

American Baptist Churches of New York State
Board of Mission Meeting
Provisional Minutes - September 11, 2021

Present:

Officers:

Wendy Depew Partelow - President
Lecia Rodriguez - Vice President (Zoom)
Bruce Aikin - Secretary
Jim Harriff - Treasurer

Association Reps:

Keith Griffin AD and V/P Camp. (Zoom)
Claudia Little AC (Zoom)
Marlene Ciranowicz BT (Zoom)
Phyllis Fox IR (Zoom)
Michael Dickinson LW (Zoom)
Dan Saulsgiver MA (Zoom)
Walter Hargrove NI (Zoom)
Aleka Schmidt WE (Zoom)

At-Large:

Jeanne Bennett (Zoom)
Lillian Cabral
Gregory Johnson (Zoom)
Patricia Ludwig
Leon Runner (Zoom)

Staff:

James Kelsey - Exec. Min.
Mary Schwarz - Admin. Asst.

Auxiliary Organizations:

Grace Kelley-Neal (ABWM) (Zoom)

- 1.0 The meeting was called to order at 10:00 AM, by the President, Wendy Depew Partelow.
 There were 18 Board members and 2 Staff members present. Thirteen of those present were on Zoom.
 She welcomed the members and asked them to share joys and prayer concerns. These will be incorporated in the opening prayer. Several concerns and joys were shared.

- 2.0 Devotions and Opening Prayer – Patricia Ludwig thanked Jim Kelsey and Jerrod Hugenot for their writing on September 11th in the recent *Region Notes*, dated September 10th. She spoke about Jesus walking on the water in Matthew 14:22-33. We think about Peter and forget the eleven disciples in the boat. It is good to get new members and have missions outside of the church but we need to remember the people who are already in church. She then gave the opening prayer for the meeting and included the joys and concerns expressed.

- 3.0 Approval of Agenda (Document #1) –
 We need to replace Tom Tharp as the representative from WEGO. It was moved by Greg Johnson and seconded by Jim Kelsey that Aleka Schmidt be elected as the delegate from WEGO. Motion carried.
 The Agenda was approved as amended.

- 4.0 The Minutes of the June 4, 2021, Board of Mission meeting (Document #2) were approved as submitted.

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Reports:

5.0 Executive Minister - Jim Kelsey (Document #3)

Any church which needs to prove its 501(c)(3) status should register with Iris Cobb at the ABCUSA Office of the General Secretary at Valley Forge.

Jim reviewed his written report.

One of the lawsuits has moved to the discovery phase. Traveler's Insurance is paying all of the lawyer's fees so far. The third lawsuit is being paid for by Church Mutual Insurance. If there is a judgement in any of the cases the insurance company will decide how much it will pay. He made correction on page 4 of his report: there have been 11,000 suits filed under the NYS Child Victims Act, not 6,000.

As noted on page 5, the money from the sale of the Waterford United Church was put in the wrong account. The money can always be moved after a decision by the Board of Mission.

It was moved by Dan Saulsgiver and seconded by Claudia Little that Jim Kelsey select a person to form a committee to plan an online mission conference in January of 2022. Motion carried.

It was moved by Lillian Cabral and seconded by Marlene Ciranowicz that up to \$2,000.00 from the AB Youth portion of the ABCNYS Ministry and Mission Fund be used to subsidize COVID precautions for the AB Youth Convention in November. Motion carried. Keith Griffin abstained from voting because he is on the ABY Adult Advisory Committee.

When the Nehemiah Leadership Network was dissolved ABCNYS got \$4,377.62. It was moved by Greg Johnson and seconded by Lecia Rodriguez that this money be used to fund the Lay Study Program. This will last four or five years. A sustainable plan for the program needs to be developed. Motion carried.

A question was raised about the Executive Minister's salary package. He will go on Medicare in November 2021, reducing the cost of his health insurance to the Region. Should this cost saving be passed onto him? This will be referred to the Finance Committee.

The following Documents are provided for the Board's information:

#4 – Part Time Is Plenty Event

#5 – Palmer Grant Proposal

#6 – Lay Study Program Brochure

#7 – Lay Study Program Letter to Pastors

6.0 Associate Executive Minister – Jerrod Huguenot (Document #9) – There were no questions about Jerrod's written report.

The Board appreciates all that our Executive Minister and Associate Executive Minister do.

7.0 Treasurer – Jim Harriff discussed the financial reports.

7.1 2021 September General Fund Profit and Loss Snapshot (Document #16)

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We are at 66.7% of the year and many funds are ahead of the budgeted amounts. Honorariums are up. The investments are doing well. The expenses are on track. The Finance Committee will consider raises for the staff. The net income is \$6,676.39 ahead. A deficit of -\$36,238.24 was budgeted for this time.

7.2 2021 September General Fund Profit and Loss Detail (Document #17)

This document shows the details for document #16.

7.3 2021 September Total Ministry Profit and Loss (Document #18)

This is for the Board's information.

7.4 2021 September Balance Sheet (Document #19)

Line 11537 –Rwanda Fund – this is for a student from Rwanda who is studying in Vermont. The funds moving through this account are “pass through” funds. People contribute for this purpose and the Region passes that contribution on to the designated recipient. Line 11560 – The Reserve Fund is good at \$78,073.90. At least \$50,000.00 should be kept in this fund. Items under 15000 – AB Foundation investments – these are doing well. Line 15250 Unrestricted Endowment includes the sale of the Waterford Church. Line 24100 is the PPP loan – the form has been submitted to make this a grant.

