

**The Presbytery of Elizabeth
Minutes of Council
April 13 MMX**

Attendance:

Ministers present:

Rob Martin (Crescent Avenue), Committee on Ministry, chair
Howard Bryant (HR), Moderator of Presbytery
Roberta Arrowsmith (Connecticut Farms), Cte on Preparation for Ministry, co-chair
Lawrence Finn (MaL), Evangelism and Church Vitality Unit, chair
John Howard (Siloam-Hope), At-large, Vice-chair of Council

Elders present:

Judy Wussler (Fanwood), Synod of the Northeast
Gerard Nelson (Liberty Corner), Trustees of Presbytery, chair
Jack Paddon (Liberty Corner), Outreach and Social Concerns Unit, Co-chair
Susie Krivenko (Rahway First), Vice-Moderator of Presbytery
Betty Prezzy Bryant (Third-Westminster), Nominating Committee, chair
Helen Mosley (Siloam-Hope), Education and Discipleship Unit
Sue Gieser (Westminster), Council chair
Barbara McLaughlan (Westfield), Former-Moderator

Present *ex officio*:

Dave Bomgaars (Central), Treasurer of Presbytery
Paul Rack (Bethlehem), Stated Clerk
Sara Burke (Westfield), Administrative Assistant
Greg Albert, Interim Executive Presbyter

Also present:

Dottie Morris (SM), Committee on Preparation for Ministry
Karen Chamis (Roselle), Greystone Legacy Committee

Excused/absent.

Peter Hofstra (Perth Amboy), Stewardship Committee, chair
George Curtis (Basking Ridge), Personnel Committee, chair
Amy Aaroe (Cranford), Presbyterian Women, President
Alan Ford (Bethlehem), General Assembly Council
Jeffrey Wildrick (Dunellen), At-large
Brenda Johnson (Siloam-Hope), Committee on Representation, chair
Warren Braunwarth (Central), At-large

Minutes:

The regular monthly meeting of the Council of Elizabeth Presbytery was held on Tuesday, April 13, 2010, at the United Presbyterian Church, in Plainfield.

The meeting was opened at 4:03 pm (EDT) with devotional time by Paul Rack.

The Council **VOTED** to approve the distributed agenda for today's meeting.

The Council **VOTED** to approve the distributed Minutes of the February 9, 2010, Council meeting.

Council Chair.

Sue welcomed the representatives from the Synod. She also reminded Council members about their written reports. Items for Council business need to be in her hands before the Pre-Council meeting (which is a week prior to Council), if they are to make it onto the Council agenda.

Treasurer's Report.

Dave Bomgaars reported that \$29K is yet to come in if we are to make our mission budget, which we should be able to make if 29 more churches pledge as expected. The Council **VOTED** to receive this report.

Synod of the Northeast Mission Team.

Sue introduced Mary Lynne Flowers and Flo Fletcher, representatives from the Synod of the Northeast. In 2006 the synod was entirely restructured, reducing staff and moving to two executives. The idea was to "spread the wealth" and get more hands-on interaction with the presbyteries. Five PPGs (Presbytery Partnership Groups) were instituted, intending that each try to work collaboratively and develop their own sense of calling. Finally, the intention was to have local issues addressed more directly by the Synod. The appearance of synod representatives before Council now is part of the evaluation process. They raised four questions to which Council responded.

1) Is the PPG structure effective?

Some members of Council didn't know or couldn't answer; others showed some involvement and knowledge of our PPG and initiatives it is funding. The current grouping of presbyteries may be too large geographically. Being our own NJ Synod might be a workable idea.

2) How is the Holy Spirit leading the presbytery?

There is a sense that the presbytery is in a "between" time. Our congregations need a more fruitful sense of connection to each other and to the presbytery.

3) What does the Synod do well?

Synod supports us when we need it. Examples were: Early Ministry Institute; Campus Ministry; Council of Churches; and building loans. Synod could do better in training participants in committees.

4) What could the Synod do that presbyteries cannot?

Presbytery boundary issues were mentioned, both in terms of transferring churches and a general revision of presbytery boundaries.

