

American Baptist Churches of New York State  
Board of Mission Meeting  
September 9, 2023

**Present**

**Officers**

Lecia Rodriguez - President  
Leon Runner – Vice-President  
Bruce Aikin – Secretary  
Jim Harriff – Treasurer

**At-Large**

Elizabeth Fell-Dewalt  
Claudia Little  
Howard Maxson  
Delma West (Committee on Ministry)

**Association Reps**

Gregory Staples CABA  
David Harris IR  
Michael Dickinson LW  
William Stoklosa MA  
Letta Palmer MO  
Walter Hargrove NI  
Edris Hitchcock WE

**Staff**

James Kelsey - Executive Minister  
Mary Schwarz - Administrative Assistant  
Stephanie Schneider, AB Youth

**Auxiliary Organizations**

Colleen Charsky (ABWM)

1.0 The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM, by the President, Lecia Rodriguez.

2.0 There were 13 Board members and three Staff members present.  
Devotions and Opening Prayer – Walter Hargrove gave a Devotion based on Colossians 2:2, “Knit It Together in Love.” He then opened the meeting with prayer.

3.0 Approval of Agenda (Document #1) –

A change was made to the Agenda: Under New Business, the Dissolution of Churches Proposal was removed. The Agenda was approved as changed.

4.0 The Minutes of the June 9, 2023, meeting were approved as submitted. (Document #2).

**Reports**

5.0 Executive Minister - Jim Kelsey (Document #3)

The sale of the Wappingers Falls parsonage was approved by the NYS Attorney General’s office. The sale was finalized and we received \$349,525.81 at closing.

Our attorney will file a petition to dissolve the Wappingers Falls church and transfer the property to us. The appraisal was for \$300,000.00. The petition is to declare the church an extinct congregation. We will give away as much of the

contents as possible and donate what is left to charity. An answer should be received from the NYS Attorney General in 60 to 90 days.

Attached to Jim's report is a Real Estate Expense Detail sheet. To date we have spent \$21,231.49. The total expenses are expected to be about \$25,000.00.

Jim wanted to postpone the action on removing West Baptist and Ilion from our rolls until he has time to have conversations with these churches.

One of the pending lawsuits under the NYS Child Victims Act has been delayed because a defendant has filed an additional action against a third party.

#### 6.0 AB Youth Convention – Stephanie Schneider (Document #8)

The promotional materials for the Convention will be sent out today, September 9<sup>th</sup>.

The safety policy will be implemented. All adult leaders will have background checks.

The safety policy will not be posted on our website.

Attendees will bring their own blankets.

There will be a discussion on Loneliness for Mental Health.

The project for this year is to raise \$9,000.00 to resettle seven refugees.

Volunteers are still needed.

There will be a lot of changes this year. November 10 to 12 is a three-day holiday weekend. The new venue is the Crowne Plaza Hotel in downtown Syracuse.

Stephanie will be attending a program at Valley Forge sponsored by the AB Home Mission Societies in October. She will report on it at the next Board meeting.

#### 7.0 Treasurer – Jim Harriff discussed the financial reports.

#### 7.1 January through August 2023 General Fund Profit and Loss Snapshot (Document #4)

The United Mission giving is coming in slowly. It should be at 66%; this report shows 55.7%. The America for Christ Offering and the Regional Offering are doing well. The Honorarium income is doing well. Line 41100, the Multi-Region Distribution, only shows two payments.

#### 7.2 January through August 2023 General Fund Profit and Loss Detail (Document #5)

The shortfall to date is \$63,610.60.

#### 7.3 January through August 2023 Total Ministry Profit and Loss (Document #6)

Line 44359 Estate/Annuity Proceeds \$349,525.81, due to sale of Wappingers Falls parsonage. The Net Income was \$251,125.15.

7.4 Balance Sheet as of August 31, 2023 (Document #7)

Line 11531 shows the Evangelism Savings available for use by churches.

The Reserve Fund shows a balance of \$396,629.76. It was recommended that we move \$300,000.00 to our AB Foundation Reserve Fund from the sale of the Wappinger Falls parsonage. Our assets are up due to this sale. We should keep \$50,000.00 in the line 15100 Reserve Fund.

It was moved by Colleen Charsky and seconded by Bill Stoklosa that we move \$300,000.00 from our Reserve Fund at Chase Bank to the AB Foundation Unrestricted Reserve Fund. Motion carried.

## Reports

8.0 AB Men – No report.

9.0 AB Women’s Ministries – No report.

Colleen Charsky submitted a written report.  
She highlighted the webinars on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

10.0 Ministers Council – Howard Maxson for Patricia Ludwig  
September 24 to 26, the Rev. Adam Russell-Taylor from Sojourners Magazine will speak about social justice.

11.0 Presentation by Linda Cassel and Kristine Lutton of the American Baptist Foundation - Strengthening Your Financial Future

This program is about Creative Stewardship, What, How and Why do people give to a church. Formulate a Vision to transform Ministry Objectives. Turn Communication into a powerful catalyst. Create marketing materials. End of year giving – you have to be intentional in asking for donations. Celebration of donors, have a Legacy Sunday. Many people now like to give while they are still living instead of bequests in their wills. To work on this program a committee of three to five people is needed.

12.0 ABCUSA General Board – No report due to Merle McJunkin being ill.

13.0 Lay Study Program – Leon Oaks-Lee (Document #9)  
The fall courses are starting this month.

14.0 Committee on Ministry – Delma West (Document #10)

The proposed changes to the Ordination Handbook were presented. The motion to accept the changes is from the Committee. The motion was carried.

- 15.0 Vick/Pathfinder Camping and Conference Ministries – (Document #11)  
Claudia Little is now attending meetings as our representative.

**Old Business**

- 16.0 People are asking about the mission trip to Community Missions in Niagara Falls.
- 17.0 The trip to Rwanda is on hold.
- 18.0 There are several international missionaries visiting the Region. They are Dan Chetti, Matt and Lori Mann and Tim Long.
- 19.0 Leon Runner said it is time to form the planning committee for the Biennial Meeting. Jim Kelsey will recommend some people. Jim Kelsey, Mary Schwarz and Leon are on the committee.
- 20.0 It was moved by Leon Runner and seconded by Delma West that we will participate in the Strengthening Your Financial Future program of the AB Foundation. Motion carried.
- 21.0 Reflections – none were offered.
- 22.0 Future Meeting Dates
- Executive Committee meetings will be held by Zoom. The November meeting will be hybrid as it is the budget meeting.  
November 16 Thursday
- Board of Mission meetings will be hybrid.  
December 8 Friday.
- All meetings will begin at 10:00 A.M.
- 23.0 The meeting was adjourned at 12:17 P.M.

Minutes taken by  
Bruce D. Aikin  
ABCNYS Secretary