

**Shalom Mennonite Church
Commission Chair Team
Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2024**

The Commission Chair Team convened on November 11, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. EST via Zoom. Present were Frank Kandel, Pastor Brian Bither, Pastor Craig Oury, Brittany Bither, Carol Bixler, Linda Showalter, Mike Wigginton, Robert (Bob) Love, and Nizeet Deiter.

Introduction

Frank opened the meeting with an icebreaker, asking team members about their reactions to the election outcomes. Following this, he initiated the meeting with a reading of Psalm 23.

Next Meeting

- **Date:** Tuesday, January 14, 2025

Review of the 2025 Shalom Mennonite Church Budget Recommendations

Bob, the treasurer, reported that the budget deficit decreased from \$23,397 to \$13,324 as of November 10. While reduced, the deficit remains a concern.

1. Dissemination of Deficit

- Discussion: CCT members discussed strategies to inform the congregation about the deficit.
- Recommendation: Increase communication about the deficit and the need for higher giving during Sunday Service.
- Conclusion: Instead of a direct request during Sunday Service, the congregation will be notified of an important discussion at the December 8th Congregational Budget Meeting, encouraging them to read related emails or pick up a hard copy of the information.

2. Outreach Commission Budget Review

- Most of the current budget is consistent with previous years, except for decreasing the Meseret Kristos Seminary (MKS) contribution and a \$0 allocation for Faith in Indiana.
- Suggestions:
 - The Mennonite Disaster Service budget was noted as potentially high.
 - Clarification: Pastor Brian confirmed that all involved were consulted and agreed on the budget.
 - Focus on outreach programs with active congregational participation.

- Conclusion: Due to MKS's shift from a liberal arts college to a biblical seminary a recommendation will be made to make the MKS support equal the AMBS support.

3. **Discipling Commission Budget Review**

- It was suggested to address financial contributions for youth conventions through family payments, scholarships, or fundraising efforts.
- Conclusion: Different models for funding youth activities will be considered next year by the Discipling Commission, pending congregational approval.

4. **Worship Commission Budget Review**

- The budget for AI-enabled earbuds to assist with multilingual interpretation was well-received.
- Nursery Supplies will remain at \$200, with an additional chair possibly being purchased.
- Clarification: The \$450 allocated for Outside Speakers does not include Black History Month speakers, which will be covered by the Discipling Commission.

5. **Community Life Commission Budget Review**

- Discussion about reducing the budget for flowers for various occasions.
- Conclusion: Suggestion to set the budget of transportation to \$0.

6. **Administration Commission Budget Review**

- Church Cleanliness: Discussions took place regarding informing Iglesia Amigos about cleaning responsibilities.
 - Process: Pastor Craig will be the point of contact for cleanliness concerns. He then will let the Administration Commission members know.
- Cost-Saving Measures: Potential savings in the Telephone and Internet budget due to a provider change.
- Conclusion: The decision is to set the MC USA Convention budget at \$3,000, which will cover expenses for one delegate and one pastor.

7. **Other**

- 2025 Pastoral Sabbatical: It was suggested that a transition to full-time be made to cover responsibilities during upcoming sabbaticals.
- Budget Reduction Considerations: Certain line items, such as decreasing the Outreach Commission and the Transportation of the Community Life Commission.

**Note: Pastor Brian, Pastor Craig, and Brittany exited the meeting for discussions involving potential conflicts of interest.*

8. **Vision & Accountability Budget Review**

- Salary and Insurance: A proposed 2.5% salary increase with full health insurance coverage was recommended. While the salary increase is modest, CCT members stated that this decision is due to the budget deficit and not a reflection of the pastors' performance. Both pastors received outstanding evaluations from the congregation.
- Differences in health insurance between the 2024 and 2025 budgets were reviewed.
- Conclusion: It was suggested to inform the congregation that, given the budget deficit, the CCT members deemed the 2.5% salary raise with full insurance coverage appropriate.

Main Conclusions

- A total of 6% increase for 2025 budget will be recommended, if congregation members feel that the proposed budget increase is not feasible, Bob will identify specific budget line items that could potentially be reduced and communicate these options to the congregation.
- Next Steps: Bob will make the suggested budget changes and send them to the commission chairs on November 12, 2024. He will also announce the importance of the Congregational Budget Meeting on December 8th, urging members to review the related emails or pick up a hard copy.

Next Meeting

The next Commission Chair Team Meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at 6:30 pm EST via Zoom.**

Adjournment

Frank expressed gratitude to Bob for leading the budget discussion and thanked everyone for their support and contributions, acknowledging the presence of the Holy Spirit during the meeting. He then adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m. EST.

Recorded by Nizeet Deiter