



# THE DIOCESAN SYNOD OF FREDERICTON

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Adopted December 3, 2021

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DIOCESAN COUNCIL**

25 September 2021

Videoconference

### **Pre-meeting circulation**

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes (May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021)
- Chancellor's Report
- Finance Committee and Treasurer's Reports
  - August 30, 2021 Shared Ministry and Employment Assessment
  - August 30, 2021 Draft Financials Diocesan Synod and Camp Medley
  - 2020 Financial Statements and Review Engagement Report
- Committee and Team Reports: HR, and Mission and Outreach
- Representative Reports: Camp Medley Director

### **Members Attending**

Kathy Asch, David Barrett, Eric Beek, David Bell, Ken Brien, David Edwards, Geoffrey Hall, Brent Ham, Heather Harris-Jones, Lionel Hayter, Susan Jack, Mary Anne Langmaid, Cathy Laskey, Bob LeBlanc, Coralie Losier, John Matheson, Rob Marsh, Michael O'Hara, Keith Osborne, David Peer, Ted Quann, Paul Ranson, William Ross, Kevin Stockall, Robert Taylor, Cheryl Young.

### **Member Regrets**

Perry Cooper, Linda Fury, Chris Hayes, and Joni Richardson

### **Members Absent**

Siobhan Laskey, and Matthew Pitman

### **Guests**

Shawn Branch (Zoom co-host), Cheryl Jacobs (Zoom co-host), Rosemarie Kingston (ACW Representative), and Gisele McKnight (NB Anglican).

### **Worship**

1. David Edwards welcomed everyone to the virtual conference room at 10:00 am and acknowledged that the land from which we gather to participate in this videoconference includes the traditional unceded and unsurrendered land of the Peskotomuhkati, Mi'kmaq, and Wolastoqey peoples.

2. David Edwards then led the council in Morning Prayer, with the help of Coralie Losier, Shawn Branch, Keith Osborne, and Paul Ranson.

### **Call to Order**

3. David Edwards called the meeting to order at 10:17 am and noted the regrets of Perry Cooper, Linda Fury, Chris Hayes, and Joni Richardson. No further regrets were received.

4. David Edwards asked Shawn Branch to review the process for voting that the members will use in the meeting.

5. David Edwards introduced the agenda for the meeting and asked for any changes or additions. He added one item of new business to discuss the upcoming Synod Meeting.

*MOTION 1: Ken Brien / Paul Ranson*

***That Diocesan Council accept the agenda as amended.***

*MOTION 1: Carried*

### **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

6. Diocesan Council reviewed the minutes of the last Diocesan Council meeting.

*MOTION 2: Ted Quann / Rob Marsh*

***That Diocesan Council accept the minutes of the last meeting on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021.***

*MOTION 2: Carried*

### **Business Arising**

7. **Diocesan Committee and Team Structure.** David Edwards reported that he is working on setting up a group to provide missional leadership in the Diocese. He has approached people and is awaiting responses.

8. **Acknowledgement of Diocesan Synod's 150th year of incorporation.** Discussion on this was deferred to the Synod discussion at the end of the meeting.

### **New Business**

9. **Periodic Synod Office facility update.** David Peer reported that the Synod Office continues to talk with the Cathedral about the possibility for joint use of a building at 121 Church St. Synod Office is also working with The Bishop and Chapter to arrange a longer-term stay at Cathedral Memorial Hall as the vision of a shared facility and the requirements for a new construction are developed and considered.

### **Reports to Council**

10. The archbishop asked for a motion to receive all reports sent in the pre-meeting package.

*MOTION 3: Mary Anne Langmaid / Rob Marsh*

***That Diocesan Council receive all reports.***

*MOTION 3: Carried*

11. **Chancellor's Report.** Under the discipline canon of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada, the Provincial Council determines the names of two members of the clergy and two members of the laity from each diocese who shall be eligible for appointment to the Court of Appeal for the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada after each triennial meeting of the Provincial Synod. Together those people eligible are called the Panel of Triers. The Chancellor of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada has asked that this diocese propose the requisite names to the Provincial Council.

