leadership had prepared for delegates to vote on both credentialing proposals by ballot.) Because it was late in the day, delegates agreed to vote by a show of hands.

ACTION V: approved CLT proposal on credentialing (49 affirmed, 15 opposed)

Phil Kaufmann led us in a closing song. David Miller led all in a closing prayer.

By MLT/CLT