Discussion Items:

1. Greystone Legacy Oversight Committee.

Karen Chamis reported on behalf of the committee. They would like to reconstitute themselves and let the presbytery know where they are right now. They want to be lodged under Council, with membership appointed by Council.

The committee has been plagued by both scheduling difficulties and infighting. New membership should have an ability to look at the larger picture and not have as much at stake in the decision.

There seems to be some discrepancy between the AC report and the implementing motions approved by presbytery.

The Council **VOTED** to bring the motion to presbytery.

2. Nominating Committee.

Betty reported that there are many vacancies, especially major unit chairs, and she encouraged all Council members to identify people who might be good to serve in these capacities.

3. Special Nominating Committee.

The Council needs to elect three of its own to meet as the Special Nominating Committee, which nominates members of the Nominating Committee. The Council **VOTED** to elect John Howard, Susie Krivenko, and Howard Bryant as the Special Nominating Committee.

4. Phone System Upgrade.

A proposal was presented that we purchase an Avaya telephone system for the office. This system will enable the Interim Executive to stay more easily in touch with the presbytery when he is out of the office. It is anticipated to cost \$6135.59. The Council **VOTED** to approve this expenditure.

5. *Nuevas Fronteras*.

Nuevas Fronteras is still technically a fellowship. They have never been officially made a New Church Development. Since they are already talking about being a chartered church, and they are getting NCD grant money, we need at least to make them an NCD, on the books. COM will work on appointing an organizing pastor. The Council **VOTED** to recommend to presbytery that *Nuevas Fronteras* be registered as an NCD.

6. NCDC/ECVU.

Lawrence Finn brought a motion for presbytery which would semi-merge the NCDC with the ECVU. The unit would have the powers of the commission, when it functioned as such.

The Council **VOTED** to recommend to the presbytery that the NCDC be dissolved, and the NCD oversight functions be delegated to ECVU, which it may use when “acting as a commission” of presbytery. These responsibilities will include mainly things like permission to celebrate sacraments, but will not include the authority to charter the congregation.

7. AA.

The Council **VOTED** to invite Al Hein, an elder from the Westfield church to speak to presbytery in May on the Alcoholics Anonymous organization and its purpose.

8. Global Mission and Peacemaking.

The GM&P Committee wants to do a Consultation Hour and special gathering on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

After a discussion concerning fairness, balance, and equal time for differing views, Council **VOTED** to have the consultation include both sides at one meeting. The Council **VOTED** to allow the GM&PC to hold this Consultation Hour.

9. Preaching at Presbytery.

The Council **VOTED** to have Greg Albert serve as semi-permanent preacher at presbytery meetings, except for June, for the term of Greg’s covenant, in consultation with WATT.

10. Next Council Meeting.

The Council **VOTED** to meet again on May 11.

Interim Executive Presbyter.

1. Greg mentioned the ecumenical Revive! program in Trenton, June 11-13, on social justice.
2. Greg recommended that we read *The Fly in the Ointment: Why Denominations Aren't Helping Their Congregations*, and that we spend about 20 minutes in each Council meeting to discuss it. The Council **VOTED** to buy the books for each Council member and schedule the time at each Council meeting for this discussion.

Administrative Assistant.

Sara Burke invited the Council to the Administrative Professionals' Day celebration at United church on April 20.

Reports.

CPM – Jonathan Williams is moving from learner to seeker in the CLP process.

EDU – Helen presented the brochure for the educational event this coming Saturday.

OSCU – Jack listed proposed grants to outside ministries; New Hope Initiative grant requests are coming in. The Council **VOTED** to receive this listing of beneficiaries. It will be reported to presbytery among the expenditures in the report of the Treasurer.

Personnel Committee – The report will be referred to the next meeting as it included significant items with little time for reflection.

Synod – Judy mentioned the upcoming PPG meeting and invited people to bring any concerns to them ahead of time.

ECVU – The Council **VOTED** to have the presbytery view the DVD, "Deep and Wide" at the May meeting. It will take 15 minutes.

The Council **VOTED** to adjourn at 6:08 pm (EDT).

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