



**Approved December 2, 2023**

**THE DIOCESAN SYNOD OF FREDERICTON**  
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**Approved 2 December 2023**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF DIOCESAN COUNCIL**

28 September 2023

Virtual

**Pre-meeting circulation**

- Agenda
- Draft Minutes (June 3, 2023)
- Correspondence from the Anglican Foundation and from King's College
- Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Nominations Process and Committees of Council
- Archbishop David Edwards' address to Diocesan Council 3 June 2023
- Proposal for two additional norms
- Motion on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity training
- Chancellor's report
- Proposed amendment to Regulation 7-3 Housing and Relocation
- Finance Committee report
- Approved Diocesan Synod Grants
- Anglican Foundation of Canada Grant application – Parish of St George
- Anglican Foundation of Canada Grant application – Parish of Moncton
- Treasurer's Reports
  - August 31, 2023 Shared Ministry and Employment Assessment
  - August 31, 2023 Synod Financial Statements
  - Camp Medley Income Statement

**Members Attending**

David Bell, Michael Briggs, Jasmine Chandra, Robert Cheatley, Perry Cooper, David Edwards, Trevor Fotheringham, Geoffrey Hall, Brent Ham, Heather Harris-Jones, Margaret Holder, Bonnie Hunt, Susan Jack, Cathy Laskey, Gerry Laskey, Bob LeBlanc, Leo Martin, Rob Marsh, Laura McNulty, Neil Osiowy, David Peer, Julian Pillay, Paul Ranson, Nancy Stephens, Robert Taylor, Marilyn Wilson.

**Member Regrets**

Martha Barker, Connor DeMerchant, John Matheson, Robert Montgomery, Tony Munn, Jill Stewart.

**Guests Attending**

Shawn Branch (Parish Development Officer), Gisele McKnight (Communications Officer).

## **Guest Regrets**

Cheryl Jacobs.

## **Opening**

1. David Edwards opened the meeting at 6:32 pm, welcomed everyone, and acknowledged that the diocese conducts its activities on the traditional and unceded territory of the Wabanaki people, which includes the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, and Peskotomuhkati nations. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship," entered with the British Crown in the 1700s, to establish an ongoing relationship of peace, friendship, and mutual respect.
2. David Edwards led the Council in evening prayer with the assistance of Gerry Laskey, Robert Taylor, and Cathy Laskey.

## **Call to Order**

3. David Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:45 pm and noted regrets from John Matheson. He noted minor changes to the agenda: the wording for the motion for appointments to the King's College board is for a "further" term, not a "second" term and the discussion on an amendment to Regulation 7-3 will take place after the Finance Committee report is presented. The motion originated from a recommendation from the Finance Committee.

*MOTION 1: Gerry Laskey / Rob Marsh*

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

*MOTION 1: Carried*

4. Cathy Laskey proposed a motion to allow Shawn Branch and Gisele McKnight a voice at Diocesan Council meetings. This will recognize their regular attendance and valuable contribution in support of the Diocesan Council. They have been intentionally invited and this will allow them to be able to engage openly during the council meeting. The courtesies being extended are for speaking and engaging in council discussion, not voting.

*MOTION 2 Cathy Laskey / Paul Ranson*

***That the Diocesan Council extend courtesies to regular formal guests, Shawn Branch and Gisele McKnight.***

*MOTION 2: Carried*

## **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

5. Diocesan Council reviewed the minutes of the last Diocesan Council meeting. The secretary thanked members who had provided comment on the draft minutes and noted additional editorial edits to the minutes in the meeting package:

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| paragraph 6  | Replace "lead" with "led" i.e. Any real change will need to be led at the local level. |
| paragraph 9  | Add a "d" to "provide". i.e., provided by Camp Medley staff.                           |
| paragraph 21 | Replace "suggesting" with "suggested", i.e., Brent suggested a more widespread....     |
| paragraph 23 | Remove the commas, i.e. What was submitted as an agenda item was "A review and...."    |

- paragraph 32    Move the comma, i.e., Robert Taylor, the Sessional Nominating Committee Chair and a member of the council, ... informed the Diocesan Council....
- Motion 11        Correct the spelling of “Stockal” to “Stockall”.

*MOTION 3: David Peer / Heather Harris-Jones*

***That Diocesan Council approve the minutes of the last meeting June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, as presented and corrected.***

*MOTION 3: Carried*

### **Correspondence**

6.        The Secretary received two items of correspondence since the last meeting. The Anglican Foundation wrote to thank the Synod for its generous donation. The Chair of the Board of King’s College wrote to request the reappointment of two governors; this will be discussed as new business under item 5a.