*MOTION 4: David Bell / David Peer*

**That Diocesan Council nominate to the Council of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada the following as members of the panel of triers for the Provincial Court of Appeal: Ann Fairweather, Ross Hebb, Kelly VanBuskirk, Deidre Wade.**

*MOTION 4: Carried*

12. **Canon Five Amendment – fixed return of investment.** David Bell explained that the language being changed in subsection 1(4) represents an investment environment where the only available equity investments were corporate shares. Investment products resist such a simplistic categorization today and the current language restricts Synod equity investment in a way that is impractical.

13. The aim of the proposed amendment is to retain the intent of the existing provision (that is, not less than 40% in fixed income products) while removing the obsolete restriction on the breadth of equity investments.

*MOTION 5: Rob Marsh / Coralie Losier*

**That Diocesan Council recommend to the Diocesan Synod that Canon Five – Diocesan Business be amended as follows.**

1(3) When the Finance Committee invests property, including trust property, in any kind of property, real, personal or mixed it shall, subject to any express provision of a will or other instrument creating a trust and to such policies and standards as the Synod adopts, exercise the judgement and care that a person of prudence, discretion and intelligence would exercise as a trustee of the property of others.

1(4) Notwithstanding subsection (3), the Finance Committee shall not invest **less than forty per cent** ~~more than sixty per cent~~ of the Synod's general investment fund or of any segregated fund **in fixed income securities** ~~preferred and common shares of corporations~~.

*MOTION 5: Carried*

14. **Finance Committee Report.** Susan Jack noted three errors in the report. Under Item 1 the Shared Ministry is at the end of August 2021, under Item 2 Claire

Fracker's name was spelled incorrectly, and under Item 8 the former church of the Holy Trinity, Lower St Mary's belongs to the Diocese of Fredericton, not the Parish of Saint John.

15. The Finance Committee is pleased with the return on our investments and very happy with our investment advisors, PH&N. The Finance Committee has spent some time discussing the rate of return on the DCIF and how to calculate it. The Committee has opted to align income for the rate of return with the Canada Revenue Agency definition of income, which includes interest, dividends, and realized capital gains / losses.

16. Susan Jack then explained the recommendation of the Finance Committee to Diocesan Council to extend access to the Retiree Benefit Plan to lay employees. This recommendation arose after a lay employee on the verge of retirement and facing significant medical costs would be forced to apply for new coverage upon retirement. The solution is to allow lay employees to transfer to the Retiree Benefit Plan. The proposal is that employees pay 100% of the insurance so this solution comes at no cost or risk to the Diocese.

*MOTION 6: Susan Jack / Heather Harris-Jones*

***That Diocesan Council approve the extension of access to the Retiree Benefit Plan to retired Lay employees (including Synod) in order to provide them access to the benefits on their retirement with the lay employees paying 100% of the premium.***

*MOTION 6: Carried*

17. **Treasurer's Report.** Heather Harris-Jones reviewed the Shared Ministry Budget Support and the Employment and Pension Assessments. The Shared Ministry shortfall from the Parish of Douglas and Nashwaaksis is on the way. The rest of the shortfall is not expected this year. The positive balance in employment assessment from the Parish of St George covers a shortfall from last year.

18. Heather then reviewed the financial statements in detail. She noted that the Diocese will be booking a gain of over \$700,000 in realized capital gains later this year from the sale and transfer to the care of PH&N of the proceeds of our REIT investment. There are savings on budgeted expenses because of COVID-19 and overspends on grants to parishes but the Diocesan Synod is within budget and no concerns exist at this point in the year.