Our endowment is the best it has ever been. See Document #8.

Old Business:

8.0 The Mission trip to the Tuscarora Indian Mission has been postponed to the summer of 2022. The funds from this have been transferred to the trip to the Niagara Community Mission.

9.0 Suzi and Jim Harriff are willing to give presentations about Rwanda.

10.0 Niagara Falls Mission Trip, Nov. 11 – 14 – Participants must have proof of being vaccinated. The limit is ten participants. The activities may include painting, sorting food, landscaping, preparing food, serving meals or whatever else needs doing. There have been a lot of inquiries.

11.0 Are there other possibilities for missions? A conference was suggested.

12.0 Safe Region Policy Sub-committee – The committee had its first meeting on August 26th. They will meet again on September 27th. The committee will address 1.) general policies to keep people safe; 2) what situations need policies?

The members of the committee are: Jerrod Hugenot, Keith Griffin, George Stefani, Jeanne Bennett, Wendy Depew Partelow and Judith Chritiansen.

13.0 The sub-committee to consider Mission Support needs to be set up.

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14.0 Dan Saulsgiver noted that on Wednesday, Sept. 22nd, at 6:30 P.M., the Hamilton Baptist Church will have Shane Claiborne as a speaker.

15.0 Greg Johnson noted that there is a bill in the NYS Senate about sealing or expunging criminal records to help people with criminal convictions get good jobs and housing. More information about this can be found at cleanslateny.org.

16.0 The Biennial Meeting – Lecia Rodriguez
The Committee has been formed. A meeting will be set up soon.
The Committee members are: David Harris, Claudia Little, Jason Hladik, Patricia Ludwig, Jim Kelsey and Mary Schwarz. Jim Kelsey recommended adding a Burmese representative. He will contact the Burmese church in Albany.

New Business:

17.0 Revision to sign at Pathfinder Lodge – Jim Kelsey noted that the sign at Pathfinder Lodge says, “An American Baptist Camp.” And the sign by the road has the ABC logo on it. If any lawsuits were ever filed against ABCNYS or VP Camp & Conference Ministries, the other party could be named in the suit. We need to limit our and VPCCM’s legal exposure. He will approach Mandy Simons, the CEO of Vick/Pathfinder CCM, about changing the signs. Doing this should not be very expensive. We will offer to pay 50% of the cost.

Additional Reports:

18.0 Ministers Council - Patricia Ludwig (Document #10)
Their Annual Retreat begins tomorrow, in Canandaigua. Jim Kelsey will be the main speaker about Civility. Upcoming events are noted in her report. All events are open to pastors, lay leaders and Christian Education Directors.

19.0 AB Men - Chris Blackwell (Documents #11 and #12)
The men’s conference scheduled for September 25th has been postponed until May 21, 2022.
The disaster relief trailer is in Addison, being used by volunteers from other areas. They are helping with the damage caused by flash flooding in the Southern Tier.

20.0 AB Women’s Ministry - Grace Kelly-Neal (Document #13)
Grace noted that her home was one of those affected by the flooding. She asked for prayers as the lower level of her home was flooded.
ABWM is planning an in-person Board meeting in October.
On July 28th the IRS approved their 501(c)(3) status. They will now apply to NYS for sales tax exemption.
An in-person convention is being planned for April 22-24, 2022.

21.0 AB Youth – Keith Griffin for Stephanie Schneider

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The AB Youth Fall Convention will be held on November 5 – 7, at the Ramada by Wyndham, in Liverpool. They are hoping for an in-person convention.

All of the information for the convention was mailed yesterday, Sept. 10th.

Keith thanked the Board for the \$2,000.00 for COVID preparations.

22.0 Vick/Pathfinder CCM – Keith Griffin

“We survived.”

There is a new Health Department inspector who is more by the book.

There were only two weeks of camp. It is required to have a qualified medical person on site.

23.0 ABCUSA Board of General Ministries – Judith Christiansen (Document #14)

There were no questions about the written report.

24.0 Committee on Ministry – Greg Johnson

No report.

25.0 Lay Study Program – Jim Kelsey

A new brochure has been created; see Document #6.

A letter was sent to all ABCNYS pastors telling them about the program. The pastors were asked to consider who could benefit from this program in their congregations.

All classes are online. The course for lay pastor certification can be completed in 2½ years.

26.0 A thank you letter was received from InterFaith Works of Syracuse for our \$1,000.00 donation to the Onondaga Chicken Coop Project.

27.0 Jim Kelsey noted that Afghani immigrants are coming to our area.

28.0 At the December 3rd Board of Mission meeting there will be several items of importance:

The 2022 Budget will be approved.

The meeting dates for 2022 will be approved. It must be decided if they will be in-person or hybrid.

29.0 Future Meeting Dates:

Executive Committee: Friday on Zoom: November 19

Board of Mission: Friday, December 3

30.0 Reflections:

Pat Ludwig was thanked for an outstanding devotional.

Greg Johnson asked that we continue to reflect on the question of what creative ways can we find to do ministry.

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Information about items like the Clean Slate bill and Shane Claiborne was appreciated.

Pat Ludwig said that she misses seeing people at lunch and having more interaction at meetings.

It was asked that everyone introduce themselves at the beginning of meetings.

Everyone please read the entire emails you receive about meetings.

31.0 The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 PM.

Minutes taken by
Bruce D. Aikin
ABCNYS Secretary