### **Business Arising**

7.        **Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Nominations Process:** Gerry Laskey spoke about the work the committee has done since the last meeting. It met once on July 12<sup>th</sup>. He sent an email through Synod Office with information to council members on September 6<sup>th</sup>. His goal is for council members to have an informed discussion on the nominating process and on council committees at the meeting in December. He noted that there is no formal record of Archdeacon appointment to the Finance Committee, though that issue has yet to be discussed at the committee. Susan Jack noted that it will be easy for the Council to get bogged down in the detail and suggested that the Ad Hoc committee bring solutions and a recommendation for a motion to the next meeting. Trevor Fotheringham noted that Council saw a presentation in December on Council committee structure that had recommended motions that could be reconsidered during a discussion.

8.        **Discussion Discernment Activities:** David Edwards updated the Council members on his discernment activities. He led a discussion on discernment at the recent Clergy Conference. He is developing a video and crafting messages to go to deaneries as part of a communications plan intended to raise awareness of the diocesan discernment. He noted two strategic initiatives supported by the strategic discretionary budget: remuneration support to the Rev Harold Boomer, who has been appointed as the Missioner to the Upper St John River Valley, and the salary of Kurt Schmidt who was selected as the part-time Director of Young Adult Formation after a recent competition.

### **New Business**

9.        **Nominations to King’s College Board:** The President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of King’s College has asked Diocesan Council to appoint two members to further terms on the board. Canon Four §21 gives the Diocesan Council the authority to appoint members in response to this request.

*MOTION 4: David Peer / Bob LeBlanc*

***Moved that Diocesan Council appoint Hugh Wright and Gwen Davies to a further term of office on the King’s College Board.***

*MOTION 4: Carried.*

10. **Proposal for two additional norms:** Cathy Laskey requested that the Diocesan Council consider adopting two additional norms, one concerning requesting the reading of the Gospel of the Day and the other on the use of Electronic Communications during meetings. The first originated with Archbishop Chris Harper and was used at the General Synod meeting this summer. This norm would allow anyone participating in a council meeting to request the Gospel of the day to be read. David Bell, who attended General Synod, commented that the very concept of interrupting proceedings with words from the Gospel was a beautiful idea. Laura McNulty, who was also at General Synod, found that when it was done, it refocused the discussion. The second proposed norm is about keeping discussion at the meeting available to all participants. It refers particularly to sidebar discussions on meeting topics held via chat or text to a small select group. After discussion the meeting participants agreed to add these norms to the Council's norms.

11. **Diversity, equity, and inclusion training:** Loving God and our neighbours is central to the Christian calling. This calling is not always easy in practice, and the way forward not always obvious. Diversity, equity, and inclusion training facilitated by the Diocesan Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Kelly VanBuskirk, K.C. will help us, as a Council, to better love one another as Christ has first loved us. It will also help us to reflect this in our communications, shared work, and ministry. This training was part of the Clergy and Licensed Lay Leaders Conference last week and was well received. Kelly VanBuskirk is available to do the training at our next meeting. Diocesan Council members would be the second group to undergo such training. The plan is to make this training available in an accessible form, so that synod staff, parishes, council teams and committees, and others can use it.

12. Gerry Laskey, who took the training at the Clergy Conference, recommended it as a non-threatening way to learn the language and concepts behind diversity, equity, and inclusion. He found Kelly a great presenter who understands the Anglican context and who can present the topics with a sense of humour.

13. Mike Briggs asked if the training could be provided at the upcoming Lay Readers conference. The bishop agreed to ask Kelly if he could present.

*MOTION 5: Cathy Laskey / Gerry Laskey*

***That the Diocesan Council commit to engaging in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training and that this training be provided during the in-person council retreat on December 1-2, 2023.***

*MOTION 5: Carried.*

### **Reports**

14. David Edwards asked for a motion to receive all reports.

*MOTION 6: Bob LeBlanc / Mike Briggs*

***Moved that Diocesan Council receive all reports as circulated.***

*MOTION 6: Carried*

15. **Finance Committee Report.** Susan Jack presented the Finance Committee report and noted

that the Committee is recommending a change to Regulation 7-3 to add a cost-of-living adjustment for housing allowances, The Diocesan Council would determine the adjustment annually. This change recognizes that the cost of owned housing is rising and that clerics should not be expected to shoulder all those increases. Susan spoke about the findings of the Finance Committee's investigation; some clerics receiving housing allowance have not seen an increase in years. The investigation recognized the housing allowance is agreed between the cleric and parish, but that some guidance on recommended increases to housing allowance is needed. The Treasurer, Heather Harris-Jones, spoke in favour of the motion, as did Michael Briggs, who has served for many years as a parish treasurer. Susan noted that a voluntary request to parishes providing housing allowance to provide an increase last year resulted in only 5 of 16 parishes providing an increase.