19. Camp Medley finances are in good shape. The Camp budget is based on 200 campers. The camp was successful in hosting 275 campers over the summer; a third were new to the Camp. Having 75 more campers than the budget assumed did create variances like greater food costs. Heather complemented John Galbraith, the Camp Director for his financial management. The Camp should finish the year with a surplus. Heather is expecting a \$10,000 grant soon, which will be the last of the income for the year. Expenses will continue. Ken Brien thanked Heather on the meeting chat and David Edwards thanked Heather and John for the financial turnaround, the great camp experience for campers, and the infrastructure improvements.

20. **The 2020 Financial Statements and Review Engagement Report.**

Heather Harris-Jones presented the Diocesan Synod's 2020 financial statements and the review engagement report from Bringloe Feeney. The Finance Committee had reviewed the statements and report in June and the Synod submitted its Charitable Return before the deadline. Heather summarized the report conclusions. She noted that Bringloe Feeney identified that the Diocesan Synod was vulnerable to problems with cash flow because of the policy in 2020 to include unrealized capital gains in the rate of return.

*MOTION 7: Susan Jack / Heather Harris-Jones*

**Diocesan Council receive the 2020 Financial Statements and Review Engagement Report as presented**

*MOTION 7: Carried*

21. Susan Jack, Chair of the Finance Committee, noted that it was a big accomplishment to get this report completed. Over 2020, the Finance team saw significant staff turnover, increase in workload, and a change in investment advisors. David Edwards thanked the Finance employees of the Synod office and the Finance Committee for their work in 2020. It was a difficult and busy year and the goal posts kept moving.

22. **Break.** Diocesan council recessed for a 10-minute break at 1110.

23. **Camp Medley Director's Report.** David Peer provided a verbal report for John Galbraith with John's three top accomplishments this year: 1) An excellent staff team this summer; 2) A great summer after a year off and 275 campers this year, many new to the Camp; and 3) Work has already started on next year's program.

24. **Diocesan Camps.** David Edwards rounded out the discussion on camping ministries by explaining Camp Brookwood was not open to campers this year and instead focused on training staff for next year. Choir School and St Michael's Youth Conference were not held in 2021.

**Other Items**

25. **Synod.** David Edwards explained he hoped to hold an in-person Synod session this year at the beginning of November. Unfortunately, the fourth wave of COVID-19 and the necessary government response to the strain on the health care system may make an in-person Synod session difficult. David introduced his thoughts on potentially delaying the Synod session to 2022 and holding a Synod session in-person or virtually. David Edwards noted that it is still canonically possible to push our Synod session into 2022 and that the Provincial Synod delegates and Diocesan Council members would continue until replaced. He requested the opinion of Diocesan Council. Only two members of council spoke. The first asked if there was any pending business that could not wait and hearing there was none supported pushing the Synod session to 2022. David noted that regardless of which year the Diocesan Synod meets there will be something that marks the 150<sup>th</sup> year of incorporation.

26. **Public Health Measures and the Mandatory Order.** David Edwards noted he issued a pastoral letter and was regularly updating parish corporations with information from the provincial government. He reviewed the two options available to parishes regarding Sunday worship, depending on whether a parish asked for proof of vaccination or not. He noted the government made the two options available for worship; all other activities in parish buildings, including ACW meetings, require attendees to provide proof of double vaccination and to always wear masks. The Secretary of Synod, David Peer requested any members of Diocesan Council who would be unable to attend an in-person meeting (under the current regulations, which currently require proof of vaccination and masks) to let him know.

27. **Rolling Meeting Schedule.** Our next meeting is planned to occur as part of an in-person Diocesan Council retreat from Friday Dec 3 to Saturday Dec 4.

<b>2021-2022</b>
Saturday Sep 25
Friday Dec 3 to Saturday Dec 4
Saturday February 26, 2022
Saturday May 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2022
Saturday September 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2022

### **Adjournment**

28. David Edwards closed the meeting in prayer at 1133 and asked for a motion to Adjourn.

*MOTION 8: Michael O'Hara*

***That this meeting of Diocesan Council be adjourned.***

Respectfully submitted,

The Most Rev David Edwards  
Archbishop and Chair

The Rev David Peer  
Secretary of Synod