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

***Moved that Diocesan Council amend Part 2 of Regulation 7-3 - Housing and Relocation to add:***

...

***4. Cost-of-Living Adjustment***

***The housing allowance shall be indexed annually by a factor set by Diocesan Council.***

*MOTION 7: Carried*

16. Susan Jack discussed grants and the summary of grant submissions considered by the Finance Committee at a recent meeting. She also explained Heather's approach to work with the Anglican Foundation of Canada (AFC) to ensure that the Synod only submits the strongest applications. As a result, the Finance Committee is recommending Diocesan Council approve two applications for submission to the AFC for grants. The AFC applications are in the pre-read package.

*MOTION 8: Susan Jack / Heather Harris-Jones*

***that Diocesan Council approve the recommendation of the Finance Committee for two parishes to apply to the Anglican Foundation of Canada for grants:***

- ***Parish of St. George for \$15,000 to repair their foyer and seal serious leaks.***
- ***Parish of Moncton for \$5,000 to fund their community breakfast program.***

*MOTION 8: Carried*

17. **Treasurer's Report.** Heather Harris-Jones presented the Shared Ministry and Employment Assessment status. Parish contributions to the Diocesan Shared Ministry Budget to the end of August were at 97%, up from 91% last year. The total shortfall was \$24.8K, with about \$8K considered uncollectable and \$6K at moderate risk of being uncollectable. Parishes are doing all they can with employment assessments. A couple of Parishes are still behind but are not falling further behind.

18. The Synod Office continues to search for a person to provide centralized parish treasurer support. There is enough work to fund a 75% part-time position. A suitable candidate has yet to be identified.

19. The Synod office will be changing the health care provider on 1 Dec 2023 from RBC to

Medavie/Blue Cross. The Finance Committee recently approved the change. Heather expects that the change will fix the challenges plan members have been experiencing with GreenShield, the RBC benefits manager. The customer experience with Blue Cross is rated superior to GreenShield. Blue Cross combines the plan and benefits administration in one organization, and this provides superior customer service to members and pharmacies. It is the most popular provider in New Brunswick. The new plan will have an annual drug cap of \$20K, after which members will be transferred to the New Brunswick provincial plan. The cap is how the plan provider reduces risk. Blue Cross administers the provincial plan, and this transition would be seamless for any members that might be affected. Members transfer back to Blue Cross benefits at the beginning of the year. The Diocese will cover additional costs incurred by any plan members living outside of New Brunswick if they do not have a provincial plan that will match the NB program after the \$20K cap is reached.

20. Heather also noted that as of 1 Jan 2024, the centralized pay system will move from twice-monthly to bi-weekly. This will mean slightly smaller paychecks, but also means that there will be three pays in May and November next year. This change will improve effectiveness and reduce errors in the administration of pay. It will be particularly helpful for summer students. The Synod office will be preparing communications to make everyone aware. The office is committed to help anyone that experiences challenges because of this change. In response to a question by Gerry Laskey, Heather said the pay day will either be Thursday or Friday.

21. Heather reviewed the finances and explained that she will be working throughout the fall to determine if any of the variances to the budget are permanent. Heather expects that the Synod will end the year better than the budget; there are no surprises expected in the financials. Heather has no concerns with the Synod financial position.

22. Heather then presented the Camp Medley financials. Overall, it was a good year financially for the Camp. The Camp is showing a \$31K surplus at the end of August. More income is expected from government grants and some rentals. Though the statement shows expenses \$17K under budget, Heather is expecting purchases at the end of the year. Camp Medley should close the year substantially better than the budget surplus of \$6200.

### **Other Items**

23. **The Diocesan Council meeting and retreat in December.** The Villa Madonna is not available for our December retreat and meeting. David Peer presented three options to hold the retreat on the dates planned: An alternate retreat venue at Beulah Camp located at Brown's Flats, Commercial accommodation, and Church meeting facilities in Fredericton or Oromocto, Commercial accommodation in Fredericton or Oromocto with Camp Medley meeting facilities. David recommended the option that paired Church meeting facilities with commercial accommodation. The Council members agreed.

### **Rolling Meeting Schedule**

24. Our next meeting includes our retreat. It should start Friday December 1<sup>st</sup> around 5:00 pm and complete Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> around 4:00 pm. It will be in the Fredericton/Oromocto area.

<b>2023-2024</b>
Friday December 1 <sup>st</sup> to Saturday December 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2023 (in-person retreat)
Thursday March 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2024 (Virtual)
Saturday, June 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2024
Thursday October 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2024 (Virtual)

### **Adjournment**

25. David Edwards asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:06 pm and closed the meeting with a prayer and a blessing.

*MOTION 9: Rob Marsh*

*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